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This lively book sweeps across dramatic and varied terrains_volcanoes and glaciers, billabongs and canyons, prairies and rain forests_to explore how humans have made sense of our planet's marvelous landscapes. In a rich weave of scientific, cultural, and personal stories, The Face of the Earth examines mirages and satellite images, swamp-dwelling heroes and Tibetan nomads, cave paintings and popular movies, investigating how we live with the great shaping forces of nature_from fire to changing climates and the intricacies of adaptation. The book illuminates subjects as diverse as the literary life of hollow Earth theories, the links between the Little Ice Age and Frankenstein's monster, and the spiritual allure of deserts and their scarce waters. Including vivid, on-the-spot accounts by scientists and writers in Saudi Arabia, Australia, Alaska, England, the Rocky Mountains, Antarctica, and elsewhere, The Face of the Earth charts the depth and complexity of our interdependence with the natural world.