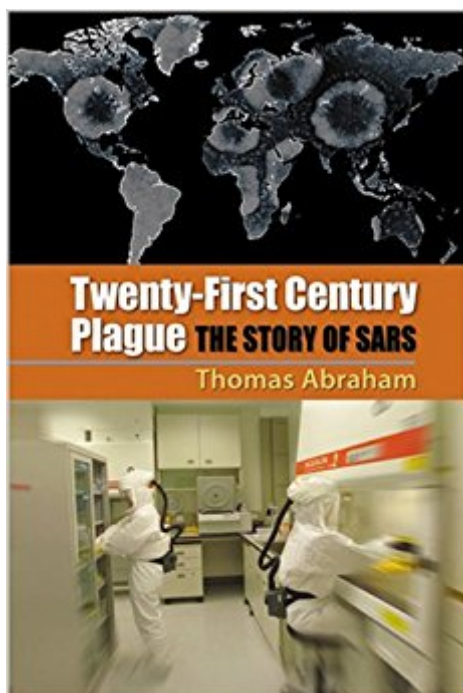


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# Twenty-First Century Plague: The Story Of SARS



## Synopsis

In the autumn of 2002 in southern China, a previously unknown virus jumped the species barrier from animal to man and sparked the first global epidemic of the new century. The disease sped along the air routes of a globalized world, spreading within months to thirty-one countries on every continent. Before it was reined in by a remarkable international scientific effort, the SARS virus demonstrated human society's vulnerability to disease. New infectious diseases like SARS have been emerging at an alarming rate over the past few decades. There is every indication the world will continue to face new viral diseases, some of them much more lethal and contagious than SARS. This book traces the emergence of SARS, in the process examining the global politics and economics of disease. It provides the first behind-the-scenes account of how the global battle against SARS was fought and the incredible research efforts that finally led to identification of the virus. Drawing on unprecedented access to scientists, doctors, and recovered patients, Thomas Abraham recounts the pressures and heartbreaks suffered by brave researchers who battled the clock to solve the SARS puzzle—even as colleagues and friends succumbed to the disease. "The caller at the other end of the phone was from the Manila office of the World Health Organization (WHO), and his message was alarming. Flying over the Atlantic Ocean on a Singapore Airlines flight was a critically ill man who had to be hospitalized in an isolation ward as soon as possible... There were over 300 passengers on the jet, which was bound for Singapore via Frankfurt, and unless the man was taken off the plane, they were all in danger." "On March 15, while David Heymann and his team were toiling away on their global travel alert in Geneva, a 72-year-old man boarded Air China flight 112 from Hong Kong to Beijing... Not only was he sick, he also happened to be a super-spreader of the disease. From his seat, 14E, he infected 21 other passengers and crew members."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

" Twenty-First Century Plague describes many of the people, events, political settings, and other contributing factors in a fascinating view of the story behind the story of the outbreak."

(Science)"Abraham gives us an excellent and dispassionate account of the cultural and political background to the cover-up and the unfortunate consequences." (Nature)"The book is richly filled with facts, and they are conveyed in a captivating manner. It is as impressive as the film Outbreak. " (New England Journal of Medicine)"Abraham offers insights into the 'dos and don'ts' of managing a public health crisis and provides key learning points." (JAMA)"A ringside account of the world's recent encounter with the emerging infectious disease SARS. Engagingly written by an accomplished journalist." (American Scientist)"The rush to contain and unmask the agent responsible... had more plot twists than anything Robert Ludlum ever wrote." (The Lancet)"The book provides an important summary of many aspects of the global experience with a new disease and discusses important lessons learned from the SARS response." (Journal of Clinical Investigation)"In this detailed report by Abraham, the inability of health care systems to cope with such newly emergent infections is clear." (Choice)"A beautifully written book." (Medical History)"Timely and well-presented." (Debra Rose Wilson and William A. Wilson Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved)

Thomas Abraham is one of Asia's most experienced international journalists with a twenty-five-year career reporting from locations as varied as Sri Lanka, Geneva, and London. He has also worked at the United Nations in Geneva and been a commentator for BBC news programs. A former editor of the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong, he is currently on the faculty of the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at the University of Hong Kong.

At 165 pages, the book is concise and to the point, laying out the human story of the SARS epidemic directly and forcefully. The book is organized temporally, and geographically, starting with the source of the infection in Guangdong Province, China, and following up with a description of events in Hong Kong. The book describes well the milestone events of the epidemic, particularly the

events in Hong Kong: the index patient, the Metropole Hotel, the toll on health care workers at the Prince of Wales Hospital, and the investigation of the spread of the disease at the Amoy Gardens apartments. The book describes the global spread of the disease and the decisive actions of the WHO that, in the end, may have saved many lives by getting information and warnings to the public, and organizing a large research team to find the organism. The deleterious actions of the Chinese government are described in an unbiased fashion. The race to find the organism is described in a compelling manner. The best recommendation I have for the book, however, is that it is short, informative, and easy to read. The book is interesting, and takes only two or three hours to read.

The author is so boring I literally fell asleep while reading the 3rd page of this book!! I thought it would be filled with interesting insights into this killer 21st century disease, but he spends way too much time blaming everyone on the planet but the SARS pathogen itself for the evolution of this plague. He writes with far too much intellectual bravado and machoism for my taste. There is very little substance in this book; the author may know something about science but his writing does not reflect this at all!

My dad wrote this and I read it i think its great its full of detail and intrestng tidbits even though this is adult lit i still loved itP.S my dad really did write this

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