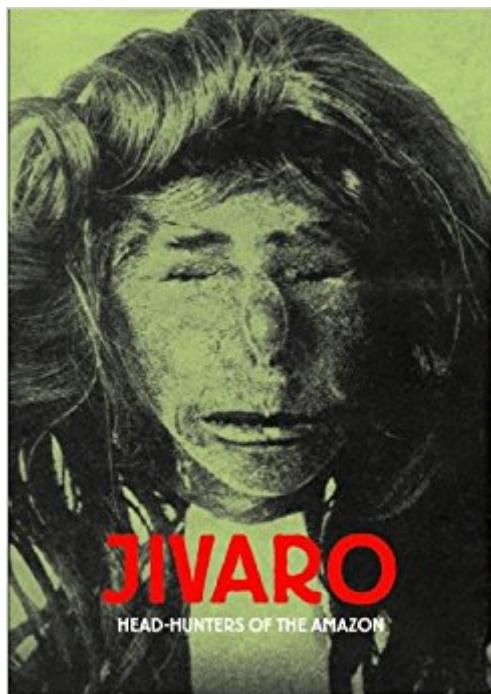


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Jivaro: Head-Hunters Of The



Synopsis

The Jivaro Indians of the Peru-Ecuador interior have long been renowned for their ferocity and cruelty in warfare; they are also shamanistic, communing with ancient spectres through the ingestion of poisonous hallucinogens. But above all, the Jivaro are known for their unique and macabre brand of death magic - the severing and shrinking of human heads. JIVARO is the true account of an expedition into the rain forest to locate and study the Jivaro Indians; their dialects, social structures, methods of survival, and - above all - the orgiastic witchcraft rites which culminate in the slaughter, decapitation and spell-binding of their enemies, whose souls are forever imprisoned and silenced by the ritual reduction of their heads. * Illustrated throughout * with a new Introduction * two anthropological Forewords on the Jivaro and the history of human trophy-taking JIVARO is one of the true classics of populist ethnography, a vivid record of a vanishing way of life which retains its power to grip, and sometimes shock, the reader.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bertrand Flornoy (1910-1980), was a French explorer, archeologist, film-maker and anthropologist. He specialised in studying the jungles of Peru and the head-hunters to be found there. Jack Hunter is author and editor of over 20 previous books on cinema, including EROS IN HELL and MOONCHILD, as well as the popular book on Japanese art, DREAM SPECTRES, and the counter-culture classic FREAK BABYLON.

THE SHRINKING OF A HUMAN HEAD In the hut, the members of the threatened jivaria prepared

their defences as they had prepared them in the days of full-scale armed raids. They posted sentries at the doors of the stockade, prepared quantities of masticated manioc in case of siege, mended their weapons and made invocations before the bed of the man who had been slain. But outside, in the darkness of the forest, the two Indians selected for the murder kept watch upon the enemy hut. They did not stand motionless in static ambush, but cunningly took advantage of trees and shrubs and the changing face of nature from dawn to dusk. When night began to fall they drew near the river that ran by the hut. Gun and spear in hand, they waited for their victim, as he waited for them. Songs and shouts reached them clearly, reminded them that their enemy must inevitably be panic-stricken, and this strengthened their self-confidence. They forgot their meagre rations and the yamanche, diluted with water, that goes sourer every day; they even forgot the hateful persecution of mosquitoes and venomous ants. The killing would take place soon now. One evening, when the witch-doctor was making for the riverside to be with one of his wives, a wooden spear struck him in the throat. Without a cry he collapsed at the murderers' feet; his wife, too, fell dead. In silence the killers bent over him and began to sever the head from the body. A long knife, acquired by barter, speeded up the work. In a few moments the trophy, still warm and bleeding, hung over the murderers' shoulders as they ran swiftly homewards. They hurried, although no one pursued them. The spears, gleaming with blood, were abandoned in a dense thicket; henceforth they were accursed and none would dare touch them. Travelling with the utmost speed on foot and, when the river became navigable, by canoe, the men reached the place allotted for the ceremony of shrinking the head. It was a good place. A clearing had been made amid the dense vegetation that crowded right down to the bank. The prow of a canoe had been pulled up on to the muddy shore. The ground had been trampled into hardness and covered with ferns and broad leaves. A slender tree-trunk was laid beside three smouldering logs. As soon as they landed, the killers were met by the headman of the community, with two men and two women bringing food. They had been expected for many days; when they appeared everyone gathered round them, but nobody touched them...

A classic work about the Shuar Indians. It takes the form of a trip report, with minimal technical information about the Shuar. It can be a bit sensationalistic at times, but that makes for a fun read.

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