



ASHFALL VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Geologist Jim Walker Spouts Off About Volcanoes: Part 1

1. If there was news that a Super Eruption like the one seen in Mike Mullin's *Ashfall* was coming, how would you respond? Why? What factors would affect your response?
2. According to geologist Jim Walker, we can tell by looking at rocks formed by magma that they were formed by magma. What are some other things scientists can learn from studying rocks?
3. In the video, we learned that Yellowstone was once a 45 mi. long caldera. Can you think of any other famous landmarks or locations that were created by nature?
4. Geologist Jim Walker explains that Yellowstone is a volcano. Now that you know this fact would you still go and visit it on a vacation? Why or why not?
5. The Yellowstone and Hawaiian volcanoes are unique because they are volcanoes that do not fall on the border of tectonic plates. Can you think of any other anomalies that occur in nature?

Geologist Jim Walker Spouts Off About Volcanoes: Part 2

1. We now know that the early signs of volcanic eruption are the ground rising, pyroclastic fall and smoke pluming. In the event that you were to witness these signs in a location with an active volcano, what would you do to prepare. Why?
2. Now that you have seen the kind of ash Alex in *Ashfall* has to walk through, do you find it easier to imagine the landscape he travels through? Do you find it easier to sympathize with him? Why or why not? What are some other ways you think Alex could have navigated this post-eruption terrain?
3. Pyroclastic flow is dangerous because it creates an avalanche that can affect 30 to 40 km around the volcano. Knowing this, do you now have a different opinion about potentially living on or camping around volcanos like Mt. Saint Helens and Yellowstone?
4. Would you want to be a volcanologist? Why or why not?
5. Geologist Jim Walker suggests a strong foundation in Math and Science in order to become a volcanologist. Why do you think that is and what is your favorite science subject? Why?

Mike Mullin at NIU: Tae Kwon Do and Vomit

1. If you could write a full-length novel about anything, what would you write about? Why?
2. How do you think society will respond when Yellowstone does finally erupt? Answer for both a minor eruption and a super eruption scenario.
3. In order to write *Ashfall* author Mike Mullin had to read a lot on geology! If you could become versed in any scientific subject what subject would it be? Why?
4. Mike Mullin embraces asking questions and “thinking like a scientist” what is one example of when you thought like a scientist?
5. Mike Mullin discusses how everyone interprets literature and media differently. What is an example from your life where you interpreted something differently than the rest of your class/family/co-workers?

Mike Mullin at NIU: Practice, Determination, and Hammer Fist

1. What characteristics do you think are necessary to be a successful writer?
2. The psychologists mentioned in Mike Mullin’s ‘Successes Vs. Wannabes’ study have to consider what variables when selecting their sample of authors to participate?
3. What is an example of a time you practiced over and over for something? What methods did you use? Were you successful?
4. Let’s say you were about to start a 10,000-hour plan to become an expert in something. What would you practice 10,000 hours of? Why?
5. Do you believe there is a profession or art that is an exception to the 10,000-hour rule? If so what profession/art and why?

Mike Mullin at NIU: Volcanoes!

1. Mike Mullin compares the way heat collects under a geyser to a water fountain. What is another naturally occurring phenomena that happens when heat builds?
2. According to the video, the difference between having a super volcanic eruption and a minor eruption are in the gravity of the power and force that they exert and their ability to cause devastation to both humans and the environment. Knowing that super volcanos have the ability to cause the kind of tragedy seen in Mike Mullin’s *Ashfall* do you believe we should build anything around volcanos? National parks? Tourist attractions? Homes?
3. What other weather based phenomena does the jet-stream effect?
4. Mike Mullin talks about the traveling speed of ash, wind, and noise. What are some other naturally occurring phenomena that occur at a different traveling speeds?
5. The British Soldiers on Diego Garcia heard a volcano, but were unable to identify where the noise was coming from. In order to explain the noise, they determined it was cause by two battling ships. If you were to hear a loud, two-hour long, unexplained noise what would you attribute it to?

Mike Mullin at NIU: Q&A

1. What is your creative writing process like?
2. Do you believe it is just as important to have an interior conflict as it is to have an exterior conflict?
3. If you were to write a novel, what would your characters be like? Would you base some of them off of real people like Mike Mullin did?
4. If you wrote a novel and had to incorporate some aspect of science, like volcanoes, into the novel, what aspect of science would you select? Why?
5. If you wrote a novel, where would you have it set?

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