



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

David Grann

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A grand mystery reaching back centuries. A sensational disappearance that made headlines around the world. A quest for truth that leads to death, madness or disappearance for those who seek to solve it. *The Lost City of Z* is a blockbuster adventure narrative about what lies beneath the impenetrable jungle canopy of the Amazon.

After stumbling upon a hidden trove of diaries, New Yorker writer David Grann set out to solve "the greatest exploration mystery of the 20th century": What happened to the British explorer Percy Fawcett & his quest for the Lost City of Z?

In 1925, Fawcett ventured into the Amazon to find an ancient civilization, hoping to make one of the most important discoveries in history. For centuries Europeans believed the world's largest jungle concealed the glittering kingdom of El Dorado. Thousands had died looking for it, leaving many scientists convinced that the Amazon was truly inimical to humans. But Fawcett, whose daring expeditions inspired Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*, had spent years building his scientific case. Captivating the imagination of millions round the globe, Fawcett embarked with his 21-year-old son, determined to prove that this ancient civilisation--which he dubbed Z--existed. Then his expedition vanished. Fawcett's fate, & the tantalizing clues he left behind about Z, became an obsession for hundreds who followed him into the uncharted wilderness.

For decades scientists & adventurers have searched for evidence of Fawcett's party & the lost City of Z. Countless have perished, been captured by tribes or gone mad. As Grann delved ever deeper into the mystery surrounding Fawcett's quest, & the greater mystery of what lies within the Amazon, he found himself, like the generations who preceded him, being irresistibly drawn into the jungle's green hell. His quest for the truth & discoveries about Fawcett's fate & Z form the heart of this complexly enthralling narrative.

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

Date : Published February 24th 2009 by Doubleday/Random House (NY) (first published January 1st 2009)

ISBN : 9780385513531

Author : David Grann

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, History, Adventure, Travel, Biography

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From Reader Review *The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon* for online ebook

Diane says

Reading this book helped clarify one of my life goals, which is TO NEVER GET STRANDED IN THE AMAZON JUNGLE.

Seriously, that place would kill me. There's the threat of piranhas, electric eels, venomous snakes, vampire fish, vampire bats, disease-carrying mosquitoes, dangerous spiders, poisonous plants... and about a hundred other scary things. I fear the jungle because I respect it.*

I also respect those who have set out to explore the jungle — many of whom have died or disappeared. Some of those folks are the subject of David Grann's fascinating book, *The Lost City of Z*. Grann himself became a bit obsessed with the Amazon, hoping to discover what happened to the British explorer Percy Fawcett, who went missing in the Amazon in 1925. Fawcett had been searching for an ancient civilization, nicknamed Z, and after he disappeared, dozens of people also went into the Amazon trying to find him and the lost city. Some never returned.

This book is part travelogue, part history, part outdoor adventure. I really enjoyed reading it (even though descriptions of the jungle are terrifying) and I'm looking forward to watching the movie that is based on this book. This is the third Grann book I've read this year — I also recommend *Killers of the Flower Moon* and *The Devil and Sherlock Holmes* — and I've become such a fan of Grann's work that I'll happily read his future books.

Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go buy some antivenom and mosquito nets. JUST TO BE SAFE.

*Note: Another great-and-terrifying book about the Amazon jungle is Candice Millard's *The River of Doubt*. Highly recommended.

Meaningful Passage

"For nearly a century, explorers have sacrificed everything, even their lives, to find the City of Z. The search for the civilization, and for the countless men who vanished while looking for it, has eclipsed the Victorian quest novels of Arthur Conan Doyle and H. Rider Haggard — both of whom, as it happens, were drawn into the real-life hunt for Z. At times, I had to remind myself that everything in this story is true: a movie star really was abducted by Indians; there were cannibals, ruins, secret maps, and spies; explorers died from starvation, disease, attacks by wild animals, and poisonous arrows; and at stake amid the adventure and death was the very understanding of the Americas before Christopher Columbus came ashore in the New World."

