



Lost in Shangri-La

By Mitchell Zuckoff

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“A lost world, man-eating tribesmen, lush and impenetrable jungles, stranded American fliers (one of them *a dame with great gams*, for heaven's sake), a startling rescue mission. . . . This is a true story made in heaven for a writer as talented as Mitchell Zuckoff. Whew—what an utterly compelling and deeply satisfying read!” —Simon Winchester, author of *Atlantic*

Award-winning former *Boston Globe* reporter Mitchell Zuckoff unleashes the exhilarating, untold story of an extraordinary World War II rescue mission, where a plane crash in the South Pacific plunged a trio of U.S. military personnel into a land that time forgot. Fans of Hampton Sides' *Ghost Soldiers*, Marcus Luttrell's *Lone Survivor*, and David Grann's *The Lost City of Z* will be captivated by Zuckoff's masterfully recounted, all-true story of danger, daring, determination, and discovery in jungle-clad New Guinea during the final days of WWII.

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Lost in Shangri-La By Mitchell Zuckoff Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best Books of the Month, May 2011: Near the end of World War II, a plane carrying 24 members of the United States military, including nine Women's Army Corps (WAC) members, crashed into the New Guinea jungle during a sightseeing excursion. 21 men and women were killed. The three survivors--a beautiful WAC, a young lieutenant who lost his twin brother in the crash, and a severely injured sergeant--were stranded deep in a jungle valley notorious for its cannibalistic tribes. They had no food, little water, and no way to contact their military base. The story of their survival and the stunning efforts undertaken to save them are the crux of *Lost in Shangri-La*, Mitchell Zuckoff's remarkable and inspiring narrative. Faced with the potential brutality of the Dani tribe, known throughout the valley for its violence, the trio's lives were dependent on an unprecedented rescue mission--a dedicated group of paratroopers jumped into the jungle to provide aid and medical care, consequently leaving the survivors and paratroopers alike trapped on the jungle floor. A perilous rescue by plane became their only possible route to freedom. A riveting story of deliverance under the most unlikely circumstances, *Lost in Shangri-La* deserves its place among the great survival stories of World War II. --*Lynette Mong*

Amazon Exclusive: Hampton Sides Reviews *Lost in Shangri-La*

Hampton Sides is the editor-at-large for *Outside* magazine and the author of the international bestseller *Ghost Soldiers*, which won the 2002 PEN USA Award for nonfiction and the 2002 Discover Award from Barnes & Noble, and also served as the basis for the 2005 Miramax film *The Great Raid*.

Although World War II was the greatest conflict in the history of this planet, many a jaded reader has come to the reluctant conclusion that there aren't any more World War II stories left to tell. At least not good ones—not tales of the “ripping good yarn” variety. Yet remarkably, in his new book *Lost in Shangri-La*, Mitchell Zuckoff has found one, and he's told it with reportorial verve, narrative skill, and exquisite pacing.



What makes this World War II story all the more fascinating is that it isn't really a war story—not in a strict military sense. It's more of an exotic adventure tale with rich anthropological shadings. In 1945, near the end of the war, an American plane crashes in a hidden jungle valley in New Guinea inhabited by Stone Age cannibals. 21 Americans die in the crash, but three injured survivors soon find themselves stumbling through the jungle without food, nursing terrible wounds and trying to elude Japanese snipers known to be holding out in the mountains.

The first contact between the three Americans and the valley's Dani tribesmen is both poignant and comical. The Americans, Zuckoff writes, have “crash-landed in a world that time didn't forget. Time never knew it existed.” The tribesmen, who have never encountered metal and have yet to master the concept of the wheel, think the American interlopers are white spirits who've descended on a vine from heaven, fulfilling an ancient legend. They're puzzled and fascinated by the layers of “removable skin” in which these alien

visitors are wrapped; the natives, who smear their bodies in pig grease and cover their genitals with gourds, have never seen clothes before.

The Americans, in turn, are pretty sure their boartusk-bestudded hosts want to skewer them for dinner.

What ensues in Zuckoff's fine telling is not so much a cultural collision as a pleasing and sometimes hilarious mutual unraveling of assumptions. Though the differences in the two societies are chasmic, the Americans and the Dani become—in a guarded, tentative sort of way—*friends*.

But when armed American airmen arrive via parachute to rescue the survivors, relations become more tense. The Americans make their camp right in the middle of a no-man's land between warring Dani tribes—a no-man's land where for centuries they have fought the battles that are central to their daily culture. Here, Zuckoff notes, the ironies are profoundly rich. The Dani, untouched by and indeed utterly unaware of the great war that's been raging all across the globe, become thoroughly discombobulated when their own war is temporarily disrupted.

