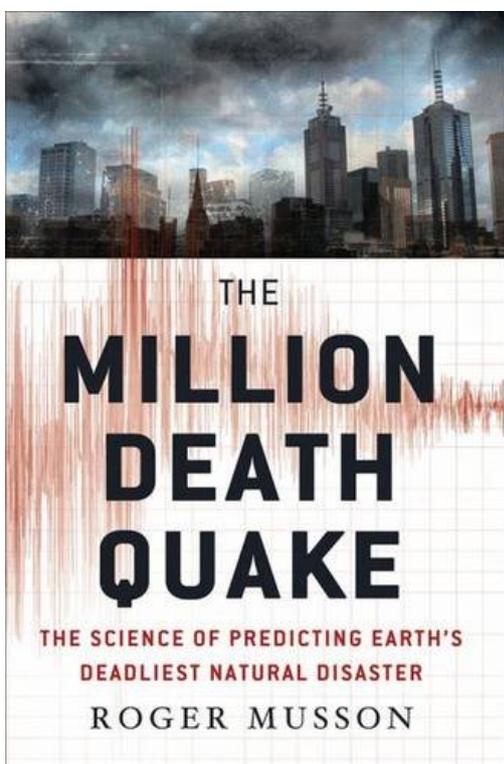


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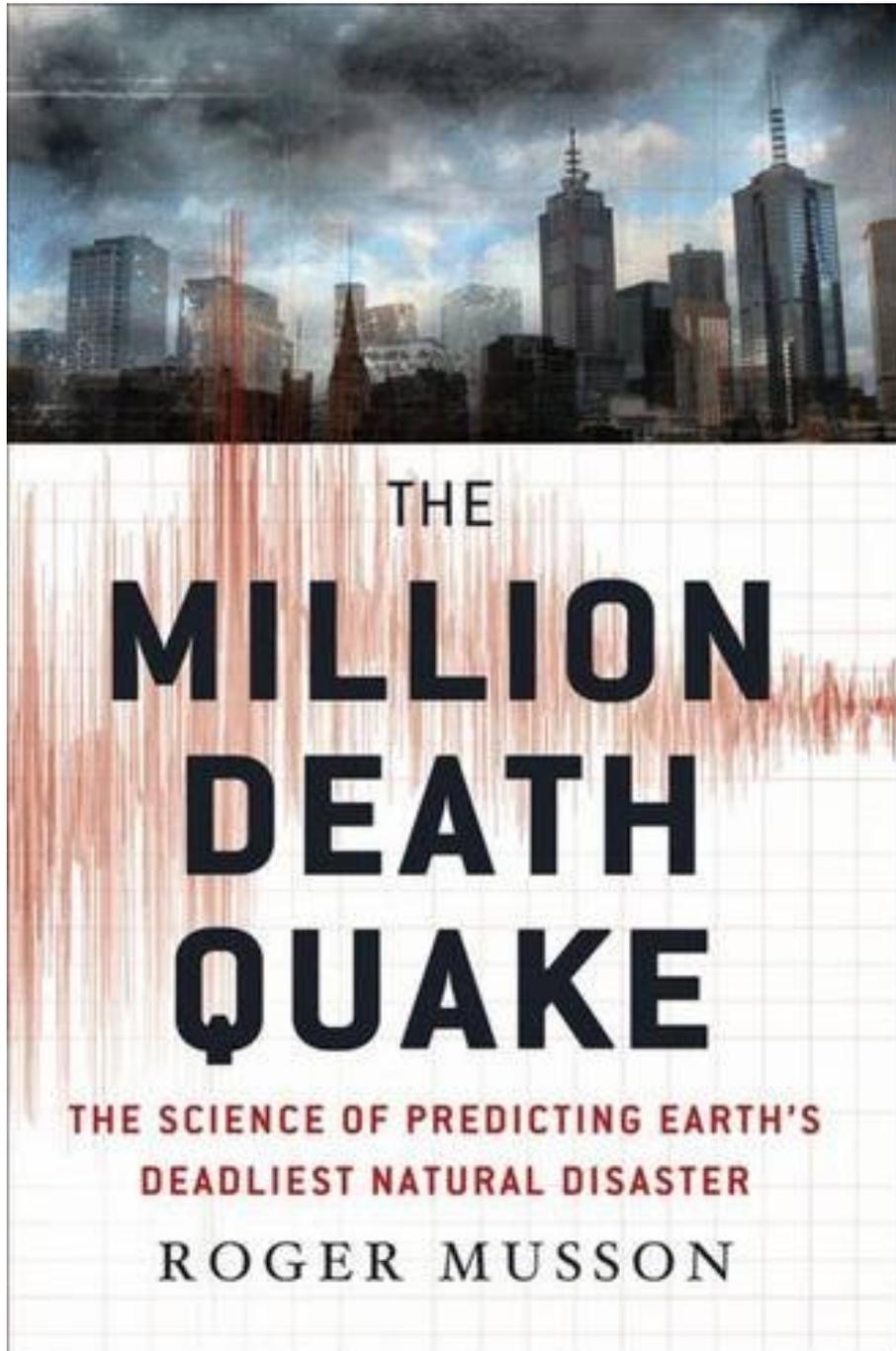
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From Booklist

