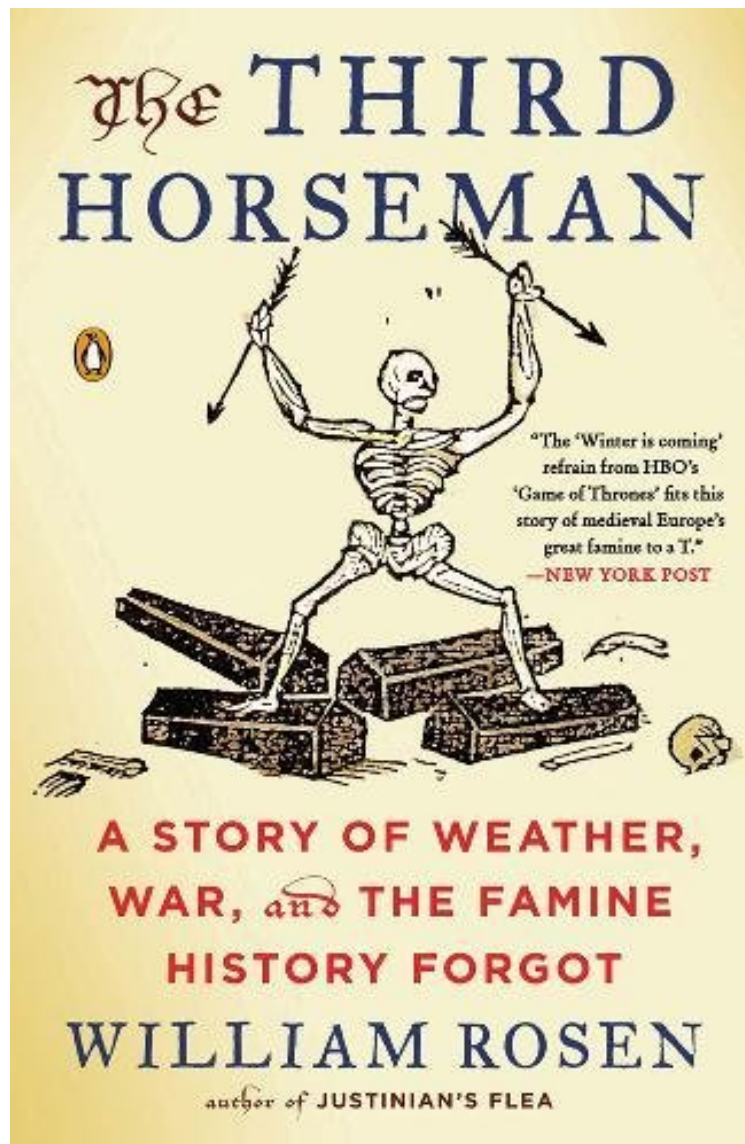


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The Third Horseman: A Story of Weather, War, and the Famine History Forgot

William Rosen

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#422428 in Books William Rosen 2015-04-28 2015-04-28 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.42 x .87 x 5.471, 1.00 #File Name: 0143127144320 pages The Third Horseman A Story of Weather War and the Famine History Forgot | File size: 25.Mb

William Rosen : The Third Horseman: A Story of Weather, War, and the Famine History Forgot before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Third Horseman: A Story of Weather, War, and the Famine History Forgot:

71 of 75 people found the following review helpful. Misleading title
By George Hariton
Misleading title
This book is mostly a history of the struggles between Kings Edward I and Edward II of England, Scottish leaders William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, and Phillip and Charles of France. There is lots on the intrigues, and battles, and changing alliances. It's a good, fun read if you want a history of English royalty in the early fourteenth century. But the book has very little to do with climate change and famine. Yes, these are discussed here and there, but mostly as background to the royal disputes of the time. When they are discussed, the explanations are very terse, and did not help me -- I had to turn elsewhere for more detail. If I were cynical, I would guess that the bits on climate and famine were added later, so as to dress up the book and make it more attractive given today's concerns. That said, the book is well written and a very easy read. I would give it four stars as a traditional history of Kings Edward I and II. As a discussion of climate change and famine seven hundred years ago, I would give it one star. Over all, given the deceptive title, I'll go with two stars.

