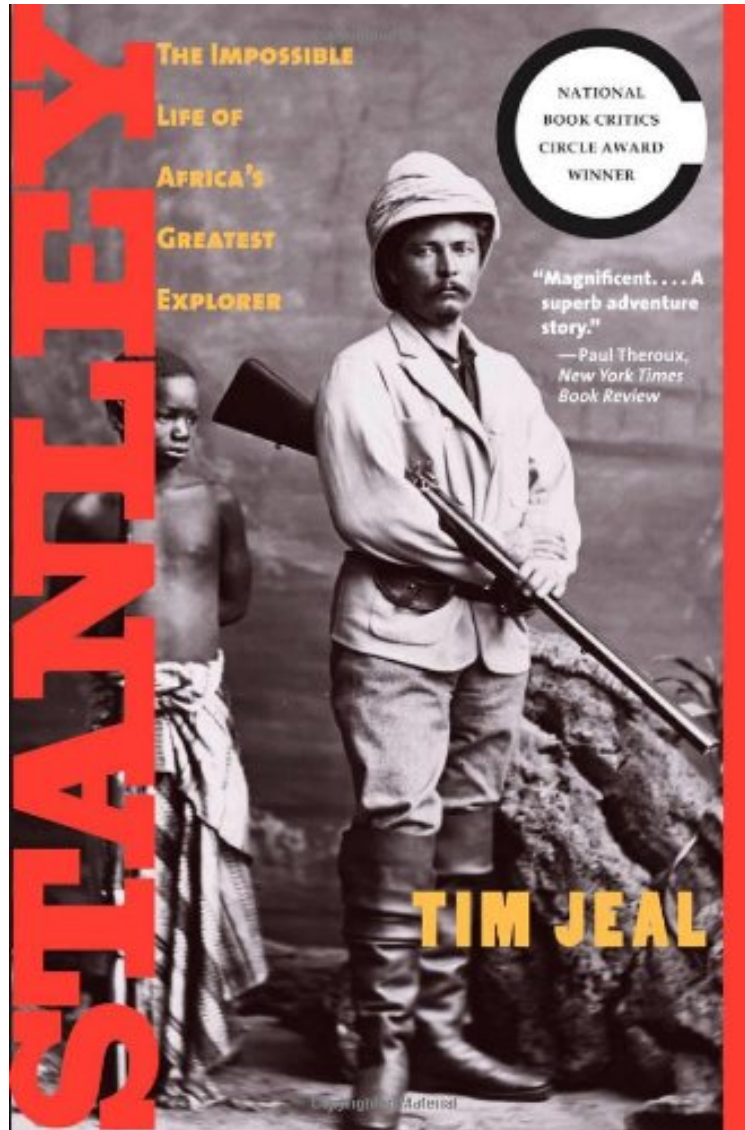


(Free and download) Stanley: The Impossible Life of Africa's Greatest Explorer

Stanley: The Impossible Life of Africa's Greatest Explorer

Tim Jeal

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#890508 in Books Tim Jeal 2008-10-28 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.20 x 1.58 x 6.141, 1.67 #File Name: 0300142234608 pages Stanley The Impossible Life of Africa s Greatest Explorer | File size: 40.Mb

Tim Jeal : Stanley: The Impossible Life of Africa's Greatest Explorer before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stanley: The Impossible Life of Africa's Greatest Explorer:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A life better explained, if not exonerated...By Richard A. LeveilleJeal has written a very juicy biography of one of the most controversial figures of 19th C African exploration. My penultimate impression of Stanley had been heavily influenced by Adam Hochschild's portrayal of him as one of the principle villain's in King Leopold's Ghost; he was the duplicitous front man spearheading the eponymous monarch's evil quest for empire in the Heart of Darkness. Jeal's portrait is much more balanced, tracing Stanley's rise

