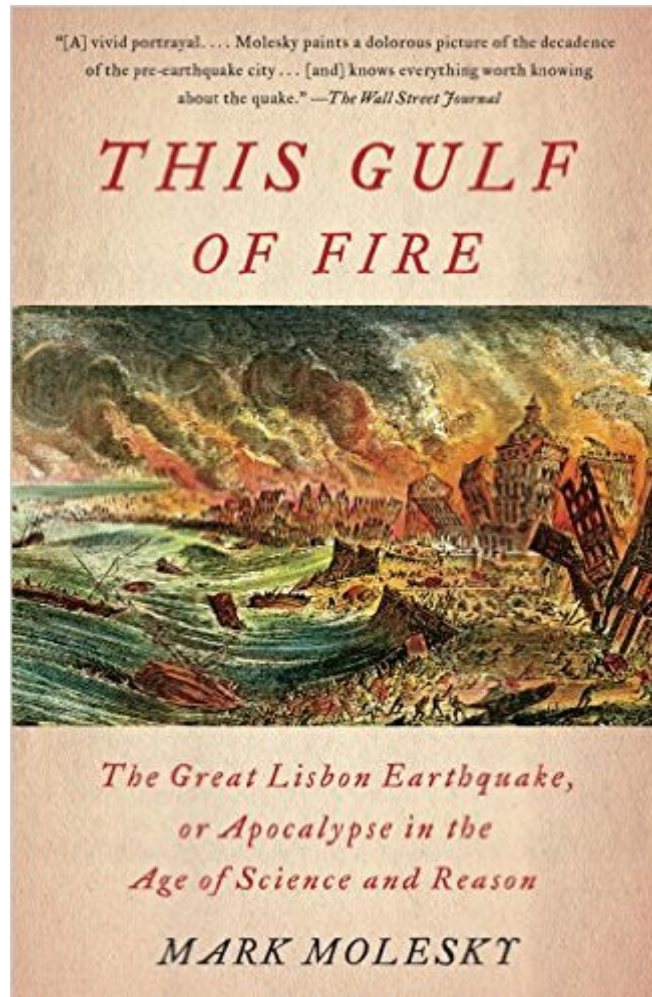


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This Gulf Of Fire: The Great Lisbon Earthquake, Or Apocalypse In The Age Of Science And Reason



Synopsis

A Los Angeles Times Book Prize Finalist
The captivating and definitive account of the Great Lisbon Earthquake--the most consequential natural disaster of modern times. On All Saints's Day 1755, tremors from an earthquake measuring approximately 9.0 or perhaps higher on the magnitude scale swept furiously toward Lisbon, then one of the wealthiest cities in the world and the capital of a vast global empire. Within minutes, much of the city lay in ruins. A half hour later, a giant tsunami unleashed by the quake smashed into Portugal's coastline and barreled up the Tagus River, carrying countless thousands out to sea. To complete Lisbon's destruction, a hellacious firestorm then engulfed the city's shattered remains, killing thousands more and incinerating much of what the earthquake and tsunami had spared. Drawing on a wealth of new sources, the latest scientific research, and a sophisticated grasp of European history, Mark Molesky gives us the gripping, authoritative account of the Great Lisbon Earthquake disaster and its impact on the Western world--including descriptions of the world's first international relief effort, the rise of a brutal, yet modernizing, dictatorship in Portugal, and the effect of the catastrophe on the spirit and direction of the European Enlightenment.

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Customer Reviews

As the sun rose on November 1, 1755, All Saints Day, the people of Lisbon had much of which to be proud. Capital of a sprawling empire, Lisbon was a fabulously wealthy city given over to excess of every kind. Its palaces, opera houses, and markets were ornate and crammed full of everything a European's heart could desire. Its multitudinous churches were just as ornate and just as excessive

in their devotion to worship. Then, within a few moments, everything was swept away. A massive earthquake estimated to have been 9.0 or higher erupted under the Atlantic and swept across the city, followed by a gigantic tsunami that swamped the ruins and swept thousands out to sea. A firestorm then engulfed what was left of the city, burning for weeks and destroying countless lives as well as an incalculable number of magnificent books, paintings, and other artwork. The earthquake and its accompanying tsunamis wreaked havoc across Europe and Africa and did damage in North and South America as well. The Lisbon Earthquake struck in the middle of the European Enlightenment, a time period during which science and reason were popularly believed to have relegated much of religion and faith to the wayside of history. People who believed that the world ran like clockwork, ticking along without divine intervention, were stunned by this incontrovertible evidence that things could suddenly go very wrong indeed. Mark Molesky's riveting account of the Earthquake and its aftermath is a highly readable and entertaining account of the days just before, during, and after the Earthquake in Lisbon, the rest of Portugal, and all of Europe and beyond.

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