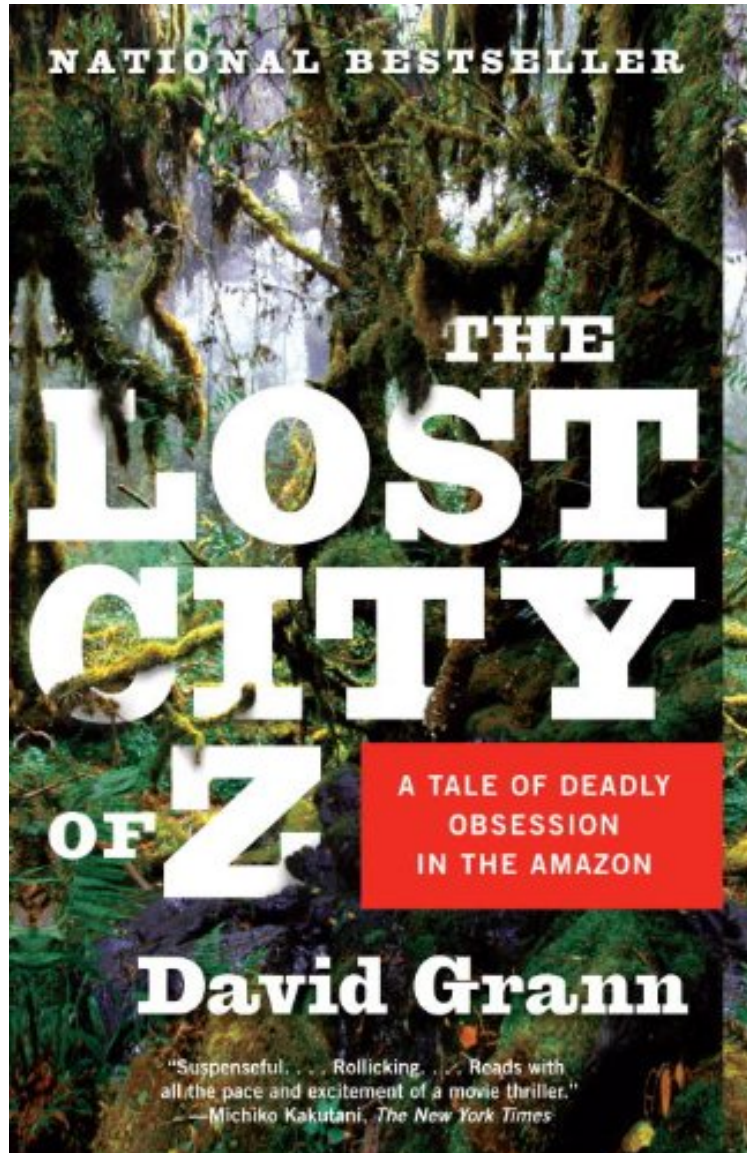


[Library ebook] The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon

The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon

David Grann

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David Grann : The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon:

62 of 64 people found the following review helpful. History, adventure, science, and action all rolled into one! And its non-fiction? By mparkerI loved reading this book because of its diversity. You get a well rounded history from multiple accounts of the many cursed expeditions into the . The crazy men who dared to do it (both present and past),

violent tribal peoples (though you understand why they're so hostile to foreigners), the nearly impassable terrain, the odd and bizarre creatures that reside there, and in the end, a plausible archaeologically based theory behind why people thought there was a large rich city once in the region. Like all things, people's imaginations run wild, but the author also brings you back down to earth with the reality of the jungle which left me with the overall conclusion that these grandiose theories of a Lost City of Z were really just grand exaggerations of much more practical evidence of a fairly developed, but long lost, past civilization. Some people criticize the book for only getting to the final expedition at the very end of the book. But I believe this criticism is unwarranted. You can't just jump into the final expedition without getting the backstory and context of the people, place, and time. I feel the author did a marvelous job of jumping around and pacing the book, so that when you get to the final expedition, you're well versed in the context and prepared to understand why things went down the way they did. Fantastic read, and I shall keep this book as a permanent fixture in my collection. Too bad I only got it in paperback... dang.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good reading for explorers

