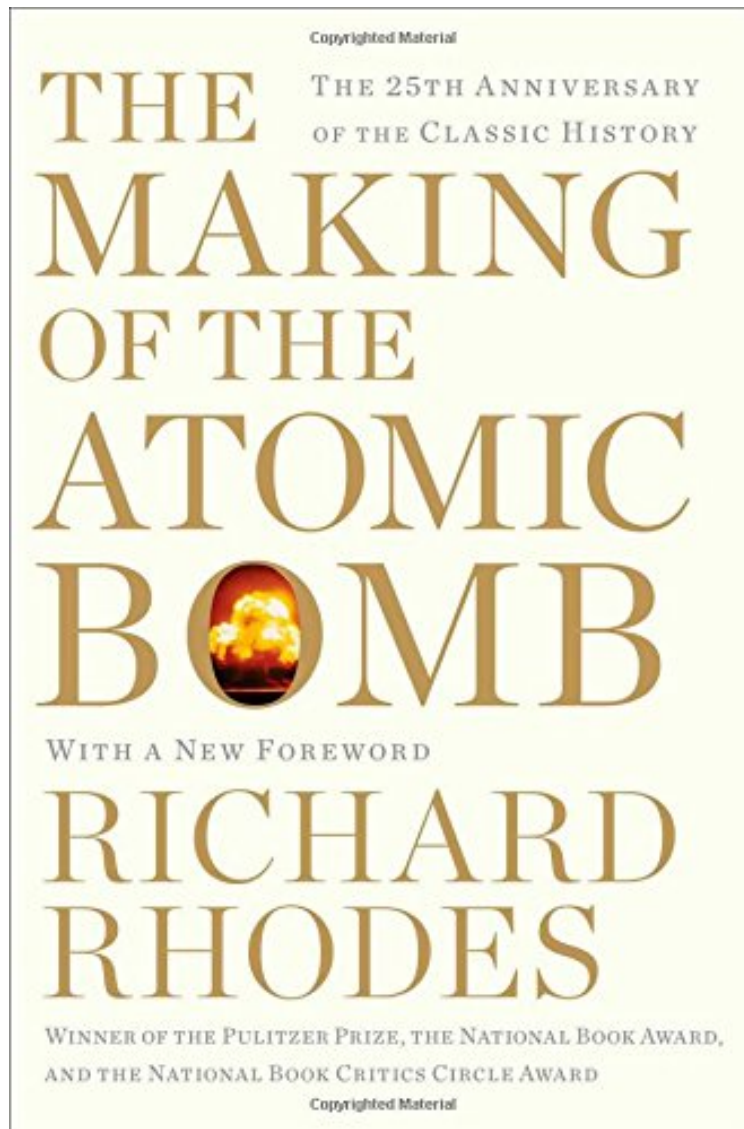


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The Making of the Atomic Bomb: 25th Anniversary Edition

Richard Rhodes

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Richard Rhodes : The Making of the Atomic Bomb: 25th Anniversary Edition before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Making of the Atomic Bomb: 25th Anniversary Edition:

53 of 54 people found the following review helpful. Flawed MasterpieceBy Daryl CarpenterA quick note for anyone deciding which edition to buy: The "25th Anniversary Edition" removes the book's final chapter completely. This feels utterly disingenuous and revisionist to me. Rhodes' "Dark Sun" covers the same ground as the omitted epilogue, but

this edition ends so abruptly I'm amazed there wasn't an advertisement for the other books in his "nuclear anthology" on the final page. The Kindle version is somewhat flawed; there are quite a few typos and dropped punctuation, and it's not always obvious when direct quotations begin and end. I'd recommend buying one of the older physical editions if you want to read this book as it was meant to be read. "The Making of the Atomic Bomb" is a richly detailed epic, a table-shaking beast of a book that frequently sent me on evening walks to ponder and process the last few chapters I'd read. This is more than just a book about Hiroshima, Oppenheimer, and the Manhattan Project. We get an in-depth look at the early history of atomic physics, the personalities of key scientists, politicians, and military leaders, the complex political and military issues surrounding the bomb's development and use, and the historic and social events that shaped its creation. This is NOT a beach read - better put aside two weeks and plenty of undivided attention before tackling it! I first read this book back in 2001, and I was totally enthralled by it, devouring it from cover to cover in four days. Having read it four times since then, some cracks have formed in its facade. Namely, it feels like two books grafted together - a decent one on the early history of nuclear physics, and an enthralling one on the actual making of the atomic bomb. The first 250 pages, while perhaps essential, tend to get bogged down by Rhodes' occasionally self-indulgent scene-setting (do we really need to know what shape the windows were?) and rather heavy philosophizing. Things pick up immensely with the actual discovery that the Uranium atom can be split, but I can see why some people give up early on. The "making of" is told with a remarkable lack of sensationalizing and sermonizing, and as horrific as the accounts of the actual bombings are, Rhodes is remarkably nonjudgmental about the bomb's use. People looking for pointed criticisms or historical revisionism will probably be disappointed; although Rhodes clearly abhors war, he seems to view Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the inevitable climax of an increasingly savage conflict against an enemy which refused to surrender. Considering how emotionally charged most books on nuclear weapons are, I actually admired Rhodes' somewhat pragmatic approach. Then again, it might leave others cold and confused. Although it's not the flawless masterpiece I once held it as, "The Making of the Atomic Bomb" is still a pretty solid tome. It's big, multi-layered, thought-provoking, darkly funny, disturbing, richly detailed, philosophical... and just a tad over-rated. The first third is somewhat rough going, and, in retrospect, could have used some careful editing. The last 500 pages, however, are among the best history writing I've ever read. If the early history of nuclear weapons and nuclear physics fascinates you, give it a shot. You just need some patience going in.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very Well Researched, Somewhat Overwritten By S. Fox If you are up on physics you will love this book. If not, there is enough to keep you going while bypassing the nuts and bolts. This is a long book and is technical enough that you will take your time reading it. I liked the physics because it gave me a better understanding of the process and experiments necessary to make the bomb work. There is way too much personal background on the players and alot of redundancy and I ended up skipping much of that. Skipping didn't take away from the story of the bomb, so the amount there was extraneous. The book ends with the bomb explosions over Japan. After following the story for about 750 pages I would have liked to read more than the wham, bam, thank you mam that the ending was. More than limited coverage of Oak Ridge would have added much to the story but there are other books on Oak Ridge that are pretty interesting. If you want to read more on Oak Ridge find something that starts with the muddy fields pre-construction and goes on from there. I would have liked to read something about the espionage that occurred but that wasn't covered. Still, this was an extremely well researched book and I recommend it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Making of the Atomic Bomb Richard Rhodes Title ...By Samuel M. Feldman The Making of the Atomic Bomb Richard Rhodes Title: Scientifically Accurate Overly Wordy Richard Rhodes tome deserves its acclaim as the most comprehensive history of the development of the atomic bomb. As a scientist with advanced degrees in quantum physics I can attest to its scientific accuracy. Mr. Rhodess has a gift for explaining complex technical details to a lay audience. I found his lengthily discourse on the lives of scientists enlightening but non-scientists might find these sidebars distracting. There is one question on the development of atomic weapons that has haunted me. What would have happened if Otto Hahns paper on the discovery of nuclear fission had not been published six months before the Nazi invasion of Poland? Would the major powers have invested so much talent and money on the urgent development of an atomic bomb? It is unlikely this question will ever be answered

