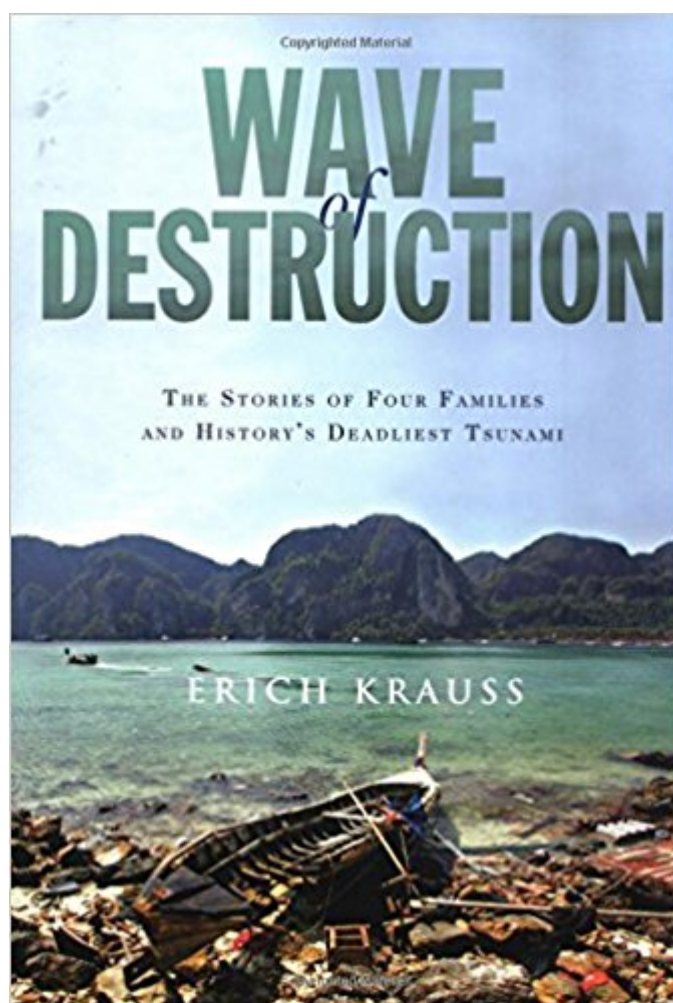


The book was found

Wave Of Destruction: The Stories Of Four Families And History's Deadliest Tsunami



Synopsis

This exquisitely written book puts a human face on the tragedy of last year's Southeast Asian tsunami through the heartbreaking and heroic stories of four who survived this cataclysmic natural disaster. Erich Krauss arrived in the Thai village of Nam Keam on a relief truck 12 days after an underwater earthquake of unimaginable magnitude erupted across the ocean floor and unleashed a tsunami that destroyed millions of lives and decimated the coastline of Southeast Asia. Wandering around the wreckage in a contamination suit, trying to deliver food and water, he found survivors desperate to tell him what their village had been like and how their lives had been changed forever. In *Wave of Destruction*, Krauss shares the pain and privation of four villagers who made it through alive only to bury their family and friends. Beginning with their fight for life as a 40-foot wave crashed down upon their community, and ending with their slow, confusing quest to rebuild after the last of the bodies had been buried, Krauss unveils the actions and thoughts of ordinary people who were forced to brave extraordinary circumstances. Much like John Hersey did in his acclaimed book *Hiroshima*, Krauss, a gifted writer and expert in Thai culture, allows the reader to experience one of the worst disasters the world has ever known — through the eyes of those who will never be able to forget.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kraus (*Wall of Flame*) provides a compelling account of four families in a Thai village devastated by the tsunami of December 26, 2004. The author first describes the harsh everyday existence of these villagers before the tsunami: a life of poverty in which children are sent off to work for abusive

bosses, of earning a hazardous living by diving for tin or stealing lobsters from Burmese traps. The villagers Krauss describes are courageous: one woman, Dang, became an activist, fighting the powerful tin-mining company trying to force her from the land. Puek, blinded in an accident, rallied to help his wife, Lek, after the death of their young son. Krauss then details the tragic tsunami and its aftermath. Trying unsuccessfully to save a baby as wave after wave comes over her, one woman knows "she would never sleep another night." A thug hired by the mining company keeps Dang from returning home to seek her family. Even the aid efforts, these survivors report, are not always blameless: Christian relief workers tell the Buddhist Wichien he must convert to Christianity to get their help, and vacationing foreigners are treated before more critically injured Thais. Passionately told, this tragic story portrays the full human cost of natural devastation. Maps not seen by PW.

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Krauss, a specialist in natural disasters and author of *Wall of Flame*, an account of the 2003 California wildfires, tells the heartrending story of the December 2004 tsunami from the perspective of four families. The approach brings a human scale to a gigantic tragedy, the deadliest tsunami in history. Krauss was among the relief workers who came to the Thai village of Nam Khem after the tsunami struck. In part 1 of the book, Krauss details the history of the village and the four families, who were struggling to survive on rice farms or in tin mines, coping with local political turmoil, facing the challenges of making a living in a developing nation, and weathering hurricanes and the occasional tsunami. In part 2, he details the fateful day as families engaged in their normal routines suddenly faced enormous waves, which washed away all that they have ever known. The latter parts of the book chronicle the search for the missing as families try to reconstitute themselves and rebuild their lives.