By Nelson Cespedes I found this book interesting in many ways. It was easy to read since it touched many subjects that are familiar to me. The book covers historic facts of the Victorian age and its influence in the world but specially South America and the countries of Bolivia and Brazil whose region was and is difficult to explore or study. It is well balanced since the book covers many areas that help understand different points of view of previous times compared to present times. I found answers to questions that come up as you read this book. For instance, to refer to the tribes that populate the rain forests as savages, made me question who is anyone to judge, specially after the atrocities of WWI, described in the book as well as all the inhuman spectacle of WW2. Also, it explains what was happening in the areas related to the fields he got to be involved in like archeology and the discovery of Machu Pichu which may have influenced him. Fawcett's motivations could have been banal if they were glory or becoming famous but he showed an ethical position not usual in his time which was to approach the indigenous people in a non violent way, trying not to use arms and ordering to drop arms even if danger was felt. He would raise his hands and confront the Indians which gave him good results since he got to be treated as a sort of friend. This respectful behavior, considering the times, was something positive to take in account when trying to define Fawcett's personality which could show his humanity, something to learn from him. Now, consider that Indiana Jones is partly based in the real life of Percy Fawcett and P.F. is one of the characters of one of his movies; however, Indiana Jones had no problem in shooting for entertainment. Having lived in Bolivia and having done some exploration myself I may have a different take to this adventure. To start, one of Fawcett's motivation was as normal as to answer why people climb mountains, the answer is, because it's there". I have done hiking going from La Paz at 12000 ft. above sea level to about 15000 ft. and then down to the tropics of Yungas which is the start of the rain jungle all along an Inca road which was partly well preserved considering hundreds of years of use. After getting familiar with this subtropical region, it happened that I read The mines of King Salomon and this book, cited in Grann's book as well, inspired me to go farther. My plan was to go to an uncharted area in the forest called Madidi, which is a national park now. My motivation was just to see what no one else has seen. I was able to enlist two university friends who seemed interested but who back down at the last minute. Next year I tried again but I had a sudden back ache problem. Going back to the book, Fawcett's intentions may have been to attain fame by finding not El Dorado but something like Machu Pichu which was found in 1911. He visited Cusco and Tiahuanacu and was able to marvel at the achievements of these civilizations. But destiny put him in the Bolivian jungle with the aid of the British government, it wasn't something that he was looking for but that opened his eyes and his innate explorer spirit. Before I even finished reading this book I was compelled to read about the original source, Percy Fawcett's own words, compiled in a book Lost trail, lost cities by Brian Fawcett, his son. By reading it, I found out that in his first trip he was hired by the Bolivian government, P. Fawcett does not mention Brazil in the first expedition which was actually work. Now, there are historical details that are not clear. The border problem between Bolivia and Brazil was already established in 1903 after a short war between these two countries and the result was the annexation of the Acre, an area of 190,000 square Kilometers (75,000 sq mls), more than the size of UK. By the way, something that this book could have in next edition is a better map, the map of Bolivia is not clear. There are details in the Fawcett's book that could have been part of Grann's book or even the movie, like the moment when, after departing La Paz, one of many mules P.F. had, runs away and that was the mule that had the \$1000 in gold he received as part of the payment from the Bolivian government, an interesting historical detail, a jingling treasure in the saddle bags. However, Fawcett explains that the mule was brought back by local people who he rewarded. P .F. describes foreigners by name but there is no mention of Bolivian dignitaries with the exception of the president of Bolivia who was taking matters with his own hands and who knew these lands very well. The region next to the Brazilian border bears his name, Pando. All who have lived in these lands and learned to know them fell captive to their irresistible charm, Fawcett writes as part of his reflexions. Is this one of the motives he kept coming back?

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Easy read, anticlimactic ending

By Duncan I read this book in a few days. The authors writing style made it easy, and the way he jumps back and forth between his story and Fawcett's keeps things fresh. As I got closer to the end I started to wonder when the "reveal" would happen, as the majority of the book had passed and Fawcett's final journey had barely been touched on. The ending is hardly conclusive, and almost felt thrown together. I didn't expect the author to solve the

mystery without a doubt, but I would have liked more time spent on the last journey of Fawcett and on the author's attempts to find out what happened. If you go into this book knowing that 300 of the 350 or so pages cover Fawcett's life prior to his last trip, and that you'll learn no more about him or Z than a quick Wikipedia read, you'll enjoy the book and the story and not be disappointed. Just don't expect to be blown away either.

