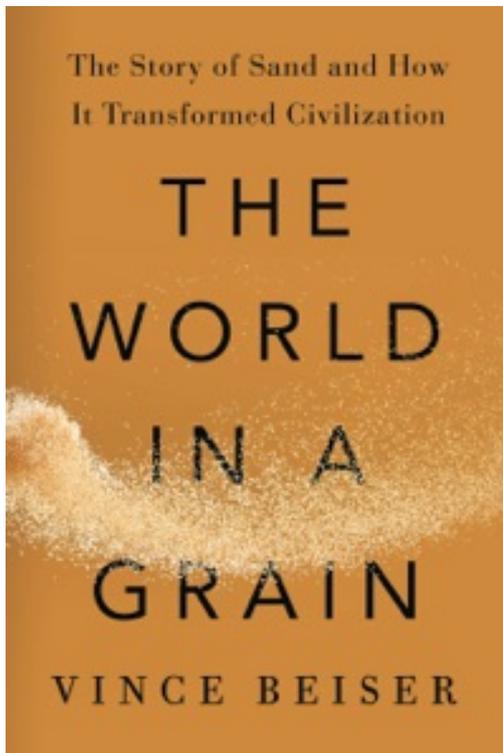


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After water and air, sand is the natural resource that we consume more than any other--even more than oil. Every concrete building and paved road on Earth, every computer screen and silicon chip, is made from sand. From Egypt's pyramids to the Hubble telescope, from the world's tallest skyscraper to the sidewalk below it, from Chartres' stained-glass windows to your iPhone, sand shelters us, empowers us, engages us, and inspires us. It's the ingredient that makes possible our cities, our science, our lives--and our future.

And, incredibly, we're running out of it.

The World in a Grain is the compelling true story of the hugely important and diminishing natural resource that grows more essential every day, and of the people who mine it, sell it, build with it--and sometimes, even kill for it. It's also a provocative examination of the serious human and environmental costs incurred by our dependence on sand, which has received little public attention. Not all sand is created equal: Some of the easiest sand to get to is the least useful. Award-winning journalist Vince Beiser delves deep into this world, taking readers on a journey across the globe, from the United States to remote corners of India, China, and Dubai to explain why sand is so crucial to modern life. Along the way, readers encounter world-changing innovators, island-building entrepreneurs, desert fighters, and murderous sand pirates. The result is an entertaining and eye-opening work, one that is both unexpected and involving, rippling with fascinating detail and filled with surprising characters.

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