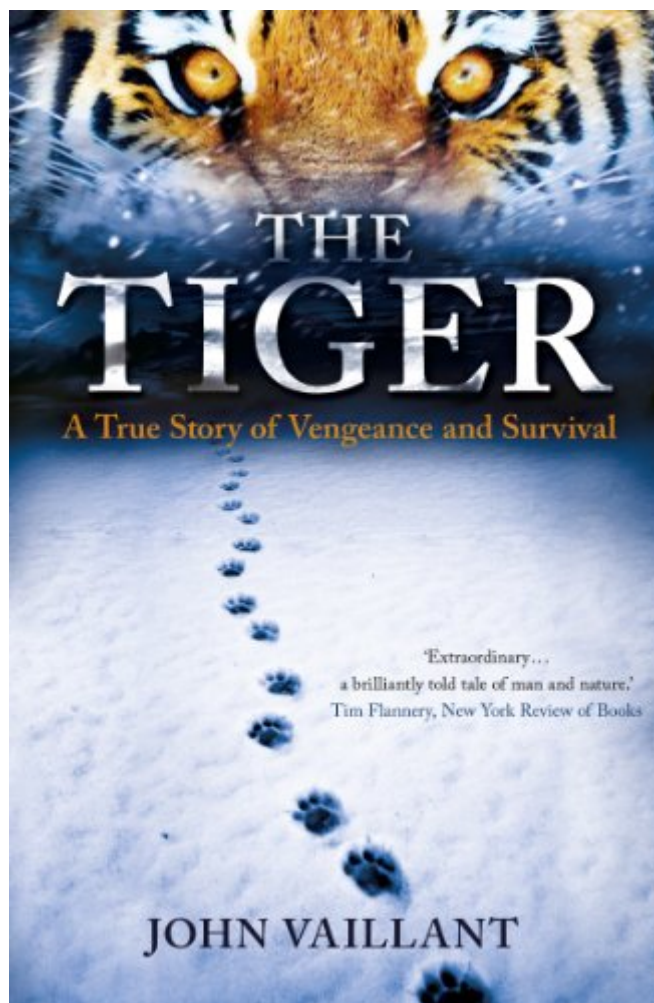


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The Tiger



Synopsis

It's December 1997, and a man-eating tiger is on the prowl outside a remote village in Russia's Far East. The tiger isn't just killing people, it's annihilating them, and a team of men and their dogs must hunt it on foot through the forest in the brutal cold. As the trackers sift through the gruesome remains of the victims, they discover that these attacks aren't random: the tiger is apparently engaged in a vendetta. Injured, starving, and extremely dangerous, the tiger must be found before it strikes again. As he re-creates these extraordinary events, John Vaillant gives us an unforgettable portrait of this spectacularly beautiful and mysterious region. We meet the native tribes who for centuries have worshipped and lived alongside tigers, even sharing their kills with them. We witness the arrival of Russian settlers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, soldiers and hunters who greatly diminished the tiger populations. And we come to know their descendants, who, crushed by poverty, have turned to poaching and further upset the natural balance of the region. This ancient, tenuous relationship between man and predator is at the very heart of this remarkable book. Throughout we encounter surprising theories of how humans and tigers may have evolved to coexist, how we may have developed as scavengers rather than hunters, and how early Homo sapiens may have fit seamlessly into the tiger's ecosystem. Above all, we come to understand the endangered Siberian tiger, a highly intelligent super-predator that can grow to ten feet long, weigh more than six hundred pounds, and range daily over vast territories of forest and mountain. Beautifully written and deeply informative, *The Tiger* circles around three main characters: Vladimir Markov, a poacher killed by the tiger; Yuri Trush, the lead tracker; and the tiger himself. It is an absolutely gripping tale of man and nature that leads inexorably to a final showdown in a clearing deep in the taiga.

