



Water: The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource

By Marq de Villiers

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In his award-winning book **WATER**, Marq de Villiers provides an eye-opening account of how we are using, misusing, and abusing our planet's most vital resource. Encompassing ecological, historical, and cultural perspectives, de Villiers reports from hot spots as diverse as China, Las Vegas, and the Middle East, where swelling populations and unchecked development have stressed fresh water supplies nearly beyond remedy. Political struggles for control of water rage around the globe, and rampant pollution daily poses dire ecological threats. With one eye on these looming crises and the other on the history of our dependence on our planet's most precious commodity, de Villiers has crafted a powerful narrative about the lifeblood of civilizations that will be "a wake-up call for concerned citizens, environmentalists, policymakers, and water drinkers everywhere" (Publishers Weekly).

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Water is a curious thing, observed the economist Adam Smith: although it is vital to life, it costs almost nothing, whereas diamonds, which are useless for survival, cost a fortune. In *Water*, Canadian journalist de Villiers says the resource is still undervalued, but it is becoming more precious. It's not that the world is running out of water, he adds, but that "it's running out in places where it's needed most."

De Villiers examines the checkered history of humankind's management of water--which, he hastens to remind us, is not a renewable resource in many parts of the world. One of them is the Nile River region, burdened by overpopulation. Another is the Sahara, where Libyan ruler Muammar Qaddafi is pressing an ambitious, and potentially environmentally disastrous, campaign to mine deep underground aquifers to make the desert green. Another is northern China, where the damaging effects of irrigation have destroyed once-mighty rivers, and the Aral Sea of Central Asia, which was killed within a human lifetime. And still another is the American Southwest, where crops more fitting to a jungle than a dry land are nursed. De Villiers travels to all these places, reporting on what he sees and delivering news that is rarely good.

De Villiers has a keen eye for detail and a solid command of the scientific literature on which his argument is based. He's also a fine storyteller, and his wide-ranging book makes a useful companion to Marc Reisner's classic *Cadillac Desert* and other works that call our attention to a globally abused--and vital--resource. --
Gregory McNamee

From Publishers Weekly

A child dies every eight seconds from drinking contaminated water. More than half of the world's rivers are now so polluted that they pose serious health risks. One-third of Africa's people already endure conditions of water scarcity, and water supplies are in jeopardy in China, India, Japan, Spain, southern France, Australia, the southwestern U.S. and many other parts of Asia and Europe. Winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for nonfiction in Canada, de Villiers's important, compelling, highly readable report on the looming global water crisis sounds a wake-up call for concerned citizens, environmentalists, policymakers and water-drinkers everywhere. In water matters, he finds the U.S. "both profligate and caring, rapacious and thrifty," and he cites studies that warn that the Ogallala Aquifer lying beneath six Great Plains states will run dry before 2020, imperiling U.S. agriculture as well as grain exports and posing the risk of a global food crisis. For sheer travelogue pleasure, his informal survey hops from the Sea of Galilee to Victoria Falls to a Russian boat ride down the Volga, as he delves into the science, ecology, folklore, history and politics of water. The news he brings back is ominous: rapidly growing populations, ever-increasing pollution, desertification and falling water tables endanger a fragile, finite resource. Avoiding a gloom-and-doom outlook, his spirited report remains determinedly optimistic, calling for a bold combination of solutions: conservation, technological innovation, desalination of sea water, demand-reducing devices like low-flow faucets and toilets, public policy to reduce water wastefulness and international cooperation to resolve transnational disputes over water. Rights sold in seven countries; documentary rights sold. (July)
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From Library Journal

The author, whose Boer childhood was spent on the edge of the Thirstland in South Africa, has had a lifelong fascination with water and studied water issues while writing his previous books on exploration, history, politics, and travel. His latest, winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for Nonfiction in Canada, depicts the current extent of world water scarcity, engineering efforts, and national and international water

policies and briefly provides guidelines for dealing with the coming world water crisis. Like Paul Simon's Tapped Out: The World Crisis in Water and What We Can Do About It (LJ 1/99), this book pays special attention to Middle Eastern water issues and to those affecting the United States and its neighbors. However, De Villiers's very readable work provides more in-depth treatment of the hydrology, natural history, and available technologies, while Simon provides more detailed and thoughtful recommendations for preventing and dealing with the anticipated water scarcities. De Villiers concludes somewhat cursorily with a chapter on solutions and manifestos. Still, his entertaining yet thought-provoking narrative style will make this book a good choice for serious summer reading. Highly recommended for public and academic libraries."Margaret Aycock, Gulf Coast Environmental Lib., Beaumont, TX
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Holt:

Book is usually written, printed, or created for everything. You can recognize everything you want by a publication. Book has a different type. As you may know that book is important thing to bring us around the world. Next to that you can your reading talent was fluently. A book Water: The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource will make you to possibly be smarter. You can feel considerably more confidence if you can know about everything. But some of you think this open or reading the book make you bored. It is not make you fun. Why they are often thought like that? Have you searching for best book or ideal book with you?

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Sara Love:

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