Kemper says

We've all been wrong on this whole rainforest issue. We don't need to SAVE the rainforest. We need to DESTROY the rainforest. Immediately.

I knew that the Amazon was a hostile environment, but I was really shocked at the variety of horrific ways that the jungle will kill a person. You've got your standard malaria and yellow fever. Then there's the

piranha, the electric eels, the anacondas, the coral snakes or the poisonous toads that are so toxic that one of them could kill a hundred people. Still not convinced? How about the tiny fish that will swim into any orifice and proceed to do things so terrible that sometimes men had to be castrated to survive.

That's not even talking about the bugs. Sure, the mosquitoes spread disease, but there's also a variety of maggot that will infect living tissue. Ants that can eat your clothes in a single night. Chiggers that eat human tissue. Cyanide squirting millipedes. Parasitic worms that cause blindness. Bugs that plant larvae under the skin where it will hatch later. 'Kissing bugs' that bite the lips but the victim doesn't die until 20 years later when their brain or heart swells.

Even if that doesn't kill you, you'd probably starve to death in what is described as a counterfeit paradise. Because even though there's all kinds of plants and animals, good luck finding anything edible. Avoid the animals, the disease, the bugs, injury, and starving to death, and you're still screwed when hostile natives catch you, eat you and use your skull as their favorite coffee mug.

To hell with the Amazon. Burn or bulldoze all of it and sow the earth with salt. That treacherous hellhole has to be obliterated before it can spread. And I don't want to hear about global warming or any nonsense about generating most of the world's oxygen. We can breathe shallow, people!

Old Percy Fawcett was a veteran explorer who mounted several expeditions into the Amazon and somehow managed to escape with his life. But he got obsessed with finding the mythical ruins of an El Dorado-type city and led his son and another poor bastard to some kind of gruesome deaths. The mystery of what happened to him led to countless deaths from other dumb asses trekking into the jungle to look for them.

The guy who wrote the book knew all this and he was still stupid enough to go in there. He somehow lived through it, but I think the message is clear. Stay out!

Denise says

Incredible reviews, national best seller, interesting subject matter, well written, extensively researched and yet it did nothing for me. EPIC FAIL. Not sure why but I had a hard time getting through it without falling asleep every other page. Too many details, too many names, too many stories, too much repetition (I get it, the AMAZON is incredibly dangerous). The first half just dragged and dragged. I am glad that I made myself finish it otherwise I would have nothing positive to say. I will admit after trudging through the back story, the intensity took off and my interest was held until the end. Unfortunately, more than half the book had been begrudgingly read by then. To illustrate: first half took two and a half weeks, last half took two days. Might not have been my thing but I can totally see why others would find it compelling and I did learn some things that I would otherwise not know. Apparently, there is a PBS special on Fawcett and this last expedition and I wouldn't mind watching it based on reading this book so evidently it wasn't a total loss. Hate to be sexist but it seems that men enjoyed this book more than women. As for me, I must be too practical and without an adventuresome bone in my body because I kept screaming "Stop going in to that godforsaken jungle, people!".

Dem says

A terrific adventure story, full of suspense and intrigue and lots of historical detail to keep the reader interested. I am not really a reader of adventure stories but every now and again one comes along that catches my interest and when a trusted Goodread's friend recommend this I just had to give it a try and see exactly what the Lost City of Z was all about.

In 1925, British explorer Percy Fawcett and his son journey into the Amazon jungle, in search of what for centuries Europeans believed the jungle was holding secret..... " The ancient city of Z" an advanced civilization that many believed to have once inhabited the jungle. Unfortunately the party never returned and over the years countless perished trying to find evidence of the party and the place they called "The Lost City of Z." In this book David Grann traces their steps.

I really enjoyed this non fiction read about Percy Fawcett and his obsession and adventures in the Amazon. I particularly enjoyed how the author weaved suspense, history and geography together in this book and I was entertained as well as educated which really added to my enjoyment of the read.

