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A History of Civilization in 50 Disasters

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Book Review

A History of Civilization in 50 Disasters

Author

Gale Eaton

Illustrator

Reviewer

Emilee Bell

Rating

Excellent

Level

Intermediate, Young
Adult

Pages

270

Year

2015

Publisher

Tilbury House Publish-

ISBN

9780884483830

A History of Civilization in 50 Disasters throws together the fates of a variety of countries through the light of massive global disasters. The book explores the effects of volcanoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, and more, halfway around the world from where they occurred and months after the initial damage was done. Readers will dive a little deeper into the small yet impactful disasters that inevitably occur when human society clashes with nature, from famine to plague epidemics. 50 Disasters even includes zany episodes like a tank of molasses exploding in tenement neighborhoods in the dead heat of summer. From BC to modern day, we can expect to battle Mother Nature until the clock ticks past the human era of time on this planet.

Perhaps the most exciting of its set, 50 Disasters may also well be the least focused. Spanning disasters from nature's hurricanes and volcanoes to man's infrastructural failures to biological devastation, it calls into question what defines a "disaster." Fortunately, the introduction provides a definition, but it is difficult to reconcile the sharp grief that accompanies the death of thousands from irresponsible human action in comparison to the helpless acceptance of massive devastation one can expect from a record-breaking volcanic eruption. However, the unabashed blend of the man-made and natural disasters creates a broad springboard for youth to start exploring the effects of humans on the earth and on each other.

*Contains mild violence.