



# The Last Day: Wrath, Ruin, and Reason in the Great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755

*Nicholas Shrady*

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The Lisbon Earthquake of 1755 was no run-of-the-mill misfortune—it was a watershed moment that shook the pillars of an inveterate social order and sent reverberations throughout the Western world. Earth, water, wind, and fire all conspired to produce a hellish catastrophe that lasted for a full five days and left Lisbon thoroughly annihilated. Nicholas Shrady's unique account of this first modern disaster and its aftereffects successfully articulates the outcome of the earthquake—the eighteenth-century equivalent of a mass media frenzy giving rise to a host of other fascinating developments, such as disaster preparedness, landmark social reform, urban planning, and the birth of seismology.



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