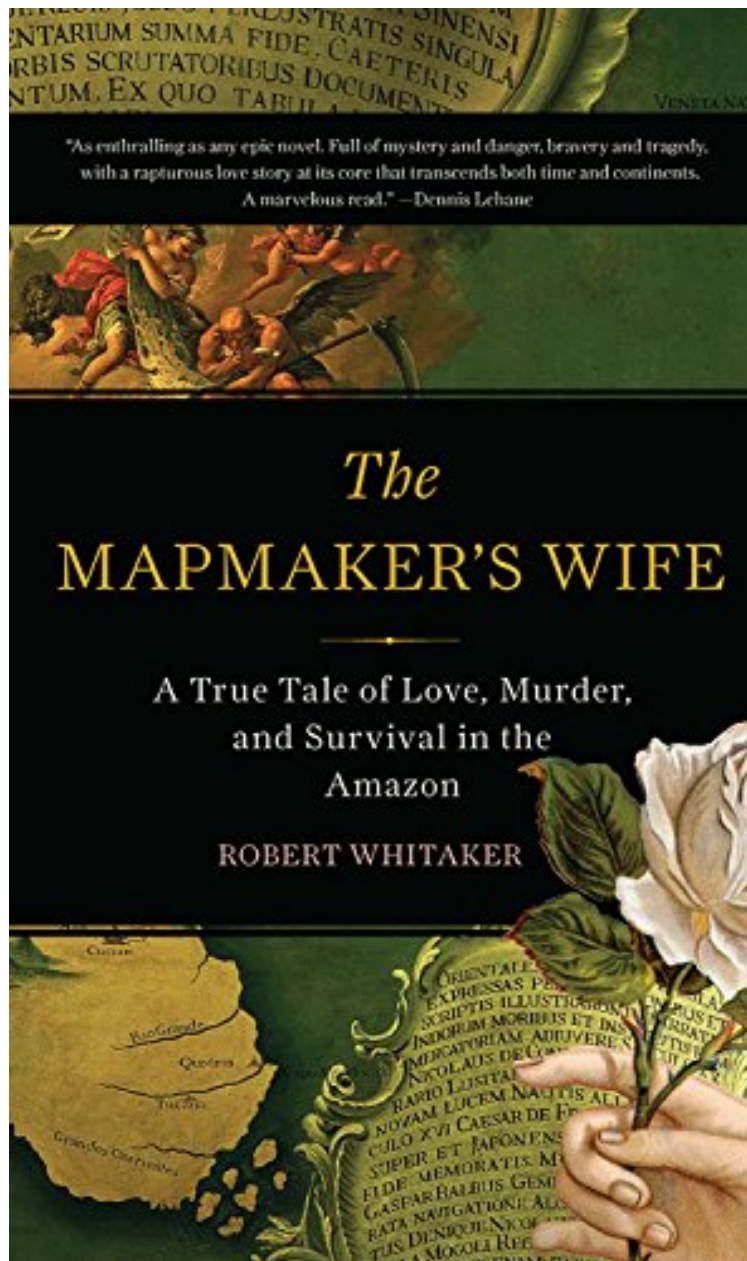


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# The Mapmaker's Wife: A True Tale Of Love, Murder, And Survival In The Amazon

Robert Whitaker

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#364479 in Books Whitaker Robert 2016-03-01 2016-03-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.25 x 1.00 x 5.561, 1.02 #File Name: 0465057942368 pages The Mapmaker s Wife A True Tale of Love Murder and Survival in the | File size: 50.Mb

Robert Whitaker : The Mapmaker's Wife: A True Tale Of Love, Murder, And Survival In The Amazon before

purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Mapmaker's Wife: A True Tale Of Love, Murder, And Survival In The Amazon*:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This is a fascinating true story of adventure and science ...By Quantum libet  
This is a fascinating true story of adventure and science in what is now Ecuador during the 1730s. The scientific part involves the expedition of members of the Acadmie franaise to measure a meridian arc at the equator and to compare its measurement with one measured in "Lapland." The object of the enterprise was to determine whether Isaac Newton's description of Earth as flattened at the poles because of the planet's rotation or elongated at the poles as postulated by other scientists. The French scientists struggled for years in the inhospitable Andean terrain to obtain accurate measurements and proved that Newton correct. One lowly member member of the French team was Jean Godin, who married Isabel Gramesn of a high-ranking family of the Spanish Viceroyaltyof Peru. Godin's plan to return to France with his pregnant wife involved exploring the downstream for its entire length and returning upstream to collect his wife. Godin spent 20 years (1749-69) in this enterprise, at which point she set out in search of him and suffered even more horrific experiences than her husband had during the interval.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Name of the book misleadingBy Was It Worth Purchasing  
This was an unread (by everyone in my book club) book club read. Although very interesting and informative, it was very a laborious read. I read a lot (2 books a week) and it is one of the first books I had to keep putting down and going back to later. Everyone in my book club was in agreement that the name of the book is misleading. It had about one chapter solely dedicated to the wife and that was at the end of the book. After discussing the book, however, many of the ladies rated it at least a 4 star due to the scientific value, exploration, flora and fauna collection and all around bravery of the men who were willing to die doing what they did.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Intriguing True Story, Rich in History, and Proving Once Again that Love Conquers AllBy Kristi Black  
I read the *Mapmaker's Wife* because we are currently visiting Ecuador and I enjoy reading stories about places I have been. Even though the story takes places in the 18th Century, I was ecstatic to not only be familiar with many of the locations, but that the place where we are currently staying is directly across the street from where one of the sub-plots occurred! I got a lot more than expected from this true story. The author delves deep into the expedition of a group of French Scientists that came to the equator to conduct the measurements to once and for all solve the argument of the size and shape of the earth. While there, Jean Godin, one of the Assistant's to the expedition marries Isabel, a daughter from one of the local well-to-do families. The couple end up being separated for over a 20-year period. Separated by the hazards of the jungle, both Jean and Isabel never gave up hope to be reunited with one another. Isabel, after waiting years for Jean to come back to Peru, sets out on a journey through the dangerous , something that was unheard of and thought to be impossible for a woman during that time. Though the title of the book is misleading, it is well written and the reader quickly comes to appreciate the in depth research the author conducted in order to put us right there from colonial Peru to deep in the jungle.

