

GAS TANKER BLAST IN HOUSTON

Midnight disaster in Houston. Eight thunderous explosions rip a twelve-thousand-ton tanker and set off a fire that burns with terrible intensity through the night. Officials fear it could spread to nearby gasoline tanks, ending in a catastrophe like the one that claimed 512 lives in Texas City a dozen years ago. In the morning, the blaze seems to subside, then flares again. It takes nineteen hours and ten million gallons of foamite to bring the fire under control. The captain and six crewmen of the tanker, the Amoco Virginia, die in the tragedy, and one of the firemen drowns in a flooded hold. Many hours later, the ship is still so hot and the gasoline fumes so dangerous that nearly twenty waiting vessels are kept from passing in the channel which connects Houston with the Gulf of Mexico. Only the heroic efforts of the firefighters keep the disaster from being far worse.

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