

A Dangerous World

Mark Raven

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There is no doubt that we live in precarious times. Pick up the newspaper or turn on the television, and at least half a dozen news stories will be about man-made tragedies or natural disasters that cause the deaths of thousands. *A Dangerous World* is Dr. Mark Raven's how-to book that informs readers about the various types of disasters that may occur and encourages them to prepare for these events so "they may survive and suffer a minimum of hardship."

A Dangerous World is divided into two parts. The first part is a broad examination of all the types of tragedies and disasters that can occur, ranging from man-made disasters—including terrorism, nuclear-chemical/biological attacks, nuclear power plant emergencies, environmental contamination, and warfare—to natural disasters such as famine, epidemics, floods, forest fires, hurricanes, landslides, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, winter storms, and heat waves.

Raven offers an interesting but brief history of overpopulation—one of the precursors of man-made disasters—and includes a succinct discussion about Thomas Malthus, the English economist and demographer. The academic discussions are what makes *A Dangerous World* shine, but unfortunately it falters when Raven breaks down every known disaster and offers a very brief danger factor overview for each subsection.

Part two focuses entirely on Raven's Vulnerability Index. This section, which includes a questionnaire, helps readers determine how vulnerable they are to death or injury during a disaster. The author provides guidelines on creating a preparedness program with a detailed list of precautions that range from packing an emergency backpack with enough food, water, and other necessities to having basic firearms training. Some readers might be put off by the suggestion of keeping a gun, but Raven argues that having the means to defend oneself from terrorists, predators, and others is critical to one's survival during terrorist attacks and civil disorder. Additionally, a gun can be used to procure meat by shooting birds, rabbits, or other animals.

Some readers might find *A Dangerous World* alarmist, but it does provide excellent information that everyone should know on how to prepare for any kind of emergency. However, the book would be better if its focus was more specific to either man-made or natural disasters instead of the gamut that is broadly examined here.

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