

Tree of Rivers: The Story of the Amazon

John Hemming



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"In his long career of exploration and scholarship, Hemming has become a powerful advocate for the Amazon."?*The New York Times*, John Hemming

Amazonia is one of the most magnificent habitats on earth. Containing the world's largest river, with more water and a broader basin than any other, it hosts a great expanse of tropical rain forest, home to the planet's most luxuriant biological diversity.

The human beings who settled in the region 10,000 years ago learned to live well with its bounty of fish, game, and vegetation. It was not until 1500 that Europeans first saw the Amazon, and, unsurprisingly, the rain forest's unique environment has attracted larger-than-life personalities through the centuries. John Hemming recalls the adventures and misadventures of intrepid explorers, fervent Jesuit ecclesiastics, and greedy rubber barons who enslaved thousands of Indians in the relentless quest for profit. He also tells of nineteenth-century botanists, fearless advocates for Indian rights, and the archaeologists and anthropologists who have uncovered the secrets of the Amazon's earliest settlers.

Hemming discusses the current threat to Amazonia as forests are destroyed to feed the world's appetite for timber, beef, and soybeans, and he vividly describes the passionate struggles taking place in order to utilize, protect, and understand the Amazon. 20 color, 50 b&w illustrations

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