Its an extremely well written and entertaining book and I couldn't help but admire these explorers (and their families) who risked everything for adventure. I think readers who like non fiction and adventure and history will really enjoy this book.

I listened to this one on audio and the narration was excellent but as always with audio I cant help wondering if the hard copy had photos and maps which I would have missed out on in the audio.

Trish says

What a great read. For really the first time I understood the fascination with the phrase 'armchair traveller.' In other circumstances, I always thought it was somewhat absurd to think that reading about a thing was as fun as doing it. In this case, it was *a lot* more fun to read about it than to do it. Pit vipers, swarms of biting insects, interminable wet, death by maggots...and in all of it, a frustrating mystery. At its heart, this is a story of the search for a magnificent civilization in the heart of the Amazon, with vast earthworks paralleled only by great cities on the European continent. This is a book to make you think about what man is: his determination, his understanding, his folly, his ego, and how some of us have these things in greater measure than others.

Heidi The Hippie Reader says

A well-researched tale by journalist David Grann about Percy Fawcett, the intrepid explorer who disappeared in the Amazon jungle on his search for the city he called 'Z'.

The part in this book that I appreciated the most was Fawcett's struggle to learn about and appreciate the cultures of the people he discovered in the Amazon, while at the same time, juggling his own biases against any culture other than his own.

In some ways, he was a product of his time, but the fact that Fawcett at least tried to understand different cultures made him different than other explorers of his age.

It's only a small part in a larger tale full of adventure, exploration and discovery.

The tid-bits about the jungle, mentioned by other reviewers on Goodreads, I first learned about in *The River of Doubt* by Candice Millard. <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7...>

The narrative in *River of Doubt* was more focused than this novel, but Millard was talking about one trip, not multiple trips or explorers.

There's a lot of weird stuff that goes on in the jungle. Read either of these books to find out all about it.

Recommended for fans of non-fiction. If you're looking for a more straight-forward adventure tale than this wandering title, choose *River of Doubt*.

Will Byrnes says

Be careful when you pick this book up. You won't want to put it down. In 1925, Percy Harrison Fawcett, armed with information only he had unearthed, accompanied by his son, his son's best friend and a small company of bearers and support personnel, headed off into the Amazonian wilderness in search of a large, ancient, fabled city, the City of Z. Fawcett, his son, Jack, and Jack's friend, Raleigh, were never seen again. There were many attempts by later explorers of varying levels of expertise to find Fawcett, or at least to learn definitively of his fate. Professional writer David Grann joins that horde, armed with little or no experience as an outdoorsman and having his athletic prowess honed by years as a subway-riding resident of Brooklyn. Not, perhaps, the likeliest starting point. He sets out on a strenuous enterprise in an attempt to explain this 80 year old mystery.

David Grann

While Grann's book is non-fiction, it reads like an H. Rider Haggard action adventure novel. You will feel palpable excitement as Grann digs up first one then another then another clue as to where Fawcett might have wound up. He follows research directions ignored or unsuspected by prior investigators, to great advantage. I won't spoil the ending by telling what he does or does not find. That is almost beside the point.

It is the journey that counts here, and part of that journey is the window Grann offers on a part of the history of exploration, the sort of people who were drawn to it, their reasons, their personalities, the effect of their quests (or obsessions, depending) on their careers, families and on the body of human knowledge. We learn also of competing theories about the potential for the Amazon to support a large, urban population. Grann shows, as well, the challenges, the horrors of trying to traverse one of the most unwelcoming areas on earth. This is a very entertaining, very informative and very engaging journey.

The Film was released in the USA - 4/14/17

=====EXTRA STUFF

Links to the author's personal, Twitter and FB pages>

Once Hidden by Forest, Carvings in Land Attest to Amazon's Lost World
New York Times: January 14, 2012

Jeffrey Keeten says

"How easily the Amazon can deceive.