In the annals of Earth's natural history, the deadliest earthquake on record hit Shaanxi, China in 1556 and killed an estimated 830,000 people, whereas the death toll of the 2010 Haiti quake topped 316,000. Yet according to noted British seismologist Musson, near-future casualties could easily surpass a million if decisive safety measures aren't taken, especially in populous urban areas along earthquake hot zones. Musson provides a lay-reader-friendly guide to seismology fundamentals, from early theories about earthquake origins to the workings of contemporary plate tectonics, before weighing the value of what he terms the "4 P's"—prayer, prevention, prediction, protection. Alas, prayer is the least effective in mitigating harm as crushed Lisbon churchgoers belatedly discovered one Sunday in 1755. Similarly, prevention and prediction have proved unreliable, leaving only protective methods, such as architectural retrofitting and outright relocation. Musson demonstrates why his expertise is much in demand in the wake of each new quake by keeping readers absorbed with clear explanations and colorful anecdotes about one of nature's most calamitous forces. --Carl Hays

Review

"Compulsively readable." ?Slate

"People with no background in Earth sciences can understand every word of it; its author is the head of seismic hazard for the British Geological Survey and writes with authority; and, above all, it could help save lives...earthquakes don't kill people – their offices, factories, tenements and houses do. There could hardly be a more serious take-home message." ?The Guardian

"A lay-reader-friendly guide to seismology fundamentals, from early theories about earthquake origins to the workings of contemporary plate tectonics...Musson demonstrates why his expertise is much in demand in the wake of each new quake by keeping readers absorbed with clear explanations and colorful anecdotes about one of nature's most calamitous forces." ?Booklist

"An authoritative and accessible investigation of one of nature's most destructive forces." ?Kirkus Reviews

"Roger Musson has written a sobering assessment of the global hazards posed by earthquakes. He gives us

an eloquent grounding in seismology based on science and history and confronts the questions of prediction and survival with balanced honesty. Buy a copy of this essential book and read it again and again.” ?Brian Fagan, author of *Elixir: A History of Water and Humankind* and *The Little Ice Age*

“Geophysicist Roger Musson provides an insider's view of seismology, from riveting accounts of historic earthquakes to the sobering modern reality that as global population grows, future earthquakes could cause unprecedented devastation. But he also argues that lives can be saved -- if we have the political will -- through investment in earthquake engineering and real-time digital warning systems. Essential reading for policymakers, planners, builders, investors, and all citizens of this tectonically vigorous planet.” ?Marcia Bjørnerud, author of *Reading the Rocks*

“A solid look at a shaky topic that shows why the whole world is earthquake country when it comes to disaster prevention.” ?David R. Montgomery, author of *The Rocks Don't Lie: A Geologist Investigates Noah's Flood*

“The Million Death Quake is an entertaining history of earthquakes, with both compelling stories of some of the deadliest disasters of all time and stories of how scientists very slowly came to understand what causes them. The author provides very clear scientific explanations of earthquakes and of the reasons why we still cannot predict them. Throughout the book Musson puts the entire subject in very human terms, emphasizing especially the important factor of population vulnerability. Because we cannot predict earthquakes our only progress in reducing earthquake deaths has been through improved building construction. But many densely populated cities lack such building improvements on a large enough scale, making possible the potential disaster that gives this book its title.” ?Bruce Parker, author of *The Power of the Sea*

“A crystal-clear primer on everything seismological...What makes earthquake disasters all the more harrowing is that in many cases the risks were known and heavy losses could have been avoided.” ?Clive Oppenheimer, author of *Eruptions that Shook the World*

About the Author

Roger Musson is the Head of Seismic Hazard and Archives at the British Geological Survey, where he is the chief spokesman to the media after any major earthquake, including *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Post*, and *The Telegraph*. He has written op-eds for *The New York Times*, is a regular contributor to *Fortean Times*, and was interviewed by *Time* magazine after the Haiti earthquake. He has appeared on a variety of documentaries, including the National Geographic Channel. Musson is also on the editorial board for the *Journal of Seismology*, the *Bulletin of Earthquake Engineering*, and *Natural Hazards*. He lives in Edinburgh, Scotland.

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