The #1 New York Times bestseller - now a major motion picture starring Charlie Hunnam, Tom Holland, Sienna Miller and Robert Pattinson. In 1925, the legendary British explorer Percy Fawcett ventured into the Amazon jungle, in search of a fabled civilization. He never returned. Over the years countless perished trying to find evidence of his party and the place he called The Lost City of Z. In this masterpiece of narrative nonfiction, journalist David Grann interweaves the spellbinding stories of Fawcett's quest for Z and his own journey into the deadly jungle, as he unravels the greatest exploration mystery of the twentieth century.

.com Exclusive: John Grisham's *The Lost City of Z* Since first publishing *A Time to Kill* in 1988, John Grisham has written twenty novels and one work of nonfiction, *The Innocent Man*. His second novel, *The Firm*, spent 47 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list, becoming the bestselling novel of 1991. The success of *The Pelican Brief*, which hit number one on the New York Times bestseller list, and *The Client*, which debuted at number one, confirmed Grisham's reputation as the master of the legal thriller. His most recent novel, *The Associate*, was published in January 2009. Read his exclusive guest review of *The Lost City of Z*: In April of 1925, a legendary British explorer named Percy Fawcett launched his final expedition into the depths of the in Brazil. His destination was the lost city of El Dorado, the City of Gold, an ancient kingdom of great sophistication, architecture, and culture that, for some reason, had vanished. The idea of El Dorado had captivated anthropologists, adventurers, and scientists for 400 years, though there was no evidence it ever existed. Hundreds of expeditions had gone looking for it. Thousands of men had perished in the jungles searching for it. Fawcett himself had barely survived several previous expeditions and was more determined than ever to find the lost city with its streets and temples of gold. The world was watching. Fawcett, the last of the great Victorian adventurers, was financed by the Royal Geographical Society in London, the world's foremost repository of research gathered by explorers. Fawcett, then age 57, had proclaimed for decades his belief in the City of Z, as he had nicknamed it. His writings, speeches, and exploits had captured the imagination of millions, and reports of his last expedition were front page news. His expeditionary force consisted of three men--himself, his 21-year-old son Jack, and one of Jack's friends. Fawcett believed that only a small group had any chance of surviving the horrors of the . He had seen large forces decimated by malaria, insects, snakes, poison darts, starvation, and insanity. He knew better. He and his two companions would travel light, carry their own supplies, eat off the land, pose no threat to the natives, and endure months of hardship in their search for the Lost City of Z. They were never seen again. Fawcett's daily dispatches trickled to a stop. Months passed with no word. Because he had survived several similar forays into the , his family and friends considered him to be near super-human. As before, they expected Fawcett to stumble out of the jungle, bearded and emaciated and announcing some fantastic discovery. It did not happen. Over the years, the search for Fawcett became more alluring than the search for El Dorado itself. Rescue efforts, from the serious to the farcical, materialized in the years that followed, and hundreds of others lost their lives in the search. Rewards were posted. Psychics were brought in by the family. Articles and books were written. For decades the legend of Percy Fawcett refused to die. The great mystery of what happened to Fawcett has never been solved, perhaps until now. In 2004, author David Grann discovered the story while researching another one. Soon, like hundreds before him, he became obsessed with the legend of the colorful adventurer and his baffling disappearance. Grann, a lifelong New Yorker with an admitted aversion to camping and mountain climbing, a lousy sense of direction, and an affinity for take-out food and air conditioning, soon found himself in the jungles of the . What he found there, some 80 years after Fawcett's disappearance, is a startling conclusion to this absorbing narrative. *The Lost City of Z* is a riveting, exciting and thoroughly compelling tale of adventure. (Photo Maki Galimberti) A QA with Author David Grann Question: When did you first stumble upon the story of Percy Fawcett and his search for an ancient civilization in the and when did you realize this particular story had you in the grip? David Grann: While I was researching a story on the mysterious death of the world's greatest Sherlock Holmes expert, I came upon a reference to Fawcett's role in inspiring Arthur Conan Doyle's novel *The Lost World*. Curious, I plugged Fawcett's name into a newspaper database and was amazed by the headlines that appeared, including **THREE MEN FACE CANNIBALS IN RELIC QUEST** and **tribesmen Seize Movie Actor Seeking to Rescue Fawcett**. As I read each story, I became more and more curious--about how Fawcett's quest for a lost city and his disappearance had captivated the world; how for decades hundreds of scientists and explorers had tried to find evidence of Fawcett's missing party and the City of Z; and how countless seekers had disappeared or died from starvation, diseases, attacks by wild animals, or poisonous arrows. What intrigued me most, though, was the notion of Z. For years most scientists had considered the brutal conditions in the largest jungle in the world inimical to humankind, but more recently some archeologists had begun to question this longstanding view and believed that a sophisticated civilization like Z might have existed. Such a discovery would challenge virtually everything that was believed about the nature of the and what the Americas

