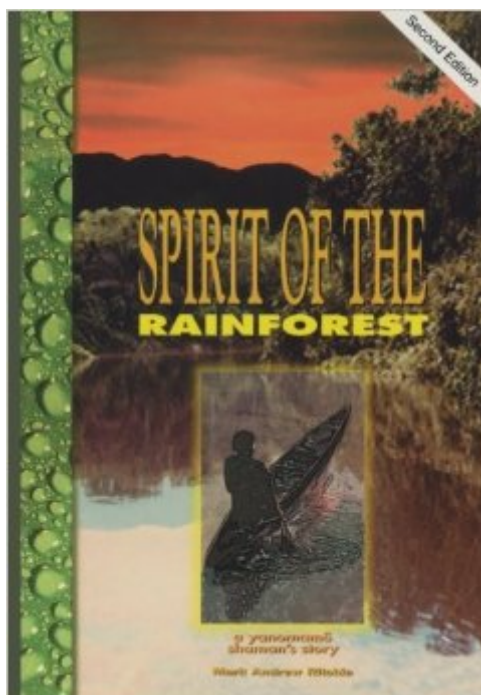


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Spirit Of The Rainforest: A Yanomamo Shaman's Story



Synopsis

The Yanomamo of the - endangered children of nature or indigenous warmongers on the verge of destroying themselves? Now for the first time, a powerful Yanomamo shaman speaks for his people. Brutally riveting, the story of Jungleman is an extraordinary and powerful document.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I received this book in the mail one day earlier this month, and finished it by about the same time the next day -- despite the fact that I had three 90 minute college classes to teach, and needed to prepare for a trip to Taiwan. It was that good, and that awful. I had devoured a good chunk of the book by the time I turned on my computer and learned the terrible news from New York. I kept reading; there seemed to be a connection. The book is an absolutely mind-blower of a story, but if we were to translate the events it describes into a thesis, one sub-point of that thesis would be: "Mass murder and sincere spirituality are not mutually exclusive, by any means." As Ritchie put it, "(Ex-shaman and Yamomamo Indian Shoefoot) has no problem understanding the Columbine High School massacre or any other killing spree. The spirits of anger and hatred that own and drive a person are spirits he has known personally." It occurred to me that we have the same choice as confronts the "converted" village in this book: to seek justice with mercy and caution, and danger to ourselves, or to pass on forgiveness and descend to the level of our enemies. While in Taiwan, I was asked to speak about the relationship between Christianity and Islam, and found myself wishing I'd brought the book along. Jungleman puts so many things so well. This is not a book you want to read your children to sleep by. It might not even work for your church (still less, coven)

book-of-the-month club. Besides being full of violence, its message will be a challenge to skeptics and those who are attracted to the occult. But anyone who is untouched by it, by the pain, beauty, pathos, irony, and danger of being human that it reveals, of living in a spiritual jungle as responsible beings, must have a heart of stone.

The 16,000 Yanomamo people are depicted as the most primitive, most violent, and most famous tribal society in the . Popularized by the most widely read book in the history of anthropology (*Yanomamo: The Fierce People*, by Napoleon Chagnon), these people are today suffering excruciating problems from gold miners and newly introduced diseases. Major debates have raged among anthropologists, and between anthropologists and missionaries, for 20 years over the "truth" of the Yanomamo culture. Do they live a wonderful life in a beautiful rain-forest Eden, as Chagnon implies in his 1992 book, *The Last Days of Eden*, or do they live in fear and misery as some missionaries say? Perhaps we should ask that question to the Yanomamo themselves, rather than to the anthropologists or the missionaries. Who does speak for the Yanomamo, anyway? Here, for the first time, author Mark Richie allows the Yanomamo to speak for themselves to us. This is truly "a Yanomamo shaman's story," as the book's subtitle says. It is the autobiography of a Yanomamo shaman-chief named Jungleman. He, at least, is weary of his violent society, and fed-up with the anthropologists, too. Anyone who thinks the Yanomamo culture is idyllic must be a male: The women live in chronic danger of gang-rapes, savage beatings by their husbands, and kidnapping. And men suffer one of the highest homicide rates in the world from the frequent raiding between villages. If you think it's a romantic way of life, why don't you try it? Non-specialists in anthropology may be skeptical of Jungleman's descriptions of the sexual customs of a European anthropologist who the Yanomamo call "Ass Handler." A.H.

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