In the early years of the 18th century, a band of French scientists set off on a daring, decade-long expedition to South America in a race to measure the precise shape of the earth. Like Lewis and Clark's exploration of the American West, their incredible mission revealed the mysteries of a little-known continent to a world hungry for discovery. Scaling 16,000foot mountains in the Peruvian Andes, and braving jaguars, pumas, insects, and vampire bats in the jungle, the scientists barely completed their mission. One was murdered, another perished from fever, and a third-Jean Godin-nearly died of heartbreak. At the expedition's end, Jean and his Peruvian wife, Isabel Gramesn, became stranded at opposite ends of the Amazon, victims of a tangled web of international politics. Isabel's solo journey to reunite with Jean after their calamitous twenty-year separation was so dramatic that it left all of 18th-century Europe spellbound. Her survival-unprecedented in the annals of Amazon exploration-was a testament to human endurance, female resourcefulness, and the power of devotion.Drawing on the original writings of the French mapmakers, as well as his own experience retracing Isabel's journey, acclaimed writer Robert Whitaker weaves a riveting tale rich in adventure, intrigue, and scientific achievement. Never before told, *The Mapmaker's Wife* is an epic love story that unfolds against the backdrop of "the greatest expedition the world has ever known."

From Publishers WeeklyAs was customary for girls from elite families in 18th-century colonial Peru, Isabel Gramesn was barely a teenager when she married Jean Godin, a Frenchman visiting the territory as an assistant on a scientific expedition. Planning to bring his wife back to France, Godin trekked across South America to check in with the French colonial authorities, but was refused permission to return up the back into Spanish territory to retrieve Isabel. So they remained a continent apart for 20 years until 1769, when Isabel started making her way east. Her party ran aground on the Bobonaza River (which feeds into the ), and though almost everyone perished, she managed to survive alone in the rainforest for weeks. Although science journalist Whitaker doesn't directly refer to his own modern trek following Isabel's route down the Bobonaza, his descriptions of the conditions she would have encountered convey his familiarity with the territory, often quite viscerally, ("There are giant stinging ants, ants that bite, and ants that both bite and sting"). His account of the French expedition that brought Godin to Peru and then separated him from his new

wife is equally vivid, with exhilarating discoveries and petty squabbles--and richly illustrated with contemporary drawings. Though an early, long digression tracing the history of attempts to measure the size of the earth may establish the context a little too solidly, making some readers impatient, they'll certainly be hooked once the story really begins. Isabel and Jean's adventures are riveting enough on their own, and colonial South America's largely unfamiliar history adds another compelling layer to this well-crafted yarn. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From School Library Journal  
Adult/High School  
Whitaker merges a gripping account of scientific exploration with an amazing story of survival in the wilderness. For those who think of the Enlightenment only in terms of sedate Paris salons, this book will alter that image forever. The best minds of Europe in the 1730s knew that the Earth was not perfectly round, but the exact size and shape were in hot debate. Someone figured out that to nail down the answer certain data was needed, and that the best place to get that data was at the equator. Given the technological and political realities of the time, that meant one place: Peru. A scientific expedition was organized in Paris and sent to the New World in 1735. After 10 years of incredible hardships and setbacks, it accomplished its mission (and a host of other enlightenments along the way). As captivating as this story proved to be, another developed: a young member of the party met, fell in love with, and married an upper-class, 13-year-old Peruvian girl. Due to a tangled swirl of unfortunate events, this couple became separated for 20 years (beginning just before the birth of their only child). Finally, in 1769, Isabel Grameson set off on a trek through the most inhospitable of jungles to rejoin her husband in French Guiana. The author's depiction of that harrowing journey is the crowning jewel of this outstanding volume.

Robert Saunderson, Berkeley Public Library, CA  
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From Booklist  
\*Starred \* Only an exceptional life could connect the Enlightenment salons of Paris with the tribal villages of the jungle. Peruvian-born Isabel Grameson lived such a life, and now a prizewinning science writer has retraced its improbable course in a riveting narrative. That story begins with eighteenth-century physicists debating theoretical issues that only observers positioned in South America can resolve. But the French academics who set out to make these observations soon leave behind the empyreal world of pure formulas: only by traversing unmapped rivers, scaling Andean peaks, enduring vexatious insects, and pacifying murderous Peruvians do these resolute savants obtain the longitudinal data they seek. Ultimately, though, these scientific adventurers endure the disappointment of seeing their work validate a British rather than a French paradigm! Finally, too, the expedition sees all its scientific valor eclipsed by the heroism of one beautiful young Peruvian woman--Isabel Grameson--who marries one of the group's cartographers. For it is this woman who--when cruelly separated from her husband--braves perils far beyond those faced by the scientists. Readers can only marvel at how Isabel survives a rain-forest journey (personally repeated, afoot and afloat, by Whitaker) that claims the lives of all of her companions and leaves her stranded and presumed dead. A rare story, taut with intellectual controversy, romantic passion, and harrowing danger.

Bryce Christensen  
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