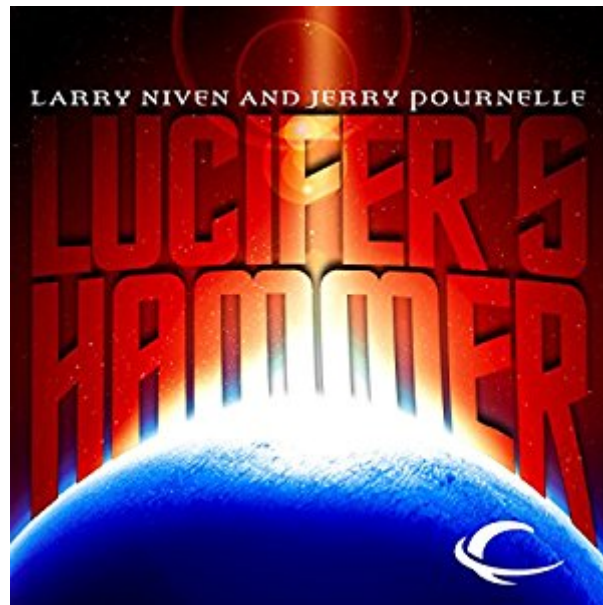


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# Lucifer's Hammer



## Synopsis

Monumental devastation will sweep across the globe if the newly-discovered Hamner-Brown comet collides with the one major obstacle in its path: Earth. For millionaire Tim Hamner, the comet is a ticket to immortality. For filmmaker Harvey Randall, it's a shot to redeem a flagging career. And for astronauts John Baker and Rick Delanty, it's a second chance for glory in outer space. But for a world gripped by comet fever, fascination quickly turns to fear. And only those who survive the impact will know the even greater terror, when rich and poor, politicians and killers, turn to each other or against each other--and the remnants of humanity grow savage to battle for what little remains . . . Including an all-new introduction by the authors! --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There have been so many reviews accusing this book of being racist that I guess I'll have to address that issue before I can even talk about my opinion of the book. What a lot of people don't seem to realize these days is that there's a difference between portraying racism (e.g. in a novel) and actually supporting racism. In my opinion Niven and Pournelle weren't trying to stereotype blacks or make any kind of political statement, they were simply depicting something that could likely take place. It's not all that far fetched to believe that an inner city LA gang of African-Americans would band together after an apocalypse and might hook up with a radical fanaticist army promising them power, plenty to eat, and no racial barriers. And they weren't the only ones doing this. As I

remember, they weren't even the ones who started the cannibalism. That was an army platoon mainly composed of white guys who did that, and forced everyone else to come on board or else starve or be killed. As I see it Niven and Pournelle gave a fairly accurate depiction of race relations as they stood in 1970. If I thought they were deliberately targeting one group or another and trying to negatively stereotype them, I could just as easily complain that this book is biased against Christians since it displayed the leader of the cannibals as an insane preacher. But I don't complain because I know they weren't trying to take potshots at Christianity, they were merely portraying what could happen, same as they were portraying what could happen to an inner city gang after the end of the world. That being said. I do think that this book was one of the best end of the world stories I have read yet. It is riveting and you won't be able to put it down after the Hammer actually falls.

I just finished "Lucifer's Hammer," and, well, I'm impressed! Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle have done a wonderful job in weaving a tale of excitement, fear, devastation, fear, desperation, and hope. This is 5-star sci-fi all the way! If all you read is the first 100 pages, however, you probably won't agree with that. You see, the first part of the book is a bit slow in getting moving, but that's because the authors introduce a whole string of characters that interact with one another as the story and the action unfolds. And once the action starts, it doesn't stop. In fact, it makes you want to store some food, some water, some other things...and get ready for what COULD happen. As I started reading this book I thought to myself, this book has many similarities with the movie "Deep Impact." Was I ever wrong with that assumption! This book goes way beyond "Deep Impact." It goes beyond it in that this book is not so much about events surrounding a comet-earth collision as it is about the aftermath, and how people do or do not cope with that kind of calamity. Imagine this...world-wide cataclysmic events wipe out the major governments on the planet -- national, state, and local governments collapse, and people are left to fend for themselves. What will they do for food, shelter, personal safety, information, etc.? It's a whole new ballgame out there! The kinds of challenges described in the book bring out the best in some people, the worst in others, and trapped in the middle of everything that's happening are the characters you'll come to know quite well. The characters are, for the most part, believable, the plot development is riveting, and the conclusion is satisfying. Do good guys always finish first? Do they even survive?

This novel will be a tough one for faith-based people. The comet that destroys the earth is a starkly "random" event. One more orbit, one less piece of debris, and we could have had a miss. I enjoyed the science aspects of the book, which is unusual for me. Almost all the astronomy is clearly

presented and easy to understand. "Lucifer's Hammer" is the first apocalyptic novel I have read that takes up famine as a major factor in surviving. It is explained convincingly and is horrific in its implications. The general behavior of the survivors (poor) seemed much more realistic to me than the God-like heroism in most such novels. Cannibalism would not be unusual at all, but it would probably be done in a clandestine way, everybody's "dirty little secret," not an article of faith, as depicted in the book. The horrendous geographical upheavals-earthquakes, tidal waves, and volcanic eruptions are handled expertly and realistically. The start was slow and the setting of characters was haphazard. There were too many, and the similarity in names was confusing: Hardy, Harry, Harvey-and the two major females Maureen and Eileen-give me a break here! Some reviewers have painted the authors as racist, particularly objecting to a black leader flaunting cannibalism and discussions of "slaves" in the new world order. No one black, white, yellow or brown behaved with complete honor or integrity. It is realistic to imply that no one performs well when they are terrified, whatever their racial makeup. A good point was made when one character vehemently objected to the use of the word "slave," but agreed that "prisoners of war" would have no rights and would have to undertake the most menial and disagreeable tasks. Ah, what a difference a "word" makes!

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