It begins as barely a rivulet, this, the mightiest river in the world, mightier than the Nile and the Ganges, mightier than the Mississippi and all the rivers in China. Over eighteen thousand feet high in the Andes, amid snow and clouds, it emerges through a rocky seam--a trickle of crystal water."

By the time it reaches the ocean, the estuary of the Amazon river at the mouth is 202 miles wide. A trickle becomes one of the mightiest forces on the planet.

Colonel Percy Fawcett, the legend that launched a thousand explorers.

Candice Millard, in her book about Theodore Roosevelt's trip through the Amazon, summed it up nicely: **"The rainforest was not a garden of easy abundance, but precisely the opposite. Its quiet, shaded halls of leafy opulence were not a sanctuary, but rather the greatest natural battlefield on the planet, hosting an unremitting and remorseless fight for survival that occupied every single one of its inhabitants, every minute of every day."**

David Grann, the author, became fascinated with Colonel Percy Fawcett after he stumbled upon a treasure trove of his journals. He wasn't alone. Thousands have also found his story fascinating; hundreds have been so inspired by him as to go into the Amazonian jungle in search of him, their heads dancing with visions of being the next Henry Morton Stanley to find a famous missing explorer.

There are as many visions of what El Dorado looks like as there are explorers to look for it.

On his final journey to the Amazon in 1925, Fawcett was determined to finally find El Dorado, or the City of Z as he liked to call it, but he...**disappeared without a trace.**

Not that it is difficult to disappear in a jungle as dangerous as the Amazon. Everything from the most microscopic insect to infections to pumas are trying to kill you, not to mention the local tribesmen who may think you are interesting enough to let live or even more interesting to roast on a spit. There was one description that made me shiver: *"Espundia, an illness with even more frightening symptoms. Caused by a parasite transmitted by sand flies, it destroys the flesh around the mouth, nose, and limbs, as if the person were slowly dissolving. 'It develops into...a mass of leprous corruption.'"*

So why do Amazonian explorers insist on trying to conquer such an inhospitable place?

Because it is there.

But also because there are people who feel an itch so intense that they have to go somewhere as far away from people as possible. *"Indeed, some might say that explorers become explorers precisely because they have a streak of unsociability and a need to remove themselves at regular intervals as far as possible from*

their fellow men.” I resemble that comment, but my solution is less glamorous. I’m more likely to descend into the bowels of my library and let my books take me to Istanbul, Manchu Picchu, Gettysburg, or even, yes, to places as inhospitable as the Amazon. I can navigate the river without coming down with some hideous infection or being drained dry by a vampire bat because my arm flopped outside the netting in the middle of the night or feel the sting of a poisonous arrow puncturing my neck. My martini stays dry and at the proper temperature, too.

Besides the desire for discovery, Fawcett was fortunate to have an iron constitution. While other members of his party were dropping like flies from a host of illnesses or injuries, he just marched on. He lost several key years to the trenches of WW1, and when he emerged from the war to start finding funding for his final trip, he discovered that his patron, the Royal Geological Society, was broke. He had to find financing elsewhere. America beckoned.

Fawcett believed in small parties rather than large, heavily armed parties for exploring the Amazon. He had a rule that I think said a lot about his character, but also about his depth of wisdom. **”Die if you must, but never kill.”** Unlike other European and American explorers, he was not in love with his guns. He was there to explore and discover, not conquer.

Percy’s son Jack Fawcett looking very fit for his venture into the jungle.

Decades after his final dispatch from the jungle, Fawcett’s wife and remaining family (he took his teenage son Jack with him) continued to believe that one day he would emerge from the jungle with a tale so epic that only Homer could tell it properly. Grann, too, like so many others before him, became infatuated with what became of Fawcett. He is not made in the same mold as Fawcett, or really any explorer. He is short, pudgy, and not athletic, but he is helped by some modern conveniences that Fawcett would have snickered at the prospect of using. If you so dare, strap on your machete and hack your way through the Amazon with Fawcett, and see if the jungle will eat you or make you into a legend.