Twenty-five years after its initial publication, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* remains the definitive history of nuclear weapons and the Manhattan Project. From the turn-of-the-century discovery of nuclear energy to the dropping of the first bombs on Japan, Richard Rhodes's Pulitzer Prize-winning book details the science, the people, and the socio-political realities that led to the development of the atomic bomb. This sweeping account begins in the 19th century, with the discovery of nuclear fission, and continues to World War Two and the Americans race to beat Hitler's Nazis. That competition launched the Manhattan Project and the nearly overnight construction of a vast military-industrial complex that culminated in the fateful dropping of the first bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Reading like a character-driven suspense novel, the book introduces the players in this saga of physics, politics, and human psychology from FDR and Einstein to the visionary scientists who pioneered quantum theory and the application of thermonuclear fission, including Planck, Szilard, Bohr, Oppenheimer, Fermi, Teller, Meitner, von Neumann, and Lawrence. From nuclear powers earliest foreshadowing in the work of H.G. Wells to the bright glare of Trinity at

Alamogordo and the arms race of the Cold War, this dread invention forever changed the course of human history, and *The Making of The Atomic Bomb* provides a panoramic backdrop for that story. Richard Rhodes' ability to craft compelling biographical portraits is matched only by his rigorous scholarship. Told in rich human, political, and scientific detail that any reader can follow, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* is a thought-provoking and masterful work.

.com If the first 270 pages of this book had been published separately, they would have made up a lively, insightful, beautifully written history of theoretical physics and the men and women who plumbed the mysteries of the atom. Along with the following 600 pages, they become a sweeping epic, filled with terror and pity, of the ultimate scientific quest: the development of the ultimate weapon. Rhodes is a peerless explainer of difficult concepts; he is even better at chronicling the personalities who made the discoveries that led to the Bomb. Niels Bohr dominates the first half of the book as J. Robert Oppenheimer does the second; both men were gifted philosophers of science as well as brilliant physicists. The central irony of this book, which won a National Book Critics Circle Award, is that the greatest minds of the century contributed to the greatest destructive force in history. From Publishers Weekly The breadth and scope of this gripping narrative is almost as impressive as the story itself. Rhodes (*Looking for America* describes the theoretical origins of the bomb, the lab experiments, the building of the prototype, the test at Alamogordo, the training of the B-29 crews assigned to deliver the first two combat bombs and the missions themselves. There's much more. Rhodes, gifted with sharp psychological insight and a novelist's ability to convey character, reveals the personalities and emotional dynamics among Niels Bohr, Leo Szilard, Enrico Fermi, Edward Teller, Ernest Lawrence, Robert Oppenheimer, General Leslie Groves, Colonel Paul Tibbets and others responsible for conceiving, engineering, testing and ultimately dropping the apocalyptic devices on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In addition he describes the struggle in Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan to make the first bomb, as well as the political and military events that led inexorably to the destruction of the Japanese cities. This is the most comprehensive and authoritative book on the subject to date. Illustrations. BOMC alternate. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This is a massive work dealing with the history of the people and the science that preceded and then made possible the development of the atomic bomb. Heavily biographical, the book provides portraits of the many players from Szilard and Einstein to Oppenheimer. Rhodes includes detailed explanations of the various scientific discoveries beginning in the late 19th century which culminated in the Manhattan Project. The book is heavily documented and includes a 13-page bibliography. This is a definitive work, well written, with a gripping story. It is not an easy book to read, but it is well worth the effort. BOMC alternate. Hilary D. Burton, Lawrence Livermore National Lab., Livermore, Cal. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc.