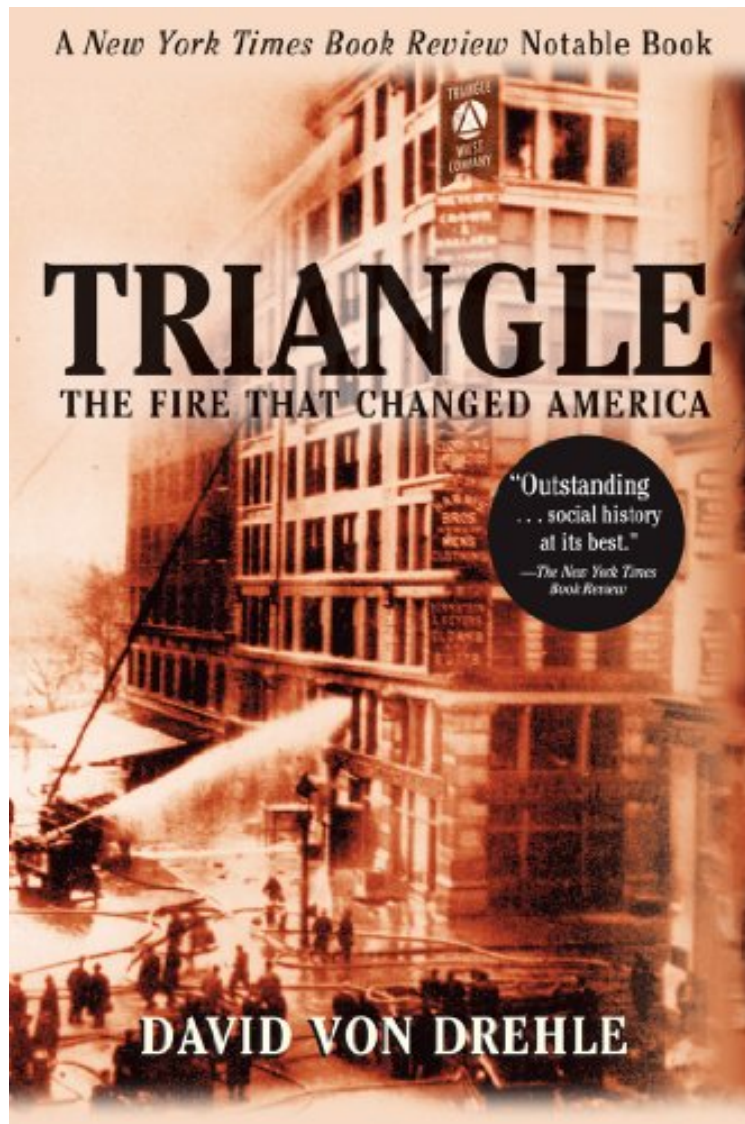


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Triangle: The Fire That Changed America

David von Drehle

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David von Drehle : Triangle: The Fire That Changed America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Triangle: The Fire That Changed America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book is beautifully researched. It provides vivid detail to round out ...By MeganIn 1911 a shirt-waist factory catches on fire, leading to an unprecedented change in work safety standards.This book is beautifully researched. It provides vivid detail to round out the characters so that the reader truly understands the time period that this story is taking place in. I was particularly interested in the insights provided about the local government, Tammany Hall. I know others didn't understand why there was so much about Tammany Hall in the book, but I found that understanding the local politics really helped me to understand the different forces at

play in NYC during the time. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not what I had expected, but still a fine book

By Ellkay Kay
The book was not really what I had expected. I had looked for a more personal account of the people who died and those who survived. My husband's grandmother was an Eastern European immigrant to New York shortly after the time period of the Triangle Fire. She came alone to this country, lived with relatives already here, and worked in one of the garment factories. With the great exception that she escaped the Fire, her early life in this country was the life that had been lived by the Triangle victims, and I think I had expected to learn more about this life. Mr. von Drehle makes clear that the book I had expected is just not possible because of the great scarcity of source material. He does what he can in general terms: he tells where the majority of these women came from and the circumstances most of them escaped. He details the incredibly long hours they worked, the incredibly small wages they received, and the fact that many still managed to help support families in this country or The Old Country. He explains that, because of the horrific over-crowding of the tenements in which they lived, their lives away from work were spent on the streets. Here they found community with people of their own background, language, and age; intellectual stimulation in the many near-by free courses offered by NYU and various associations; and exposure to the social and political thought of the day. But these generalities are pretty much as far as he is able to go. The real subject matter of this book is political change; in particular, the liberalization of New York. In this context, the Triangle Fire was no more than a tremendous spur to this change. His enduring characters are less the women of Triangle and more the reporters, business people, public officials, and primarily the politicians who, willingly or not, took part in this change. He chronicles the fall of Tammany Hall and the rise of the Democrats. Once I got past the realization that the book was other than what I had expected, I grew to appreciate it for what it is. It is a well-documented and compelling account of a time of change and the people (certainly including the victims of the Fire) who combined to bring it about.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very Interesting!

By Cheryl J. Leslie
This is the definitive historical book that explores the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. Author von Drehle gives a human face to the tragedy by writing about the people, mostly girls and women, who died and also those who escaped. It is interesting to learn how buildings were designed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and how buildings such as the one that housed Triangle were not designed for the safety of the occupants and how lax inspections precipitated the horrific fire that occurred. I also found out where the term "sweatshop" originated. Besides this documentation, the author also includes a look at the trial where the owners of the building were charged with knowingly locking exit doors and disallowing workers to escape the blaze. It looks like a no-brainer, but there were some twists in the testimony that made the outcome of the trial a surprise. This book kept my interest and kept me turning pages until late at night. I would recommend this book to anyone who like history and in particular New York in the early 20th century.

Triangle is a poignantly detailed account of the 1911 disaster that horrified the country and changed the course of twentieth-century politics and labor relations

On March 25, 1911, as workers were getting ready to leave for the day, a fire broke out in the Triangle shirtwaist factory in New York's Greenwich Village. Within minutes it spread to consume the building's upper three stories. Firemen who arrived at the scene were unable to rescue those trapped inside: their ladders simply weren't tall enough. People on the street watched in horror as desperate workers jumped to their deaths. The final toll was 146 people—123 of them women. It was the worst workplace disaster in New York City history.

This harrowing yet compulsively readable book is both a chronicle of the Triangle shirtwaist fire and a vibrant portrait of an entire age. It follows the waves of Jewish and Italian immigration that inundated New York in the early years of the century, filling its slums and supplying its garment factories with cheap, mostly female labor. It portrays the Dickensian work conditions that led to a massive waist-workers' strike in which an unlikely coalition of socialists, socialites, and suffragettes took on bosses, police, and magistrates. Von Drehle shows how popular revulsion at the Triangle catastrophe led to an unprecedented alliance between idealistic labor reformers and the supremely pragmatic politicians of the Tammany machine. David Von Drehle orchestrates these events into a drama rich in suspense and filled with memorable characters: the tight-fisted "shirtwaist king" Max Blanck and Isaac Harris; Charles F. Murphy, the shrewd kingmaker of Tammany Hall; blue-blooded activists like Anne Morgan, daughter of J. P. Morgan; and reformers Frances Perkins and Al Smith. Most powerfully, he puts a human face on the men and women who died on March 25. Triangle is an immensely moving account of the hardships of New York City life in the early part of the twentieth century, and how this event transformed politics and gave rise to urban liberalism.