”Those whom the Gods intend to destroy they first make mad!”

The movie was released April 17th, 2017. I have not had a chance to watch it yet.

As a companion volume, I would recommend reading Candace Millard’s equally fascinating book *The River of Doubt*.

If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews, visit <http://www.jeffreykeeten.com>
I also have a Facebook blogger page at: <https://www.facebook.com/JeffreyKeeten>

Jason Koivu says

This will make you feel like a kid again! It will ignite a Jonny Quest kind of desire for adventure, to dive into the jungle in search of lost worlds.

This will also quench most desires to ever take one step closer to a jungle.

"Z" is supposedly a long lost South American city of a once powerful people. Think El Dorado. Did it ever really exist? Finding out was the self-imposed task of an almost legend of a man who lives up to the myth:

Famous British explorer Percy Harrison Fawcett...

A military man with an athlete's physique and a cast iron constitution, Fawcett made the perfect explorer. As fortune would have it, he lived in a time and place where conquering the last of our Earth's unknowns was in high fashion: Victorian England.

I've read a few of these sorts of books and I've come to expect the unavoidable asides. After all, to take this book as an example, there is always going to be more to the story than just one man trying to find one lost city. *The Lost City of Z* is fattened by many an aside discussing the myriad of Victorian era explorers who threw themselves into harm's way for glory and adventure. It was almost like a game to them, a great race to see who could get there first, be it the depths of the jungle or the arctic pole.

Author David Grann juggles these stories well, never dropping the main story, at least no more than necessary to incorporate the interesting details from these off-shoot tales that help the reader to better understand the mindset of the times or to underscore the perils of such treks into the unknown.

In the process of putting this book together, tracking Fawcett became Grann's adventure. However, it turned out to be one shared by many.

Fawcett went on numerous South American explorations with varying degrees of success and always emerging - though slightly worse for wear - in relatively good health compared to the many who perished along the way. However, after disappearing into the jungle one last time, with his son and a friend in-tow on this occasion, Fawcett disappeared forever. In the years that followed, finding Fawcett became a new kind of sport that swept the world. Many expeditions set out to find and bring the man back, dead or alive.

As you read *The Lost City of Z* you begin to form the opinion that "dead" is the only possible outcome for anyone foolish enough to set foot in the jungle. Grann's descriptions of the jungle's deprivations felt to me like watching a David Attenborough nature program in Feel-o-vision...every sting, bite and virulent disease feels like its invading your body. I itched unconsciously at every mention of the ubiquitous insects. I swore my skin crept and I could feel a fever coming on. So, if you've got Indiana Jones aspirations, this is the cure!

Sara says

The Lost City of Z by David Grann is exceptional book that I can altogether recommend to every variety of reader. This well-rendered and deeply researched biography of Percy Fawcett, centers on his all consuming obsession with the Lost City of Z (evidence of a great but forgotten jungle civilization), the international fever that follows his mysterious disappearance and some of the more exciting tidbits of Grann's journey to piece together Fawcett's tale.

The book is unrelenting in its portrayal of everything Fawcett—you will find yourself deep in the Amazonian Jungle from the first page and racing through the subsequent pages to a surprising conclusion. It boasts unbelievably TRUE stories of savages, cannibalism, kidnappings, murder, torture, mutiny, starvation, massive hoaxes, madness and exotic deaths. Not only is this a astonishing biography, it's also a fantastic adventure story.

Nancy Oakes says

I picked up this book and was immediately lost between the covers and could not stop reading until I had finished the entire thing. That's how good this book is.

