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# Chernobyl 01:23:40: The Incredible True Story Of The World's Worst Nuclear Disaster



## Synopsis

At 01:23:40 on April 26th 1986, Alexander Akimov pressed the emergency shutdown button at Chernobyl's fourth nuclear reactor. It was an act that forced the permanent evacuation of a city, killed thousands and crippled the Soviet Union. The event spawned decades of conflicting, exaggerated and inaccurate stories. This book, the result of five years of research, presents an accessible but comprehensive account of what really happened. From the desperate fight to prevent a burning reactor core from irradiating eastern Europe, to the self-sacrifice of the heroic men who entered fields of radiation so strong that machines wouldn't work, to the surprising truth about the legendary 'Chernobyl divers', all the way through to the USSR's final show-trial. The historical narrative is interwoven with a story of the author's own spontaneous journey to Ukraine's still-abandoned city of Pripyat and the wider Chernobyl Zone. Complete with over 45 pages of photographs of modern-day Pripyat and technical diagrams of the power station, Chernobyl 01:23:40 is a fascinating new account of the world's worst nuclear disaster. edition revised to remove typos.

## Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Andrew Leatherbarrow; 1 edition (April 16, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0993597505

ISBN-13: 978-0993597503

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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## Customer Reviews

I, like the author, have found myself fascinated by the Chernobyl disaster, but had a hard time learning about it. Many of the other books out there are either dry, technical reads awe-inspiring photo collections without much information on the actual event. Mr. Leatherbarrow has put together a great book- it's clearly written, easily approachable and well-researched. It's tone is almost conversational; something I don't usually care for, but thought it works well in this instance. If you're

looking for something deeper than the Charles River Edition's brief overview of the Chernobyl event, but want something less technical than Medvedev's Chernobyl Notebook, this book is perfect. I was a bit surprised that more books weren't coming out for the 30th anniversary of Chernobyl, but this is really all you need! And PS for folks like me who like pictures- there are some black and white photos in the book.

After the author did an AMA (ask me anything) on Reddit, I purchased this book for my 22 year old son, who is very interested in the Cold War era and the Soviet Union. He found this book to be incredibly interesting and informative. So much so that he couldn't put the book down. He said that the pictures were great. He highly recommends this book if you're interested in Chernobyl and the Soviet Union.

I've been interested in Chernobyl for many years and finally decided to purchase a book to read about it. This is a truthfully written, well researched book written by someone not from the area where the disaster occurred but someone who had been moved enough by the topic to write something honest after visiting and researching and reading about the event for many years. What makes this more believable than many accounts of the disaster is that the author stated most early accounts shortly after the disaster and for many years thereafter were untrue and inaccurate. Most of disturbing was the Soviet attitude regarding what should have been the safety of it's citizens. Citizen safety was not a priority to the Soviet government even prior to Chernobyl. There were other little known emergency events in other nuclear plant locations in the then USSR. What was stated to the public shortly after the disaster and even years later in documents after the trial of those in charge at Chernobyl during the event were classified to the residents of the Ukraine and surrounding area. The citizens were fed whatever the government chose to tell them, and it was not the truth about what really happened. This is a great book for someone interested in reading about Chernobyl. It is technical in a few places but still easily understood. Very well written and I suspect, more trustworthy than other earlier publications on the same subject.

A self-published amateur effort that does a better, more readable, job on the disaster than many professional accounts I have read. Yes, for technical information, do make use of other sources, but understand that those sources will have little of the human drama a non-technical reader might be looking for. I was doubtful of the usefulness of such a book, given that Mr. Leatherbarrow is not a scientist or engineer and does not speak Russian. I decided to give his book a read based on the

recommendation of another self-published person, a retired engineer (caveat: in addition to being professionally published, I, too, am a self-published author). Making use of nearly all the translated Russian accounts, both personal and technical, he has succeeded. He makes the functioning of the reactor and its disaster very clear, and parallels the Chernobyl experience with Fukushima and Three Mile Island. His brief history of the development of the reactor gives a very good account of the decisions that set the wheels in motion that moved into tragedy. The story of the aftermath, which is still being written, is made more real by his own visit to Chernobyl and the surrounding area. If you can only get one book on the disaster, then make it this one.

This gripping, well-researched book deftly takes us from the beginnings of humanity's toying with nuclear power all the way through to the Chernobyl disaster in only a few pages, quickly and effectively describing how the Soviet Union's across-the-board lack of interest in safety led more or less inexorably to the release of incredible amounts of radiation into the atmosphere and countless unnecessary deaths. Highly recommended for anyone with even a passing interest in nuclear power.

I have read many books about Chernobyl, from dry scientific texts to often silly fictional accounts of its aftermath, yet this young author has done the best job of all of them, offering a simple-yet-accurate description of how Chernobyl's RBMK reactors worked and, ultimately, how one of them critically failed. But there is much more here than a factual account of what happened 30 years ago at the V. I. Lenin power plant. Mr. Leatherbarrow shares his deepest feelings about what he encounters on his all-too-short journey to Pripyat and the plant itself. His descriptions are excellent and without pretense, and, above all, his narrative never gets bogged down. His unpretentious and even-handed treatment of the main players in this oft told story is very refreshing. And I was deeply moved by his emotional responses to what he saw and experienced; I think that I too would have wept as I left this compelling place behind. In the final analysis, Andrew put together a superbly told story that turned out to be of sufficient length to ensure that the reader "got it" without going on and on with repetitious and unnecessary details. Simply put, it was an excellent read, and I found it hard to believe that this was his first book. I certainly hope it won't be his last.

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