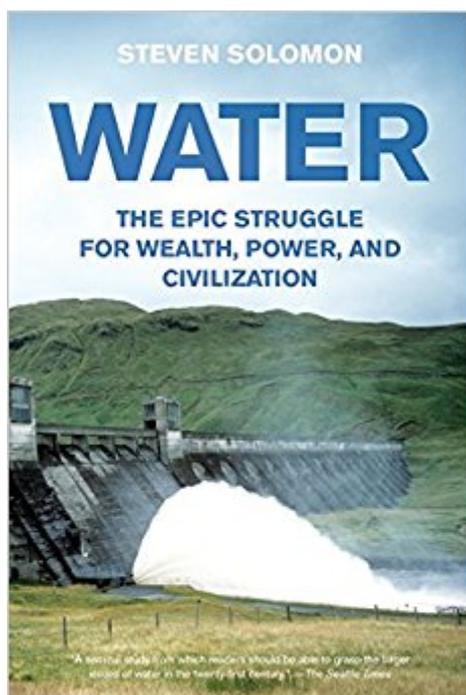


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Water: The Epic Struggle For Wealth, Power, And Civilization



Synopsis

Read this wide-ranging and thoughtful book while sitting on the banks of the Ganges near Varanasi—it's a river already badly polluted, and now threatened by the melting of the glaciers at its source to global warming. Four hundred million people depend on it, and there's no backup plan. As Steven Solomon makes clear, the same is true the world over; this volume will give you the background to understand the forces that will drive much of 21st century history. • Bill McKibben In *Water*, esteemed journalist Steven Solomon describes a terrifying—and all too real—world in which access to fresh water has replaced oil as the primary cause of global conflicts that increasingly emanate from drought-ridden, overpopulated areas of the world. Meticulously researched and undeniably prescient, *Water* is a stunningly clear-eyed action statement on what Robert F Kennedy, Jr. calls the biggest environmental and political challenge of our time. •

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This sprawling text reconstructs the history of civilization in order to illuminate the importance of water in human development from the first civilizations of the Fertile Crescent and the Indus River Valley to the present. Solomon (*The Confidence Game*) advances a persuasive argument: the prosperity of nations and empires has depended on their access to water and their ability to harness water resources. The story he tells is familiar, but his emphasis on water is unique: he shows how the Nile's flood patterns determined political unity and dynastic collapses in Egypt. He suggests that the construction of China's Grand Canal made possible a sixth-century reunification that eluded the

Roman Empire. Finally, he attributes America's rise to superpower status to such 20th-century water innovations as the Panama Canal and Hoover Dam. Solomon surveys the current state of the world's water resources by region, making a compelling case that the U.S. and other leading democracies have untapped strategic advantages that will only become more significant as water becomes scarcer. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Starred Review Solomon's unprecedented, all-encompassing, and resounding inquiry into the science and politics of water is predicated on two incontrovertible yet disregarded facts: water is essential to life and civilization. After elucidating water's defining role in the planet's climate and quantifying the earth's limited supply of freshwater, Solomon describes in vivid detail the water technologies of the ancient river societies of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Assyria. On to Rome and its world-altering aqueducts and advanced sanitation, a crucial subject covered in depth when Solomon turns to nineteenth-century London, after telling the fascinating story of China's bold and transforming waterworks. By the time Solomon reaches America and its water-powered industrialization, it becomes clear that the technological marvels of one era deliver the environmental challenges of the next. The triumphs of water harnessed, therefore, give way to accounts of water polluted and squandered. Solomon shares sobering revelations about the harsh disparities between the lives of those who have water and those who don't, reports on the cruel consequences of today's water scarcities, and assesses the potential for a nightmarish impending freshwater famine. Seeking to inspire us to place a higher value on water and establish wiser approaches to its use, Solomon has created a brilliantly discursive and compelling epic of humankind and earth's most vital and precious resource. --Donna Seaman --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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