looked liked before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. Suddenly, the story had every tantalizing element--mystery, obsession, death, madness--as well as great intellectual stakes. Still, I probably didnt realize I was fully in the storys grip until I told my wife that I planned to take out an extra life insurance policy and follow Fawcetts trail into the . Q: Tell us about the discovery of Fawcetts previously unpublished diaries and logbooks. DG: Researching the book often felt like a kind of treasure hunt and nothing was more exciting than coming across these materials in an old chest in the house of one of Fawcetts grandchildren. Fawcett, who had been a British spy, was extremely secretive about his search for Z--in part because he didnt want his rivals to discover the lost city before he did and in part because he feared that too many people would die if they tried to follow in his wake. These old, crumbling diaries and logbooks held incredible clues to both Fawcetts life and death; whats more, they revealed a key to his clandestine route to the Lost City of Z. Q: In an attempt to retrace Fawcetts journey, many scientists and explorers have faced madness, kidnapping, and death. Did you ever hesitate to go to the ? DG: I probably should have been more hesitant, especially after reading some of the diaries of members of other parties that had scoured the for a lost city. One seeker of El Dorado described reaching a state of privation so great that we were eating nothing but leather, belts and soles of shoes, cooked with certain herbs, with the result that so great was our weakness that we could not remain standing. In that expedition alone, some four thousand men perished. Other explorers resorted to cannibalism. One searcher went so mad he stabbed his own child, whispering, Commend thyself to God, my daughter, for I am about to kill thee. But to be honest, even after reading these accounts, I was so consumed by the story that I did not think much about the consequences--and one of the themes I try to explore in the book is the lethal nature of obsession. Q: When you were separated from your guide Paolo on the way to the Kuikuro village and seemingly lost and alone in the jungle, what was going through your mind? DG: Besides fear, I kept wondering what the hell I was doing on such a mad quest. Q: Paolo and you made a game of imagining what happened to Fawcett in the . Without giving anything away about The Lost City of Z, I was wondering if you came away with any final conclusions? DG: I dont want to give too much away; but, after poring over Fawcetts final letters and dispatches from the expedition and after interviewing many of the tribes that Fawcett himself had encountered, I felt as if I had come as close as possible to knowing why Fawcett and his party vanished. Q: In his praise for your book, Malcolm Gladwell asks a central question of our age: In the battle between man and a hostile environment, who wins? Obviously, the jungle has won many times, but it seems man may be gaining. What are your thoughts on the deforestation taking place in the ? DG: It is a great tragedy. Over the last four decades in Brazil alone, the has lost some two hundred and seventy thousand square miles of its original forest cover--an area bigger than France. Many tribes, including some I visited, are being threatened with extinction. Countless animals and plants, many of them with potential medicinal purposes, are also vanishing. One of the things that the book explores is how early Native American societies were often able to overcome their hostile environment without destroying it. Unfortunately, that has not been the case with the latest wave of trespassers. Q: You began this journey as a man who doesnt like to camp and has a terrible sense of direction and tend[s] to forget where [you are] on the subway and miss[es] [your] stop in Brooklyn. Are you now an avid outdoorsman? DG: No. Once was enough for me! Q: Early in the book, you write, Ever since I was young, Ive been drawn to mystery and adventure tales. What have been some of your favorite books--past and present--that fall into this category? DG: Im a huge Sherlock Holmes fan, and every few years go back and read the stories again. I do the same with many of Joseph Conrads novels, including Lord Jim. Im always amazed at how he produced quest novels that reflected the Victorian era and yet seem to have been written with the wisdom of a historian looking back in time. As for more contemporary authors, I read a lot of crime fiction, especially the works of George Pelecanos and Michael Connelly. I also relish books, such as Jonathan Lethems Motherless Brooklyn, that cleverly play with this genre. Finally, there are the gripping yarns written by authors like Jon Krakauer and Nathaniel Philbrick--stories that are all the more spellbinding because they are true. Q: Brad Pitt and Paramount optioned The Lost City of Z in the spring. Any updates? DG: They have hired a screenwriter and director and seem to be moving forward at a good clip. Q: What are you working on now? DG: I recently finished a couple of crime stories for The New Yorker, including one about a Polish author who allegedly committed murder and then left clues about the real crime in his novel. Meanwhile, Im hoping to find a tantalizing story, like The Lost City of Z, that will lead to a new book. Q: Anything else youd like to add? DG: Just that I hope that readers will enjoy The Lost City of Z and find the story of Fawcett and his quest as captivating as I did. (Photo Matt Richman) Look Inside The Lost City of Z Click on thumbnails for larger images Percy Harrison Fawcett was considered the last of the individualist explorersthose who ventured into blank spots on the map with little more than a machete, a compass, and an almost divine sense of purpose. He is seen here in 1911, the year of his fourth major expedition. (Copyright R. de Montet-Guerin) Fawcett mapping the frontier between Brazil and Bolivia in 1908. (Courtesy of the Royal Geographical Society) Dr. Alexander Hamilton Rice, Fawcetts main rival, was a multimillionaire as much at home in the elegant swirl of Newport society as in the steaming jungles of Brazil. (Courtesy of the Royal Geographical Society) A member of Dr. Rices 1919-20 expedition deploys a wireless telegraphy setan early radioallowing the party to receive news from the outside world. (Courtesy of the Royal Geographical Society) From Publishers WeeklyStarred . In 1925, renowned British explorer Col. Percy Harrison Fawcett embarked on a much publicized search to find the city of Z, site of an ancient ian civilization that may or may

