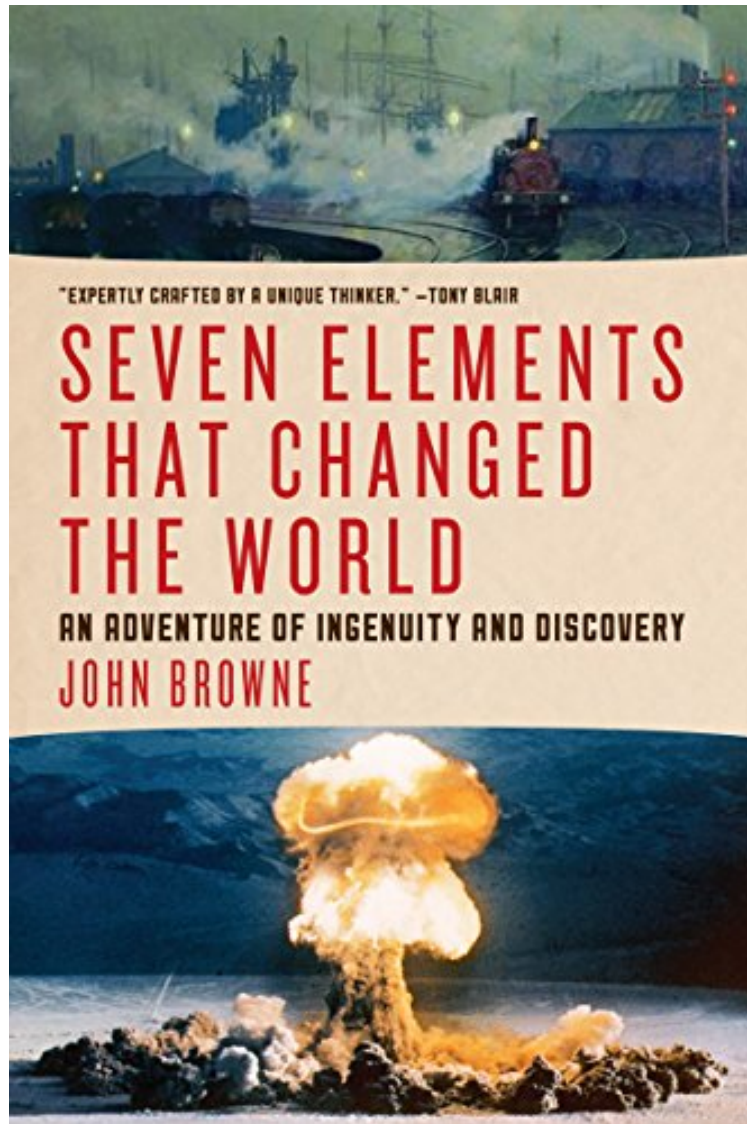


Seven Elements that Changed the World: An Adventure of Ingenuity and Discovery

John Browne

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"Mr. Browne uses his chosen elements to frame a wide-ranging look at scientific progress. It's also a lot of fun." The Wall Street Journal The fascinating story of how seven elements—iron, carbon, gold, silver, uranium, titanium, and silicon—have changed modern life, for good and ill. With carbon we access heat, light and mobility at the flick of a switch, while silicon enables us to communicate across the globe in an instant. Uranium is both productive (nuclear power) and destructive (nuclear bombs); iron is the bloody weapon of war, but also the economic tool of peace; our desire for alluring gold is the foundation of global trade, but has also led to the death of millions. John Browne, CEO of British Petroleum (BP) for twelve years, vividly describes how seven elements are shaping the world around us, for better and for worse. Combining history, science and politics, *Seven Elements* takes you on a present-day adventure of human passion, ingenuity and discovery. This journey is far from over: we continue to find surprising new uses for these seven elements. Discover how titanium pervades modern consumer society, how natural gas is transforming the global energy sector, and how an innovative new form of carbon could be starting a technology revolution.

From Booklist Anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of chemistry can look at the periodic table of elements and feel confident that the vast majority of listed chemicals, save several latecomers synthesized in physics laboratories, serve vital roles in the world around us. For his debut work of nonfiction, however, former British Petroleum CEO Browne decided to focus only on seven—iron, carbon, gold, silver, uranium, titanium and silicon, convincingly demonstrating how each had its part in shaping human civilization, both for good and for ill. Iron, for instance, was indispensable in building machinery that powered the industrial revolution, but has also made possible the diverse and destructive weapons of war. Carbon, in the form of oil and coal, provides abundant energy but also accelerates global warming. Gold and silver have buttressed international economies while fostering greed and genocide, whereas uranium is essential both in nuclear power plants and in the world's deadliest bombs. In his first foray into popular-science writing, Browne does an admirable job crafting an informative and engrossing chemistry-based view of history. --Carl Hays The human quest for knowledge has led to extraordinary progress. This book forces us to confront these realities and does so in a unique and fascinating way. It weaves science and humanity together in a way that gives us new insight. This is an expertly crafted book by a unique thinker. - Tony Blair In his first foray into popular-science writing, Browne does an admirable job crafting an informative and engrossing chemistry-based view of history. - Booklist [Browne] mixes in his travels and anecdotes from an impressive career to produce a lively, educational examination of civilizations building blocks. - Publishers Weekly The topics the author chooses to cover, ranging from the use of coal in ancient China to the Bessemer converter and silver photography, unfold in thoughtful detail, and the ample footnotes accompanying the text are as diverting as they are helpful. - Kirkus s About the Author John Browne was born in Germany in 1948 and joined BP as a university apprentice in 1966, rising to Group Chief Executive from 1995 to 2007, where he built a reputation as a visionary leader, regularly voted the most admired businessman by his peers. He splits his time between London and Venice.