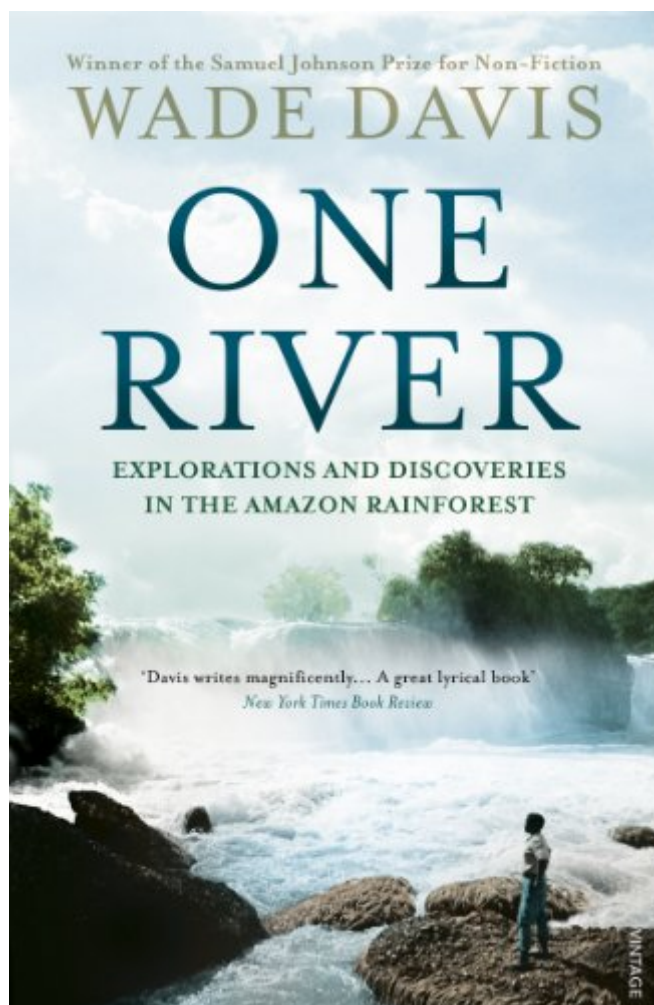


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One River: Explorations And Discoveries In The Rain Forest



Synopsis

From the author of INTO THE SILENCE, winner of the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction In 1941, Richard Evans Schultes took a leave of absence from Harvard University and disappeared into the Northern of Colombia. The world's leading authority on the hallucinogens and medicinal plants of the region, he returned after twelve years of travelling through South America in a dug-out canoe, mapping uncharted rivers, living among local tribes and documenting the knowledge of shamans. Thirty years later, his student Wade Davis landed in Bogota to follow in his mentor's footsteps " so creating an epic tale of undaunted adventure, a compelling work of natural history and a testament to the spirit of scientific exploration.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Strangely enough, one of the best books I've ever read. I am a Richard Evan Schultes fan boy in some sense, but my God, his life was as close to an "Indiana Jones of Drugs" as you can get. But he wasn't a hippie or new age goofball in any sense of the word, just loved plants, science, and

plants that mess with humans.

Dr. Davis' *One River* carries the reader on an unforgettable journey through the twentieth-century Amazonian rainforest. Providing an intimate glimpse into the travels of the legendary ethnobotanist Richard Schultes and his graduate students, Davis weaves a fascinating history of mentor and student, lured collectively to the Amazon wilderness to explore its plants and people. A remarkable storyteller, Davis illuminates the incredible reality of these indigenous peoples and their extensive ecological relationships with an understanding of science and appreciation for mysticism that few others are able to offer.

I gave it five stars but it was not as good as *"Serpent and the Rainbow"*. Also two other things bothered me, one the strong focus on drug plants and highs, two that the author's explorations contributed to the exploitation and subsequent destruction of jungle and peoples. Otherwise the book was very entertaining, informative and about a place no-one can return to.

Very well written book about discovery of new species of plants and how people lived in the Andes region including role that hallucinogenic plants and shamans played in society.

If a celebrity is known for being known, a hero is known for what he or she has done. Richard Evans Schultes was a man out of time. Having solved the mystery of the Aztec sacred hallucinogens, and having sparked the psychedelic era with his discovery of the "magic mushrooms" in Mexico in 1938, he took a leave from Harvard and slipped away into the Northwest where he remained for 12 years, traveling down unknown rivers, living among unknown peoples, all the time enchanted by the wonders of the tropical flora and the indigenous people who knew it best. *One River* brings his story to life, and in a manner that should always us of just what it takes to become a true hero. Schultes is a figure bigger than life, a scientist and explorer revered by all he encountered and a man the likes of which we will rarely see again.

It took three months to read this book, NOT because it was difficult to read or boring. There was never doubt that I would finish the book. In fact, with 50% remaining, I was already grieving in anticipation that I'd one day read the final sentence. In addition to introducing us to the Americas (not just South America), the author manages to tell us the what and the why. For me, this book, more than any other historical work, provided me with many "ah ha" moments. I'm grateful to the author for

writing this tome, and to the men and women who experienced the triumphs and tragedies throughout.

I actually teared up at the end of this book, not something I expected from a book about ethnobotany. At the end of the reading I had learned about the lives of researchers in such exquisite detail that I lived along side of them. This book is nearly perfect, much better than even the rave recommendation from some very respected friends. It's possible that there will never be anyone who will have the knowledge from experience that Richard Schultes had acquired in South America and that alone makes this book very rich, yet added to his story are the experiences of Davis and Dr. Plowman two researchers that also immerse themselves deeply into the Andes, the llanos, and the to learn about the forests, the people and the use of medicinal and psychoactive plants. This is a long book, nearly 500 pages and is a serious commitment but well worth it as you will not experience anything quite like it unless Davis's other book is better (I have not read it yet). I only have a few complaints about the book and those are regarding omissions in some available photographs that Davis mentions in the end and a lack of maps for much of the area covered in the book. There is one small map on page 125 that shows the route of travels but it is too small and difficult to use. I resorted to a copy of International Travel Maps - South America North West to see the detail that I needed as I followed the travels of Schultes, Davis and Plowman. Davis is an excellent writer and he has a way of conveying a sensitivity to the lives of all that he encounters. That along with his insight into the cultures that he experiences and the knowledge and history that he brings into this makes it a unique, rich read.

An eloquently written, marvelously depicted dual-vantage excursion into the heart of the , its mysterious cultures, and the powerful medicines they have wielded for millennia and which we Westerners now seek for spiritual and psychopharmacological purposes. Schultes was a brave adventurer and scientifically experiential genius, and Davis his apt pupil.

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