not have existed. Fawcett, along with his grown son Jack, never returned, but that didn't stop countless others, including actors, college professors and well-funded explorers from venturing into the jungle to find Fawcett or the city. Among the wannabe explorers is Grann, a staff writer for the New Yorker, who has bad eyes and a worse sense of direction. He became interested in Fawcett while researching another story, eventually venturing into the to satisfy his all-consuming curiosity about the explorer and his fatal mission. Largely about Fawcett, the book examines the stranglehold of passion as Grann's vigorous research mirrors Fawcett's obsession with uncovering the mysteries of the jungle. By interweaving the great story of Fawcett with his own investigative escapades in South America and Britain, Grann provides an in-depth, captivating character study that has the relentless energy of a classic adventure tale. (Feb.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Bookmarks Magazine Ever since Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, it has been difficult to think of a journey up a river into a jungle as anything but a journey to discover oneself. Similarly, reviewers seemed to find what they wanted in *The Lost City of Z*, even if some admitted that Grann's adventures, at times tedious, were not nearly as perilous or as larger-than-life as Fawcett's. Some critics read it as a boys' adventure story, tripping over themselves to find adjectives fit for Fawcett's derring-do. Others preferred to focus on Grann's somewhat ironic attempt to seek Z himself. And finally, some critics had it both ways, since, by the end of the book, Grann claims to have actually found Z, or something like it, with only British writer Simon Winchester willing to cry "the horror!" at his American colleague's lack of skepticism. Copyright 2009 Bookmarks Publishing LLC