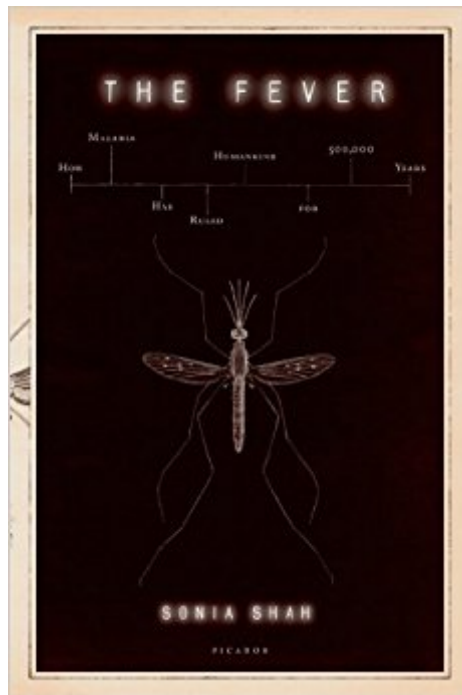




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# The Fever: How Malaria Has Ruled Humankind For 500,000 Years



## Synopsis

In recent years, malaria has emerged as a cause celebre for vogueish philanthropists. Bill Gates, Bono, and Laura Bush are only a few of the personalities who have lent their names--and opened their pocketbooks--in hopes of stopping the disease. Still, in a time when every emergent disease inspires waves of panic, why aren't we doing more to tame one of our oldest foes? And how does a pathogen that we've known how to prevent for more than a century still infect 500 million people every year, killing nearly one million of them? In *The Fever*, journalist Sonia Shah sets out to answer those questions, delivering a timely, inquisitive chronicle of the illness and its influence on human lives. Through the centuries, she finds, we've invested our hopes in a panoply of drugs and technologies, and invariably those hopes have been dashed. From the settling of the New World to the construction of the Panama Canal, through wartimes and the advances of the Industrial Revolution, Shah tracks malaria's jagged ascent and the tragedies in its wake, revealing a parasite every bit as persistent as the insects that carry it. With distinguished prose and original reporting from Panama, Malawi, Cameroon, India, and elsewhere, *The Fever* captures the curiously fascinating, devastating history of this long-standing thorn in the side of humanity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This fascinating, mordant pop-sci account tells us why malaria is one of the world's greatest scourges, killing a million people every year and debilitating another 300 million, and why we have remained complacent about it. Journalist Shah (*The Body Hunters: Testing New Drugs in the*

World's Poorest Patients) shows how the Plasmodium parasite, entering through a mosquito's bite and feasting on human red blood cells, has altered human history by destroying armies, undermining empires, and driving changes in our very genome. We've learned to fight back with antimalarial drugs and insecticides, but malaria's adaptability and its buzzing vector, Shah notes, give it the upper hand. Shah provides an intricate and lucid rundown of the biology and ecology of malaria, but her most original insights concern the ways in which human society accommodates and abets the parasite. (The impoverished denizens of Africa's malaria belt, she observes, would sometimes rather use the pesticide-laced bed nets sent by Western aid groups to catch fish.) Shah's is an absorbing account of human ingenuity and progress, and of their heartbreaking limitations. 16 pages of b&w illus. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Investigative journalist Shah maintains her signature pattern (Crude, 2004; The Body Hunters, 2006) here, exposing both the seemly and not-so-seemly aspects of the subject under review. As Shah demonstrates, when it comes to taming, never mind eradicating, malaria, the disease is cannily able to keep the ball in humankind's court. Notwithstanding, people in tropical climes who live with its ubiquitous presence have over time come to uneasy terms with the fever. That is not to say they would not benefit from a cure. Indeed, their need is most critical. It's just that when Western nontropical humans are exposed to malaria, they suffer its worst effects, then tackle the problem in largely ineffectual ways. And it is not for want of money (think Bill and Melinda Gates). But Shah takes no prisoners, blasting everyone, including the World Health Organization. Even Harvard's state-of-the-art Malaria Initiative takes it on the chin for eschewing unglamorous but effectual grunt work in favor of "lavishly funded . . . economy building technology." Malaria may rule humankind, but Shah rules the in-depth investigative report. --Donna Chavez --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The Fever presents an absolutely fascinating overview of how malaria and its effects on various groups of people have played a role in human history. You may wonder how this topic could be at all interesting, let alone fascinating. Sonia Shah manages to combine a personable and readable style with narratives that tie together wide-ranging events as connected with malaria, including as the fall of the Roman Empire and the slave trade in the Americas. I wish someone had given me this book to read when I was having my dry and meaningless history classes in high school! This is like

one of those epic historical novels, but with the malaria parasites as the main characters. For those who want to delve in in more detail, there are lots of references for every point; but the reading pleasure doesn't suffer from just reading past the scholarly references (which, I confess, I am doing).

I hate subtitles, including this book's, but that's all I can find to complain about. The Fever embodies extraordinarily fine writing coupled with copious documentation, outstanding historical insights, and engaging perspective. I will be requiring this book in my intro ecology course, as a sterling example of how ecology interacts with human disease, politics, economics, and history. Additionally, malaria offers a sobering insight into the realpolitik of science. Certainly one of the best books on disease and science I've ever read.

A remarkable book on a disease that still plagues humankind. It brings into real perspective the toll taken, the mindset of people from the developed world who hope to "fix" it with accompanying insights into failures, lack of communication and strategy with locals, etc.-easy read and timely.

I found this book to be tremendously interesting and informative. Ms. Shah writes with such depth of knowledge and is able to present what she has learned/researched with talented writing ability. The book was always interesting and accessible and at times both intriguing and downright frightening, It is also very relatable what with recent outbreaks of West Nile (in the area where I live) and with the Zika virus on the rise. I highly recommend it.

Read this because I was thinking of donating more to anti-malarial efforts and wanted to do some research. By the time I finished the book, I became aware of just how big the problem is and wish that I was much, much wealthier.

I never know that Malaria was a big issue as it was 100 years ago. This history has never been told in my history classes. It has certainly changed commerce in the world. Her research is wonderfully given in this book.

And you should. It has been a major factor in human civilization over the last million years and continuous to resist our efforts to eradicate or at least manage it. Beware, it may be coming to you.

Do we really want to "Roll Back Malaria"? Is it possible? This book gives you information you could not find anywhere else about the politics of malaria aid and malaria research. It is interesting, clear and well-documented. I'm so glad that I read it. The author has an excellent TED talk that summarizes the main points of the book.

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