



Crazy River: Exploration and Folly in East Africa

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NO ONE TRAVELS QUITE LIKE RICHARD GRANT and, really, no one should. In his last book, the adventure classic *God's Middle Finger*, he narrowly escaped death in Mexico's lawless Sierra Madre. Now, Grant has plunged with his trademark recklessness, wit, and curiosity into East Africa. Setting out to make the first descent of an unexplored river in Tanzania, he gets waylaid in Zanzibar by thieves, whores, and a charismatic former golf pro before crossing the Indian Ocean in a rickety cargo boat. And then the real adventure begins. Known to local tribes as "the river of bad spirits," the Malagarasi River is a daunting adversary even with a heavily armed Tanzanian crew as travel companions. Dodging bullets, hippos, and crocodiles, Grant finally emerges in war-torn Burundi, where he befriends some ethnic street gangsters and trails a notorious man-eating crocodile known as Gustave. He concludes his journey by interviewing the dictatorial president of Rwanda and visiting the true source of the Nile. Gripping, illuminating, sometimes harrowing, often hilarious, *Crazy River* is a brilliantly rendered account of a modern-day exploration of Africa, and the unraveling of Grant's peeled, battered mind as he tries to take it all in.

Crazy River: Exploration and Folly in East Africa Details

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Phil Overeem says

This is a third about Grant's ill-advised attempt to trek the full length of the Malagarisi, a third parallel history followed the legendary British explorer Richard Burton, and a third commentary on the joys and horrors of East Africa. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Carol Chapman says

I got this book from a kiosk where you leave 1 book and pick up another. I had mixed feelings about it. I enjoyed learning more about Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda, but thought the author was a bit nuts.

Vanessa says

I enjoyed reading this book while I was travelling through Malawi - many of Grant's observations and insights about African culture and travel resonated with my experiences and with the stories I'd heard from other travellers, and I agreed with his views on aid.

I'm not a big fan of travel writing in general, though. Reading books like this usually makes me feel like I'm swapping tales with other travelers (which I do enjoy), except without being able to relate my own experience or get into deeper discussions/arguments about the issues.

I've also noticed that travel books tend to include far too many overwrought insights into the author's state of mind and emotions for my tastes - somehow I never seem to find myself having the same sorts of crises of conscience or emotion or identity while travelling. The few male travel writers I've read, this one included, also seem to spend a lot of time in bars, commenting on how beautiful the women around are - something I'm not particularly interested in reading (male readers may feel differently!).

Thomas Ryan says

Great book that I read while traveling in East Africa a few back.

Jo Ann says

Love the adventures of Richard! This is my second read. I also enjoyed Postcards From Pluto. Oddly enough, I've been to Tanzania several times on mission trips and I found his descriptions spot on of the region and people. Good read!

Steve Bera says

One of the most interesting reads of Africa I have ever read. Highly recommend. Not so much about paddling as about the history and current conditions there.

Mike Fantauzzi says

Another fantastic African travelogue. Grant travels through some far flung East African locations, meets very interesting people and re-counts the fascinating history of Burton & Speke traveling a similar route many years earlier. His writing is honest and insightful and I felt I learned so much about the history and present landscape of this beautiful & troubled part of the world. I will surely check out his other efforts.

April U. says

Crazy River is a great travel memoir, particularly if visiting far away lands is in your blood. Grant captures perfectly the mindset of the career traveler, where you most appreciate the comforts of home when you are away. He also deftly weaves African history and culture throughout his story, creating an entertaining and informative picture of modern-day life in East Africa.

Chris says

Suffers a bit from being unfocused. I'm not ruining anything to say the canoe trip Grant had planned didn't work out, so he wrote a book about 4 different locations which sort of ties together. Having said that, it's a really excellent read; thoughtful, intelligent and well written. He tackles the past, present and future of central Africa and leaves you to draw your own conclusions. Not my favourite of Grant's books, but that's only because the standard is so high

Psocoptera says

A Random Assortment of Insightful and Thrilling Escapades from the Heart of Africa

4.5/5

From the comfort of your living room chair, Richard Grant takes you on a chaotic adventure starting with his dodging of thieves and prostitutes in insalubrious bars in Zanzibar through to a tense interview with the first democratically elected president of Burundi. In just over 200 pages Grant manages to cram in seafaring the Indian ocean in a cargo dhow, navigating the whole of Tanzania's Malagarasi river in a raft whilst avoiding crocodiles, hippos, lions and bullets, whilst picking up on important issues in his destinations of Rwanda and Burundi, such as genocide and the questionable efficacy of foreign aid.

Following in the footsteps of Richard Burton and John Hanning Speke, Grant gives a more up-to-date view on Eastern Africa whilst suffering similar illnesses and troubles that his predecessors succumbed to. The tales of dangerous travel are interspersed with interesting reviews on the strange phenomenon that Grant

encounters, such as the demonisation of Albinos in these countries.

This book is essential reading for any budding traveller, but large parts should be of interest to practically anyone.

Leila says

I love the way Richard Grant writes. I love his adventurousness. He has a great way of capturing people that I really enjoy. If he has one fault, it is that he tends to overstate some points and opinions. Specifically, I felt that the criticisms of all aid work were overdone. Still loved the book and will read more by him.

Cathy Savage says

This is essentially a travelog about the author's travels through East Africa. It details the journey from Zanzibar across to Tanzania to make the first descent of the Malagarasai River. He also is looking to see the origins of the White Nile for himself and interview the president of Rwanda. This story gives the short story of the woes of travel in East Africa, health issues encountered along the way as well as introducing us to the cast of people who helped him along the way. The writing is easy to read and the descriptions of the characters he meets are quite entertaining. The reader is able to travel vicariously through him in some of the back country areas of a part of the world not easily traveled. His report of the conversation with the Rwandan president was interesting and makes me want to learn more of East African history than the news reveals. Once I had time to sit and read the story was quite engrossing.

Scott says

Richard Grant is excellent.

Andrew says

A fascinating, occasionally grueling, insight into contemporary East Africa, with parallel analysis of previous exploration (Burton, Speke, Grant, Livingstone).

William J. Wood Jr MD says

A trip that went so bad you can only laugh. Excellent end section of interviews with the golden boy President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame. I'm a big fan of Grant's writings. He used to be a Tucsonan.
