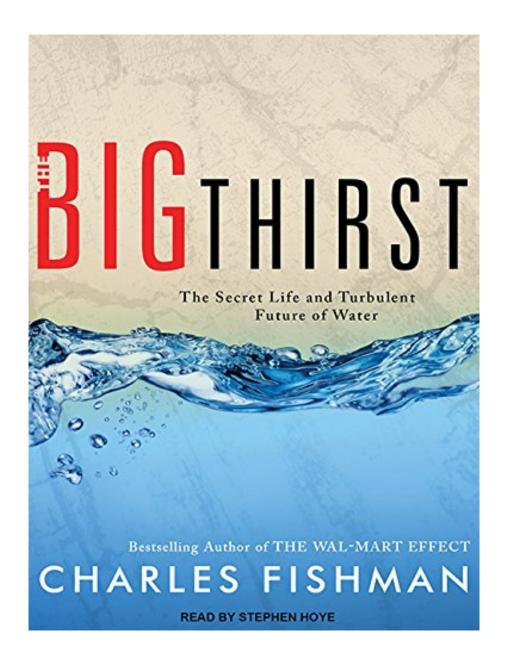


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Review

"A timely warning about the dwindling global water supply." ---Kirkus

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. For the past 100 years, the developed world has enjoyed a cheap, safe, and abundant water supply, but Fishman (The Wal-Mart Effect) warns that everything about water is about to change—how we use it, how we share it, and how we value it. In an engrossing, globe-trotting narrative, he introduces the reader to people already grappling with water shortages—Patricia Mulroy, Las Vegas's no-nonsense water czar known as the best water manager in the country; the inhabitants of a neighborhood in Delhi who line up twice a day for water they must carry home. Since water cannot be created or destroyed, the challenge we face is not so much about water scarcity but rather how we can use it more equitably and protect it—the meaning of "clean" has a wholly new connotation in an era when we can pollute water in new ways with residues of medicine and plastics. Fishman notes that some of the most innovative ways of conserving water are coming from big businesses, including IBM, which has cut the water use in its microchip production 27% in the past eight years. A comprehensive, remarkably readable panorama of our dependence on—and responsibilities to—a priceless resource. (Apr.)

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About the Author

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The water coming out of your tap is four billion years old and might have been slurped by a Tyrannosaurus Rex. We will always have exactly as much water on Earth as we have ever had. Water cannot be destroyed, and it can always be made clean enough for drinking again. In fact, water can be made so clean that it actually becomes toxic. As Charles Fishman brings vibrantly to life in this delightful narrative excursion, water runs our world in a host of awe-inspiring ways, which is both the promise and the peril of our unexplored connections to it. Taking listeners from the wet moons of Saturn to the water-obsessed hotels of Las Vegas, and from a rice farm in the Australian outback to a glimpse into giant vats of soup at Campbell's largest factory, he reveals that our relationship to water is conflicted and irrational, neglected and mismanaged. Whether we will face a water scarcity crisis has little to do with water and everything to do with how we think about water-how we use it, connect with it, and understand it. Portraying and explaining both the dangers-in 2008, Atlanta came just ninety days from running completely out of drinking water-and the opportunities, such as advances in rainwater harvesting and businesses that are making huge breakthroughs in water productivity, The Big Thirst will forever change the way we think about water, our crucial relationship to it, and the creativity we can bring to ensuring we always have plenty of it.

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Most helpful customer reviews

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Everything you never knew or thought about water

By Amazon Customer

I came to The Big Thirst as someone who was already pretty water conscious (some think obsessed), and a definite water conservationist. But, wow, all that I had never thought about water Charles Fishman has contained in this book in a thought provoking, entertaining and instructive way. This is in no diatribe designed to make us feel guilty about our water ignorance (although Fishman does rant on Arlen Specter at one point near the end, and rightfully so), but rather a series of stories crafted to heighten our awareness, in an attempt as the author says "to change our relationship to water".

From Australia to India, down the strip of Las Vegas, around the Gulf Coast of Texas to Vermont and elsewhere Fishman takes the reader on a tour of man's challenges and successes in managing our water usage, distribution systems as well as the effect on mankind, the economy and lastly gets the reader thinking about where the next million or billion gallons is coming from.

This book is a treat for anyone who has stopped for even one minute to wonder where our water really flows from and if someday it might not.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Easy to read

By A Courtenay

Top class research on a very - how should we put it - fluid subject. Easy to read, digestible and well thought out - if just a little repetitive at times. Otherwise a brilliant book for anyone worried about the global outlook for this precious resource.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Everything You Need to Know About Water and Why It's So Important

By Frederick S. Goethel

Water, as everyone knows, is the basis of life as we know it. We simply cannot survive without it. That makes water a very valuable resource and one that people have argued and fought over for too many years to recall.

In this book, the author takes us on a journey about the history of water, why it is where it is, why cities have sprung up where they have, how water has been turned into a multibillion dollar business and what is happening in the water world currently. It is almost all encompassing on the subject of water and is fascinating in the process.

One of the first points made by the author is that the water we drink today is the same water that has been on the planet for ions. That water was formed during a period in the earth's creation and the amount has not changed since then. As a result, the water we drink today was, at one time, the toilet water of ancient civilizations and was where dinosaurs drank, bathed and went to the bathroom. While this may be a disturbing thought, it has been that way for ions and provides us with a method for reusing today's water to become tomorrow's water.

Along the journey, the author points out that due to climate change, water that was easily obtainable in the past maybe be moving to newer locations. Cities that were thought to have safe supplies are in the process of going dry. Las Vegas, as one example, is reusing and capturing every possible drop of water since the supply at Lake Mead is dwindling by the day. Another example used by the author is the drought that has overtaken the City of Atlanta and how precarious the supply to that city is. He also discusses why this doesn't have to be.

This is only a small part of the discussion of water the author brings to the table. He goes around the world to explore water issues in other countries and why they have occurred and what can be done to fix the problems.

I highly recommend this book to all. As the water we take for granted becomes harder to supply, we will need to develop new strategies for handling water supply to citizens and corporations. This book is the beginning step in a new way to think about

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