11 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Bait and switch: the famine is a sideshow in the book, almost an afterthought
By newnewyorker
I'm really surprised by the rave reviews about this book. Think of the stated subject of this book, Climate Change and the Great Famine of the 14th Century, as a delicious side dish, in which the author seldom and then fleetingly indulges in. The rest of the book, the main dish, however, is about geopolitics and mainly the English-Scottish war. All you have to do is count the references to the Battle of Bannockburn: it's mentioned in intricate detail (including the battle order) 28 times in the Kindle version. The very complicated relationship between Isabella of France (108 mentions) and Edward II is given far more weight (and pages) than famine. The author sometimes go to his tasty side (the famine) but mainly focuses on the English-Scottish border. How he tried squaring this with the book's title is a mystery, but as a reader you are sometimes shown the sleight of hand. When trying to explain the Avignon papacy, the author simply says in one amazing paragraph in page 166 that it would be a mistake to include it as part of the climate change narrative, but also a mistake not to include it. And based on that logic, off it goes to the races. This is not to put off the interesting medieval geopolitics told in the book (the aforementioned Scottish-English struggle, the Holy Roman Empire and the birth of Switzerland, the Hanseatic League, etc...) but very little about the famine.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good
By Kindle Customer
Print is big enough to see well.

The incredible true story of how a cycle of rain, cold, disease, and warfare created the worst famine in European history years before the Black Death, from the author of *Justinian's Flea* and the forthcoming *Miracle Cure*
In May 1315, it started to rain. For the seven disastrous years that followed, Europeans would be visited by a series of curses unseen since the third book of Exodus: floods, ice, failures of crops and cattle, and epidemics not just of disease, but of pike, sword, and spear. All told, six million lives one-eighth of Europe's total population would be lost. With a category-defying knowledge of science and history, William Rosen tells the stunning story of the oft-overlooked Great Famine with wit and drama and demonstrates what it all means for today's discussions of climate change.

A kink in Europe's climate during the fourteenth century indirectly triggered a seven-year cataclysm that left six million dead, William Rosen reveals in this rich interweaving of agronomy, meteorology, economics and history.... Rosen deftly delineates the backstory and the perfect storm of heavy rains, hard winters, livestock epidemics, and war leading to the catastrophe. --Nature Rosen... delights in the minutiae of history, down to the most fascinating footnotes... Engrossing.... A work that glows from the author's relish for his subject. --Kirkus Rosen (*The Most Powerful Idea in the World*) argues persuasively that natural disasters are most catastrophic when humankind's actions give them a push. The depredations committed in battle by Englishmen and Scots were augmented by years of bad weather: the result was that people died in droves. The interactions Rosen describes have been studied but are seldom incorporated into popular history, and the author never overreaches in his conclusions, providing a well-grounded chronicle.... This book will appeal foremost to history lovers, but it should also interest anyone who enjoys a well-documented story. --Library Journal William Rosen is a good enough writer to hold interest and maintain the fraught relations between nature and politics as a running theme. He ends *The Third Horseman* with a stark observation: in some ways, global ecology is more precarious nowadays than it was in the 1300s. Milwaukee Express Rosen is a terrific storyteller and engaging stylist; his vigorous recaps of famous battles and sketches of various colorful characters will entertain readers not unduly preoccupied by thematic rigor.... Rosen's principal goal, however, is not to horrify us, but to make us think.... While vividly re-creating a bygone civilization, he invites us to look beyond our significant but ultimately superficial differences and recognize that we too live in fragile equilibrium with the natural world whose resources we recklessly exploit, and that like our medieval forebears we may well be vulnerable to a sudden shift in the weather. The Daily Beast Rosen is a natural and playful storyteller. The New York Times Rosen has a facility for the telling anecdote and the quirky aside. Bill Gates [Rosen] writes what might be called champagne prose: it slips down quick and easy but carries a punch. The Telegraph (UK) About the Author William Rosen, author of *Miracle Cure*, *The Third Horseman*, *Justinian's Flea*, and *The Most Powerful Idea in the World*, was an editor and a publisher at Macmillan, Simon Schuster, and the Free Press for nearly twenty-five years.