

Surviving Armageddon



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The Asian tsunami of December 2004 killed a third of a million people, and made the Earth wobble slightly on its axis. The world was shocked. Yet we know that such massive catastrophes have happened many times before in Earth's history. Could a natural disaster of this magnitude happen again? Certainly. It is only a question of when. And earthquakes and volcanic eruptions aren't the only natural hazards that face us: we have only just begun to monitor the rocks in space that might be coming our way, and some of us have yet to wake up to the dangers of global warming. Can we survive? Yes, replies Bill McGuire. In "Surviving Armageddon" he guides us through the latest approaches being researched to prevent global catastrophes, or at least to minimise their effect. Solutions range from the bizarre - filling the stratosphere with millions of tiny reflective balloons to block the sun's rays, to the realistic - the lubrication of earthquake faults, the capture and storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide, and rockets to nudge asteroids off collision courses with the Earth. Bill McGuire argues that we can make a genuine bid to get through what nature throws at us - providing we take the risks seriously.

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