The author sets forth the story of Colonel Percy Harrison Fawcett, a British explorer who in 1925 set out on an expedition to the Amazon to find what he had named the "lost city of Z." He was convinced that an ancient and "highly cultured" people lived in the Amazon of Brazil, untouched by modern civilization, and that they lived in a great city in a valley somewhere. He spent years doing research and gathering evidence for the existence of this place in order to get funding for expeditions into Brazil's interior. On the 1925 expedition, he took his son, Jack, and Jack's best friend, both eager to be part of a mission that would make history. But shortly after they had arrived into the Amazon area, all communications ceased, and while their movements were traced to a point, nothing concrete was ever heard regarding the three explorers. Their disappearance, and the publicity following the mission from which they never returned, prompted years worth of explorers trying to locate any trace of Fawcett, his son, and his son's friend, even as late as 1996. Too bad for those left behind, Fawcett, who was facing a lot of competition from others exploring the Amazon at the time, and worried that these other explorers might find the lost city of Z before he would, kept his route a very closely guarded secret, so it was pretty much impossible for anyone to go in to either locate bodies, effect a rescue or even trace with any accuracy the steps taken by Fawcett and his group. Although Fawcett's wife refused to believe that her husband and son were gone, they had pretty much just vanished off the face of the earth. Grann, who writes for the New Yorker, decided to try to find Fawcett's route and discover what had happened to him once and for all. This book not only traces Grann's efforts, but takes the reader back into the Victorian period, at the peak of the British Empire, to look at exactly who Percy Fawcett was. It also examines old and modern views of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon as well as offers a glimpse of the fate of the rain forest in modern times.

Simply stunning and superb, I loved this book so much that I pre-ordered a copy for when it is released for the general reading public. The writing is excellent, the mystery surrounding Fawcett's disappearance is well portrayed, and the amount of effort that Grann went to in his research is very much apparent here. If you are looking for something entirely different that will mesmerize you instantly, you cannot miss this book. I had never heard about any of this up until now, & my curiosity has been sparked enough that I made notes and took down book titles to fill in some holes in my knowledge.

I cannot recommend this book highly enough, and I would like to thank Doubleday for sending me this book and also those on Shelf Awareness for offering it as an ARC. It is an excellent piece of writing.

Mara says

You can see how someone, perhaps someone who goes by the alias of Kemper, would read this book and come to the conclusion that we need to destroy the rainforest immediately (see review and comments that follow for a glimpse at the behaviors of peoples who have never before come into contact with sarcasm).

Seriously though, as noted in my review of Candice Millard's *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey*, and further evidenced in reading this tale, the jungle is a punishing, dangerous place. As per usual, I'll refer to Sterling Archer for wisdom (see *River of Doubt* review), "***Everything out here either wants to eat me or give me malaria!***"*

The hunt for the *City of Z* follows the footsteps of professional explorer and part-time crazy person, Percy Fawcett (below, in an image which also suggests he may have been a Sherlock Holmes cos-play enthusiast), who went down jungle-yonder in search of the real-world, lost civilization equivalent of *El Dorado*.

Fawcett would probably be appalled by any comparisons with Roosevelt, but they *did* both take their sons into the unforgiving tropical environs and raise the hackles of the culturally-competent Marechal Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon (below yucking it up with an indigenous peoples).

Big difference between Fawcett and TR? Fawcett never came back. Seen below with fellow explorer and guide Raleigh Rimell shortly before the expedition vanished, Fawcett's story, in the hands of David Grann was equal parts *River of Doubt* and *Skyjack: The Hunt for D.B. Cooper* as tales unravel of the many minds and/or lives lost in attempts to solve the mystery of a missing man.

So what's Grann's take on all this jungle business? Well, pretty darn similar to Millard's who he, in fact, quotes in her description of the deathcage smackdown that is Amazonia:

The rainforest was not a garden of easy abundance, but precisely the opposite. Its quiet, shaded halls of leafy opulence were not a sanctuary, but rather the greatest natural battlefield anywhere on the planet, hosting an unrelenting and remorseless fight for survival that occupied every single one of its inhabitants, every minute of every day.

Why such hysteria? Well you've got your classics- poisonous snakes, jaguars, and crocodiles ("*aka the world's most deadliest predators*"- Archer's words, not Grann's). There's also a boatload of clever camouflage going down, *para exaple* (Portuguese) a caterpillar that makes itself look like a viper.