Yes, there *are* still a few good World War II stories left to tell. And yes, this one meets all the requirements of a ripping good yarn. Zuckoff, who teaches journalism at Boston University, is a first-rate reporter who has spared no expense to rescue this tale from obscurity. His story has it all: Tragedy, survival, comedy, an incredibly dangerous eleventh-hour rescue, and an immensely attractive heroine to boot. It's extraordinary that Hollywood hasn't already taken this tale and run wild with it. If it did, the resulting movie would be equal parts *Alive*, *Cast Away*, and *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. It's as though the Americans have arrived in the Stone Age through a wormhole in the space-time continuum. The Dani don't know what to do with themselves—and life, as any of us know it, will never be the same.

Review

“A truly incredible adventure.” (New York Times Book Review)

“[A] grippingly cinematic account. . . . A remarkable cast of characters. . . . A.” (Entertainment Weekly)

“This is an absorbing adventure right out of the Saturday-morning serials. . . . *Lost in Shangri-La* deserves a spot on the shelf of Greatest Generation nonfiction. It puts the reader smack into the jungle.” (Cleveland Plain Dealer)

“Zuckoff transforms impressive research into a deft narrative that brings the saga of the survivors to life.” (Publishers Weekly (starred review))

“Zuckoff delivers a remarkable survival story. . . . In this well-crafted book, Zuckoff turns the long-forgotten episode into an unusually exciting narrative. . . . Polished, fast-paced and immensely readable—ready for the big screen.” (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))

“[An] engaging story. . . . This excellent book will be enjoyed by anyone who loves true adventure stories.” (Library Journal (starred review))

“A riveting tale in the hands of a good storyteller. . . . LOST IN SHANGRI-LA is the most thrilling book, fiction or nonfiction, that I have read since I can't remember when.” (Seattle Times)

“Mitchell Zuckoff has uncovered, and vividly reconstructed, such an astonishing tale. . . . Zuckoff skillfully

builds narrative tension and deft character portraits. . . . He has pulled off a remarkable feat — and held the reader firmly in the grip.” (David Grann, Washington Post)

From the Back Cover

On May 13, 1945, twenty-four American servicemen and WACs boarded a transport plane for a sightseeing trip over “Shangri-La,” a beautiful and mysterious valley deep within the jungle-covered mountains of Dutch New Guinea. Unlike the peaceful Tibetan monks of James Hilton’s bestselling novel *Lost Horizon*, this Shangri-La was home to spear-carrying tribesmen, warriors rumored to be cannibals.

But the pleasure tour became an unforgettable battle for survival when the plane crashed. Miraculously, three passengers pulled through. Margaret Hastings, barefoot and burned, had no choice but to wear her dead best friend’s shoes. John McCollom, grieving the death of his twin brother also aboard the plane, masked his grief with stoicism. Kenneth Decker, too, was severely burned and suffered a gaping head wound.

Emotionally devastated, badly injured, and vulnerable to the hidden dangers of the jungle, the trio faced certain death unless they left the crash site. Caught between man-eating headhunters and enemy Japanese, the wounded passengers endured a harrowing hike down the mountainside—a journey into the unknown that would lead them straight into a primitive tribe of superstitious natives who had never before seen a white man—or woman.

Drawn from interviews, declassified U.S. Army documents, personal photos and mementos, a survivor’s diary, a rescuer’s journal, and original film footage, *Lost in Shangri-La* recounts this incredible true-life adventure for the first time. Mitchell Zuckoff reveals how the determined trio—dehydrated, sick, and in pain—traversed the dense jungle to find help; how a brave band of paratroopers risked their own lives to save the survivors; and how a cowboy colonel attempted a previously untested rescue mission to get them out.

By trekking into the New Guinea jungle, visiting remote villages, and rediscovering the crash site, Zuckoff also captures the contemporary natives’ remembrances of the long-ago day when strange creatures fell from the sky. A riveting work of narrative nonfiction that vividly brings to life an odyssey at times terrifying, enlightening, and comic, *Lost in Shangri-La* is a thrill ride from beginning to end.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jonathan Garcia:

Book is written, printed, or created for everything. You can realize everything you want by a e-book. Book has a different type. As you may know that book is important issue to bring us around the world. Close to that you can your reading skill was fluently. A e-book *Lost in Shangri-La* will make you to end up being smarter. You can feel far more confidence if you can know about anything. But some of you think which open or reading a book make you bored. It is not make you fun. Why they are often thought like that? Have you looking for best book or suitable book with you?

Jose Suh:

Do you have something that you want such as book? The book lovers usually prefer to opt for book like

comic, brief story and the biggest an example may be novel. Now, why not attempting Lost in Shangri-La that give your satisfaction preference will be satisfied simply by reading this book. Reading practice all over the world can be said as the opportunity for people to know world better then how they react towards the world. It can't be said constantly that reading habit only for the geeky person but for all of you who wants to end up being success person. So , for every you who want to start looking at as your good habit, you may pick Lost in Shangri-La become your starter.

Irene Gamino:

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