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This is the most stunning book I have read in a long time and I know my review cannot do it justice as there were so many elements that made this book outstanding and original. The author has captured not only an extraordinary story, but told it from the perspective of those who rarely get the opportunity to tell it - local villagers who lost most in the Tsunami. However, this is so much more than a story of a natural disaster - it is about the rotten choices facing the poor, the corruption at corporate and civic levels and the good and bad in people during times of crisis and desperation. The author holds nothing back and names corporations and individuals involved in despicable acts of greed. Similarly we read about the awful choices forced upon survivors and the guilt they will forever feel. The honesty is both humbling and at times overwhelming, as this is a very human story.

But we also meet the heroes who work tirelessly in the hospital, officials who risk their lives to save others and those who coordinate efforts to rebuild. Despite the subject matter, it is impossible not to become deeply attached to the characters and to feel their pain, suffering, and on rare occasions, their joy. The story of the Tsunami is well known, but if you want to truly feel it, then you must read this book.

The Tsunami tragedy, told by the perspective of three different people. The writer does a very decent job introducing these individuals, and then describes the moments when the waves came to shore. Many stories in one book. No doubt about it: Tsunamis are terrible acts of nature, and one best be properly elevated to avoid it. Just the thought of it sends shivers up and down my spine, for it doesn't take a crystal ball to want to wish never to be on the site where a Tsunami takes place. The book was kind of a bargain, and that added to the overall enjoyment. Once the waters receded, and these, far in the horizon long line of a wave appeared, it was time to scream and start running inland. Instead, many, tourists included, decided to venture into the wet sand where the sea had previously been in, watching fishes flapping about, some ignoring the urgency of the hotel employees voice as they asked everyone to clear the area. The number of the fatalities immense. The waves, merciless in their destructive path. Talk about Mother Nature at its most potentially dangerous! It is predictable that after the Tsunami the book deals on the aftermath of such devastating occurrence. I do not know how long exactly the waves lasted that day, for they hit different areas. Some times when I look at a little tiny island, surrounded by sea, a tiny point in a map, I can not help but to think what if I was there as a Tsunami is about to hit the mainland. The same exact feeling I got when Jaws had made everyone and their cousin, think twice before venturing too far into the big blue. Be it Tornados, Earthquakes, Tsunamis, Typhoons, etc etc, I am in awe as to what mother nature can unleash upon us. For the money, a bargain. For the content 4 solid Stars!

Great story! I'm not sure I like how the chapters break up each part of one person's story and then restart it in a chapter far away.

People should READ this book!!!

Found it to be a excellent book. The plight of these people was already hard from day to day, but then with the Tsunami, it was catastrophic. We in America don't really have a clue how blessed we

are. Erich Krauss did a great job reaching out and helping these as well as writing about them.

This book held my attention from the first page, but it was distracting how it switched back and forth every few pages to a different person's story. I couldn't remember who was who sometimes.

Great nonfiction for my high school students. They actually enjoy reading books like these because of the true subject matter.

When I bought this book I expected to learn about what it was like to live through the world's worst natural disaster. The book did just that, but it was also so much more. I learned about four Thai families who have led very different lives than those of us in the United States. The book starts off by telling how these four families came to this fishing village. Most of them came out of desperation. Each of them had lost a family member from starvation or through other horrible circumstances. They had no money, no where to live, and would work for less than a dollar a day. For most of them, it took years to get on their feet. They slaved in tin mines, stole lobster out of Burmese traps like pirates, and took jobs with abusive bosses. You watch as they slowly piece together their lives, find love and hope. Then the tsunami hits. I had pictures in my head of what that day was like, but the picture the author paints through the people in the book is nothing like I imagined. It is fifty times worse. Dang, one of the women in the book, spent days looking for the body of her daughter. Then, when she was at her lowest, a company wanting to buy a hotel on her land, threatened to take her life if she returned. Wimon, another person in the book, lost eight members in his family. While he was looking for them, he realized that no help was coming to his village (it was all at the tourist spots) and put his grief on hold in order to get help to his neighbors. Then the book goes on to describe the aftermath. This is where I was truly shocked. There were actually people who came to the area to rob money off corpses, to steal donations. Even the village leader robbed his people of the bare necessities. By this time, I had fallen in love with most of the people in the book and I wanted them to heal--but around every corner they met with another challenge. Things as simple as finding water to keep their children alive. The book doesn't end on a real happy note, but I didn't expect it to. It was a terrific read and really opened my eyes to just how many lives were forever changed in such a short period of time. I'm going to bring this book to my book club next week. I recommend it to anyone who has a heart.

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