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## WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

Power to Save the World

From the Introduction by Richard Rhodes, Pulitzer-Prize-winning author of *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*:

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Gwyneth Cravens evokes an old tradition in this very modern book: seeking understanding by going on a journey. In John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, published in the 1660s during the English Restoration, a seeker named Christian encounters the Slough of Despond, the House Beautiful, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Vanity Fair, and Doubting Castle, among other challenges, before he finally achieves the Celestial City. Gwyneth Cravens encounters similarly colorful places: abandoned mines that breathe radon; laboratories where nuclear reactors were deliberately melted down; a hellish place of heat, coal dust, and shattering noise; quietly vigilant nuclear power plants; vast humming turbines; a giant crystal called WIPP; Yucca Mountain. She accumulates knowledge as she goes, guided by her own Virgil, a steadfast scientist named Dr. Rip Anderson. She achieves greater understanding of the deep things of the world, as her predecessors did, and as they also did, she shares it generously.

Unlike the chronicles of those ancient worthies, however, Gwyneth's narrative is factual, not allegorical, a tour from discovery to mining to waste disposal of an entire new technology, nuclear power, that harnesses the first major source of energy that does not depend, directly or indirectly, on the sun. Nor did she begin her journey, as Bunyan did, with an ax to grind. If anything, she was antinuclear. Her journey to knowledge changed her perspective.