from abandoned bastard son (named John Rowlands) of a woman of low repute in Wales, through a loveless and destitute childhood, to his escape to America where he invented a new name and a new past for himself: Henry Morton Stanley, son of a prosperous New Orleans merchant. He went on to serve on both sides of the Civil War, and began freelance writing. His invented pedigree and childhood would come back to haunt him for the rest of his life in the form of numerous blackmail and extortion attempts, several of which were from his own family members. Jeal gives gripping accounts of his well know African expeditions, including that which made his name and gave the world one of the best known greetings of all time, the unforgettable "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?". Stanley's bravery, physical endurance and his relatively decent treatment of Africans versus most of his contemporaries, and his fight against the Arab slave trade, are emphasized by Jeal as counterpoints to the fact that he did help Leopold build his evil empire. He argues that Stanley, like most of the world, was duped by the king's clever PR campaign and was dumped by Leopold (with wages in arrears) when he became inconvenient. And despite the obvious magnitude of his many accomplishments, Stanley could never resist the temptation of further exaggerating them in his reports and bulletins, to the detriment of his reputation. On top of all of this, his last expedition, to rescue Emin Pasha, a dubious character at best, who didn't really want to be rescued, was a disaster. Jeal expertly twines the threads of Stanley's tortured history and personal life and the scars they left on him into the story of his rise and decline. In addition to being dogged by both his real and his invented past, and his chronic exaggeration cum lying, there was his desperate quest for a woman who loved him and a family, which culminated rather tragically with a wife whose love for him seemed subsumed to her shameless use of his reputation to further her own social and political aspirations. While this book may not resurrect Stanley's reputation, it does go a long way towards making him a more human and sympathetic character, not the devil incarnate of Hochschild's book and other recent biographies. I'd highly recommend it to lover's of good biographies, African history and just ripping good (if tragic) adventure tales. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Abandoned Boy Becomes Africa's Greatest Discoverer By DDSCThis is the finest biography that I have read in some time. The writing is superb and it is based upon the most thorough research on its subject yet. The author is uniquely qualified to write this book as he has also written the definitive book on Stanley's counterpart, Dr. Livingstone. What makes this book so compelling is the subject himself. He was abandoned by his mother and never knew his father. The kind grandfather who took care of him died suddenly when Stanley was five years old and his mother's family had him placed in a workhouse. There he stayed for ten years when he left at age fifteen. His life became an odyssey which took him to America back to England and then to Africa where he achieved fame. Despite his accomplishments as discoverer and author, his personal life was full of disappointment. His attempt to hide his illegitimacy had led him to lie about his background. This coverup came close to unraveling on numerous occasions. Years after his career had ended he returned to New Orleans incognito where he walked the cemeteries looking for a "Stanley" tombstone that would give him a name to use in documenting his story. The irony was that one of the world's greatest discoverers could never find himself. An excellent book about a fascinating subject. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Complexities of the Man and Complexity of African History Well Presented By rusgcMy only knowlege of Stanley was the "Dr. Livingston I presume" greeting when they first met in the African jungles. This history of the man is an extremely well researched and documented story about a truly enigmatic an interesting chapter in African history. I knew nothing about Stanley or African settlement in the 1800's by Eurpeon countries and fortune hunters. Much of African turmoil today is more understandable when seen in the light of how the groundwork was laid. The detail of Stanley's life through his and other's correspondence and diaries makes the real Stanley more creditable than what his detractors have portrayed over the years. Some of the detail is numbing at times but the overall adventure and Stanley's complexity as an individual makes for extremely interesting reading. The extremely negative review by "ragamuffin" does not hold up to the facts and events presented by the reserch and documentation in this book.

"A magnificent new life . . . [and] a superb adventure story. . . . There have been many biographies of Stanley, but Jeal's is the most felicitous, the best informed, the most complete and readable and exhaustive, profiting from his access to an immense new trove of Stanley material." -- Paul Theroux, front page, New York Times Book Review

"A magnificent new life. . . . [Jeal] demonstrates in a way that makes [this] a superb adventure story as well as a feat of advocacy [that] Stanley was probably the greatest explorer ever to set foot in Africa. . . . There have been many biographies of Stanley, but Jeal's is the most felicitous, the best informed, the most complete and readable and exhaustive, profiting from his access to an immense new trove of Stanley material." Paul Theroux, front page, New York Times Book