If you manage to avoid getting a fish lodged in your orifices, you still have disease to contend with. In addition to quotidian little things like Malaria, there's *espundia*.

"an illness...caused by a parasite transmitted by sand flies, it destroys the flesh around the mouth, nose, and limbs, as if the person were slowly dissolving."

Obviously there are pictures of what that little gem of an illness can do on the internet, but even I have my

limits. Oh, and also the reaction to white men waltzing into a camp of natives isn't always predictable.

A fascinating, fun read that probably would have been a bit more riveting if I hadn't read *The River of Doubt* quite so recently. Three and a half stars!

Bonus Archer Jungle Zing:

"What? I don't think it's racist to assume that a previously uncontacted tribe of indigenous peoples might react unpredictably, perhaps even wildly, to a bunch of white guys who walk up and hand them a goddamn M16!"

*Yes, I *know* that's from Pipeline Fever, which takes place in the everglades, but it still applies. Who am I lead storyboard artist Chad Hurd?

Jaya says

Part biography, of? renowned British explorer *Percy Fawcett* and part autobiographical travelogue interspersed with bits of history of myriad obsessive attempts across centuries to explore and reveal the ?location? of the ?legendary city of **El Dorado?**

The description of Fawcett's expeditions felt harrowing and blood-curling at times, them being plagued by incessant deadly mosquitoes, fleas, poisonous snakes & plants, bodies being invaded by maggots, vampire bats, pirhanas and not to forget the indigenous inhabitants of the Amazon.

The character of Fawcett unfurled as the book progressed from perfect English gentleman, a fearless army colonel to an accomplished explorer but so obsessed with his cause that it rendered him bankrupt during his last days. I can't say I appreciated the man as I got to know more about him as the book progressed.

So all in all an interesting 3.25 starred read, there was no closure to the mystery after-all....

Richard Derus says

Rating: 4.5* of five

This review has been revised and can now be found at Expendable Mudge Muses Aloud.

Real-life Indiana Jones doesn't come back from this one.

2017 Movie News: Go watch the trailer for this Amazon Studios film. I'll wait. Okay, now go read the Rotten Tomatoes aggregation. Won't take long.

Now. A four-plus star book review from me and a host of other sources, agreement among critics from *Den*

of *Geek* all the way to *The Nation*, and a cast of pretty, pretty actors...plus the fact that it's an Amazon Studios original appearing hot on the heels of their Golden Globe-winning *Manchester by the Sea*, makes this a super-promising April 2017 must-see. Amazon might very well be Satan, I can't say I agree but there's a chorus of unhappy people from contractors to suppliers to anti-globalization zealots who say it is, but Satan's offering us a lot of really great inducements to forget his agenda. Amazon's Prime streaming service alone is worth the \$100 a year it costs. I love that so much of Amazon Studios' output is book-based. Calculated or not, it's a great thing to see the filmed entertainment industry gain a player that mines the immense vein of unadapted written work instead of churning out sequels and comic book heroes and the occasional bland screensaver-level movie.

But...having Prime-watched it...it is a disappointing film, and I was so hoping for something outstanding. It's gorgeous. It's utterly gorgeous. It's a Prime freebie and deserves watching for the cinematography. The WWI bits are pornily lovely, in love with their violence but curiously unmoving like porn. But the damned film isn't anything like as effective as the book! I am not, as you who read my reviews regularly are aware, a knee-jerk book's better boy. In this case, goddammit, the book's better at getting you in the feelz. PS Charlie Hunnam is gorgeous but wrong for this role. He does a creditable job with some slim writing but isn't pulling Percy out of his pockets. Robert Pattinson is outstanding as his second-in-command. I don't care about Sienna Miller anyway, and Nina is forgettable.

Jonathan Ashleigh says

I wish this book would have been fiction so the reader would find out the ending. It seems to me that the story begins over and over but there is no closure.
