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The Great American Dust Bowl



Synopsis

A speck of dust is a tiny thing. In fact, five of them could fit into the period at the end of this sentence. On a clear, warm Sunday, April 14, 1935, a wild wind whipped up millions upon millions of these specks of dust to form a duster—a savage storm—on America's high southern plains. The sky turned black, sand-filled winds scoured the paint off houses and cars, trains derailed, and electricity coursed through the air. Sand and dirt fell like snow—people got lost in the gloom and suffocated . . . and that was just the beginning. Don Brown brings the Dirty Thirties to life with kinetic, highly saturated, and lively artwork in this graphic novel of one of America's most catastrophic natural events: the Dust Bowl.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

On April 14, 1935, temperatures dropped fifty degrees and sixty-five-miles-an-hour winds lifted arid and barren soil from Wyoming and the Dakotas, and then continued its destructive southern course to displace tons of dirt throughout much of the American Plains. Better known as Black Sunday, this storm has been earmarked as the worst of the Dirty Thirties, a decade of dust storms in the 1930s. During this time period, there were almost 200 dust storms that plagued this region. The main concentration of these storms settled in a rough circle of land, known as the Dust Bowl, which

consisted of sections of New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas. However out of all these storms, none had produced such vast physical and environmental damage like Black Sunday, and it took this storm to send a wake up call to the U.S. government. To understand how and why these dust storms evolved, Brown takes readers back millions of years from the geological developments of the Rocky Mountain range and the American Plains and what the land was like when Native Americans freely roamed the continent, to Brown's uncomplicated explanation of the adverse effects U.S. history had on the growth and progress of agriculture. By the time drought inundated the American Plains in 1931, particularly the Dust Bowl region, Brown aptly states that, "the drought tortured the land, evaporating the moisture in the soil when the wind blew, dust storms followed." These dust storms led to harsh temperatures and the encroachment of bugs and jackrabbits. On May 9, 1934, winds whipped up again, and this time from Montana and the Dakotas, taking with it 350 million tons of dirt, which created gritty clouds that reached fifteen thousand feet.

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