

In *Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded*, Simon Winchester's book based upon eyewitness accounts, we learn about the final minutes leading up to Krakatoa's fourth explosion.

So cataclysmic was this event - which happened at 10:02 on the morning of August 27, 1883 - that the volcano's ripping-itself-apart sounds were heard thousands of miles away:

*An immense wave then leaves Krakatoa at almost exactly 10:00 A.M. - and then, two minutes later, according to all the instruments that record it, came the fourth and greatest explosion of them all, a detonation that was heard thousands of miles away and that is still said to be the most violent explosion ever recorded and experienced by modern man. The cloud of gas and white-hot pumice, fire, and smoke is believed to have risen - been hurled, more probably, blasted as though from a gigantic cannon - as many as twenty-four miles into the air. (Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded, Simon Winchester, page 234.)*

Captain Sampson, in charge of the British ship *Norham Castle*, was passing by the area. He wrote what he observed in his ship's log:

*A fearful explosion...A frightful sound...I am writing this blind in pitch darkness...So violent are the explosions that the eardrums of over half my crew have been shattered. My last thoughts are with my dear wife. I am convinced that the Day of Judgment has come. (Winchester, page 234.)*

Johanna Beijerinck heard the frightful sound of the fourth explosion, too. She - like many others - temporarily lost her hearing (as dramatized in this video clip).

Reading her account of ongoing terror, one gets a mere glimpse of endlessly frightening events:

*Then came sudden, terrifying stillness. When I had walked about 15 paces, still in my doubled-up position, I stubbed my toe on something very peculiar. I ran up against large and small branches and did not even think of avoiding them. I entangled myself more and more in that nightmare of branches, all entirely stripped of leaves.*

*My hair [it was knee-length] got caught up, and each time with a twist of the head I managed to free myself. Then something got hooked into my finger and hurt. I noticed for the first time that my skin was hanging off everywhere, thick and moist from the ash stuck to it. Thinking it must be dirty, I wanted to pull bits of skin off, but that was still more painful. My tired brain could not make out what it was. I did not know I had been burned. Worn out, I leaned against a tree.*

According to the long account which Johanna wrote about the ordeal, for a time she could hear nothing. It was the sound of the volcano, destroying itself, which caused her temporary loss of hearing. She didn't know that, however, and believed she must have been dead.

Then ... something happened which made her realize maybe she was still alive, after all.

*Was it imagination or did I hear something after all? I listened and heard, first dampened and then more clearly, someone shouting and screaming for me. Everything was once more clear in my mind. I recognized my husband's voice calling me and shouting. Why was I dead and the rest of them still alive?*

She was still alive. Many people around her were not.

We can find a listing of places where the sounds of the exploding volcano were heard. (See Table IX, page 80, of *The Eruption of Krakatoa and Subsequent Phenomena*, by the Krakatoa Committee of the Royal Society, published in 1888.) Rodriguez Island, in the Indian Ocean, was the farthest from Krakatoa - 2,968 "English miles" (see page 87) - where people heard Krakatoa's explosions.

The report from Rodriguez states as follows:

*"Several times during the night of the 26th-27th reports were heard coming from the eastward, like the distant roars of heavy guns. These reports continued at intervals of between three and four hours, until 3 p.m. on the 27th (=5:48 p.m. local time at Krakatoa), and the last two were heard in the direction of Oyster Bay and Port Mathurie." Report by Mr. James Wallis, Chief of Police.*

**See, also:**

**Last Days of Krakatoa**

**Krakatoa - Ash Fall**

**Krakatoa - Deadly Tsunami**

**Krakatoa - Loss of the Fourth Point Lighthouse**

## Krakatoa - Fatal Pyroclastic Surge

### Krakatoa - After the Disaster

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Excerpts from [Johanna Beyerinck's 19th-century account](#), quoted by Rupert Furneaux in [Krakatoa](#), published in 1964, at page 107. Online, courtesy Google Books.

Quoted passages from Simon Winchester's book, [Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded](#), page 234. Online, courtesy Amazon.com

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Krakatoa-Loudest-Sound-in-Recorded-History0>

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