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Customer Reviews

"The Tiger" by John Vaillant is many things, but foremost it is a nonfiction thriller in which the central characters are a very large Tiger and the disparate characters in far eastern Russia with whom the Tiger interacts. As events unfold and the suspense builds the reader is increasingly unable to stop reading. How will this end? Who will survive? Along the way we learn much about the remote and forested Primorsky Krai region which holds Vladivostok at its tip. In my high school history class in the early 1960's I had learned about Vladivostok as Russia's most important Pacific port and as the termination of the Trans-Siberian railway. This piece of Russia borders Manchurian China and North Korea and is close to Japan. The Tiger taught me much more about this region, and the people who came here for lots of different reasons under a relatively prosperous Soviet experience but then were abandoned to a more primitive survival under Perestroika. We also learn a lot about the Amur Tiger subspecies which is concentrated partly in the mountains of the Primorsky Krai. The Amur Tiger population is barely holding its own as forces of conservation and poaching compete. Tiger products have high commercial value in China, which is right across a long and porous border. We learn as well about the long and sometimes spiritual relationship between man and tiger. Few who pick this book up will be disappointed. It holds special appeal to nature lovers as well as those intrigued by geography and history. The Tiger thriller story line is blended seamlessly with the wildlife, history and geography background. A very large number of difficult-to-pronounce Russian names may seem challenging, but in fact less than a hand full of these names need to be remembered through the story.

Fascinating book. This true story is about a man-eating Tiger. However, all the aspects of it (geography, Russian/Siberian history/species adaptations, life on the Taiga, the role of predator and

prey, native knowledge, weather, "umwelt") are so thought-provoking and challenging that long after you finish the book you will be pondering everything the author has tied together in this story. The author uses words in such a way that you can see the Taiga, feel the bitter cold, and get a sense of what it's like when this Tiger is stalking you..and waiting for you... because the Tiger sees you before you see the Tiger..Bravo..John Vaillant!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I loved this book. I read an excerpt of it in a magazine and I was hooked. I bought it and read it in a few days. It's a great window into an animal and a part of the world that I didn't know anything about but found fascinating. It's years later and I still think about the environment and characters in this book, and the atmosphere the author created in this story. The book is for anyone looking for a great read - a great story well told.

In brief, *The Tiger* tells the story of Inspection Tiger, a group of men assigned by the Russian government to investigate and arrest poachers. They find themselves investigating a peculiar instance of a tiger stalking, harassing, and eventually killing a man and his dogs. It's a very interesting narrative. However, this story line accounts for roughly about 15% of the book. The rest of the book is filled with the background and history of how the far eastern Primorsky Krai (Primorye) region became inhabited following Perestroika. I found myself nearly as interested in this aspect of the book, as I did the actual tiger investigation, which is a testament to the author. That being said, although the theme of "tigers" mostly persists throughout the book, you'll find yourself reading many more pages about the history of Russian life in the remote taiga than you will about tigers. Still a worthy read, however. I came for the tigers, and stayed for the history lesson.

A harrowing, frightening tale of a man-eating tiger in the wilds of Primorye, an area of eastern Russia near the border with China and N. Korea. The story centers on a large male tiger (and tigers in the area and in general), its victims and the assorted secondary characters, as well as the hunters-protectors of the animal. However, it is much more, as history, culture, politics and ecology are all blended in to make it a fascinating read. Some may claim that all the digressions are padding and subtract from the focus, but I don't agree. Likewise it is possible to argue that the author attributes too many human elements to a fierce beast, and that may be true, but given the history and culture of the region and the central place the Amur tiger has held in relation to humans for so many years, it is not hard to ascribe some anthropomorphic traits to these beasts. If you care about tigers and their future, are enthralled by little known geographic spots and want a darn good read,

this is your book.

Kind of a strange book. More about the area in general location, history etc. than the tiger. Didn't finish it so maybe it gets better.

One of the best books I've read in years. You learn about tigers in north east Asia (who knew?) AND about the Russians that live there. Fascinating.

An interesting story that reminds me of how fables are created. This is purportedly true life and once again, highlights the flexibility of most wildlife when sharing this world with humans. I was pleased the Russians take a more casual and causal view of living with wildlife. The Tiger Team was tasked with investigating and did. This book further illuminates the intelligence in species other than humans (and I hold my doubts on humans daily).

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