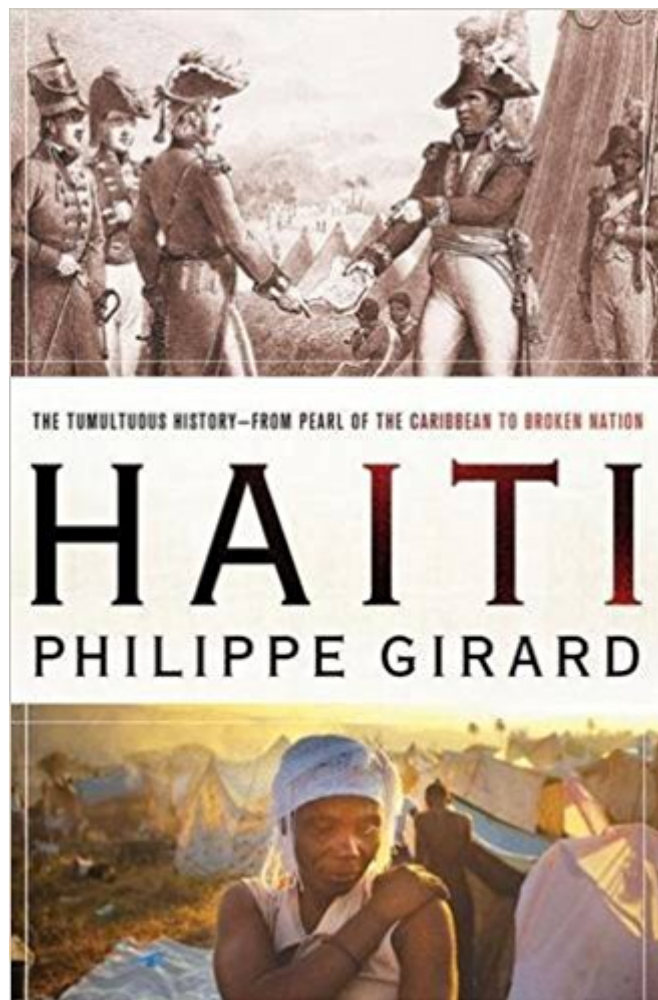




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Haiti: The Tumultuous History - From Pearl Of The Caribbean To Broken Nation



Synopsis

Why has Haiti been plagued by so many woes? Why have multiple U.S. efforts to create a stable democracy in Haiti failed so spectacularly? Philippe Girard answers these and other questions, examining how colonialism and slavery have left a legacy of racial tension, both within Haiti and internationally; Haitians remain deeply suspicious of white foreigners' motives, many of whom doubt Haitians' ability to govern themselves. He also examines how Haiti's current political instability is merely a continuation of political strife that began during the War of Independence (1791-1804). Finally, Girard explores poverty's devastating impact on contemporary Haiti and argues that Haitians--particularly home-grown dictators--bear a big share of the responsibility for their nation's troubles.

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Customer Reviews

In spite of the proximity of Haiti to the U.S., very few Americans know much about this small island nation beyond the regular tragedies that show up on our news and that they practice voodoo.

Philippe Girard's new book, *Haiti: The Tumultuous History - From Pearl of the Caribbean to Broken Nation*, is a great introduction to the fascinating, colorful and all too often tragic history of Haiti that spans her history from the early days of European exploration all the way to the 2010 earthquake. I am going to Haiti in January of 2011 and was looking for an introduction to her history and I found a goldmine with Girard's compact but thorough book. What I especially liked is that Philippe Girard refuses to get into the blame game with Haiti's woes. It is true that Haiti was exploited in its early

history but so were many other nations and they are not in nearly the same shape as Haiti. According to Girard, Haiti's woes can be placed squarely on centuries of corrupt leaders who have seized power in this island nation and used their nation as their own personal piggy bank. The end results is a giant welfare state that depends on foreign aid to function. Girard doesn't sugarcoat the racism of America and the horror of the slave trade but neither does he allow these events to be an excuse for Haiti's deplorable conditions. What was most interesting was Girard's conclusion. He asks the obvious question being asked by his primarily American audience: what should the U.S. do to help Haiti? His answer was surprising but dead on: as little as possible. Haiti needs to come into the world economy on its own. Free food helps feed people but it destroys Haiti's agricultural sector.

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