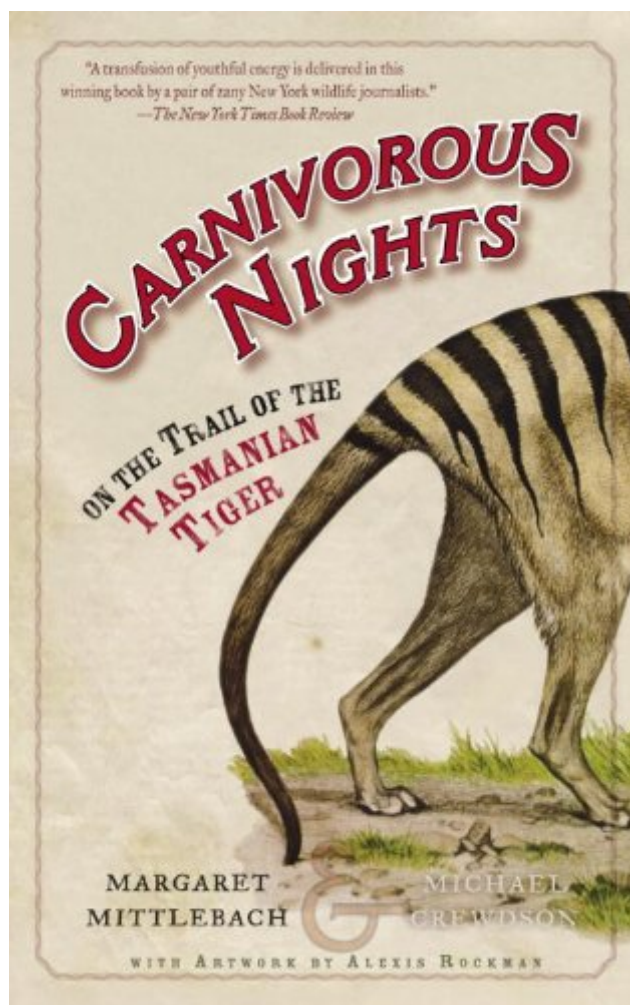


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Carnivorous Nights: On The Trail Of The Tasmanian Tiger



Synopsis

Packing an off-kilter sense of humor and keen scientific minds, authors Margaret Mittelbach and Michael Crewdson take off with renowned artist Alexis Rockman on a postmodern safari. Their mission? Tracking down the elusive Tasmanian tiger. This mysterious, striped predator was once the world's largest carnivorous marsupial. It had a pouch like a kangaroo and a jaw that opened impossibly wide to reveal terrifying choppers. Tragically, this rare and powerful animal was hunted into extinction in the early part of the twentieth century. Or was it? Journeying first to the Australian mainland and then south to the wild island of Tasmania, these young naturalists brave a series of bizarre misadventures and uproarious wildlife encounters in their obsessive search for the long-lost beast. From an ancient cave featuring an aboriginal painting of the tiger to a lab in Sydney where maverick scientists are trying to resurrect the animal through cloning, this intrepid trio comes face-to-face with blood-sucking land leeches and venomous bull ants, a misbehaving wallaby who invades their motel room, and a crew of flesh-eating, bone-crunching Tasmanian devils gorging on roadkill. They bond with trappers, bushwackers, and wildlife experts who refuse to abandon the tiger hunt, despite the paucity of evidence. Sifting through local myths, bar-room banter, and historical accounts, these environmental detectives sweep readers into a world where platypus swim, kangaroos roam, and a large predator with a pouch was "or perhaps still is" "queen of the jungle. Filled with Alexis Rockman's stunning drawings of flora and fauna "made from soil, wombat scat, and the artist's own blood "Carnivorous Nights is a hip and hilarious account of an unhinged safari, as well as a fascinating portrayal of a wildly unique part of the world. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

THIS is the way to combine the presentation of scientific research with the masterful writing of a good novelist. The book presents the story of the intentional extinction of the "Tasmanian Tiger", the Thylacine, the total disregard by so many species of indigenous wildlife in Tasmania and Australia, the deforestation of ancient, indigenous forests in Tasmania and the disregard and greed with which mankind continues to expand our numbers at the expense of every other living thing. The author of the recently released book "Woolly: The True Story of the Quest to Revive One of History's Most Iconic Extinct Creatures", should read Carnivorous Nights to see how this kind of book should be written. Anyway, GREAT read! Terrific story.

An engaging book that has a powerful lesson, drawing the reader out of their regret for something irretrievably lost to remind them of the things that we can save right now. I must admit, the ever present side bars on other parts of Tasmania bothered me at first. I was reading this because of my obsession with the the thylacine, not because of devils. Get on with it man! But those side tracks are what ended up making the book so good. It's what gave it the powerful punch that hit me at the end. The writing style, as mentioned in other reviews, is occasionally off putting and the reason for the one star loss. Using a plural point of view doesn't work when individual actions are being noted. "We" did not have a particular dream. I spent too much time trying to figure out who was who, distracting me from the actual book. As to the reviews about the foul language, get over it. There's almost none, and when it's used it isn't gratuitous, but meant to show off the quirky cast. You'll hear much worse walking down almost any street in any city of the world.

As soon as I saw the cover of this book, I knew I had to read it - as a native Tasmanian I love reading books that have a familiar setting as they are sadly few and far between. Add the bonus of finding out more about one of Tasmania's icons, the Tasmanian Tiger and I was really looking forward to this. Strangely, the book is written in first person plural - which wouldn't have been so bad

but for the references to things that 'we' did such as 'we dreamed' and 'we imagined'. In fact, it's so vague that it's only by doing some research outside the book that I managed to find out who the 'we' actually were. Unfortunately this strange narrative wasn't the only issue I had - the other characters were actually quite wanky - their jokes and attempts at being clever were quite flat, and their idea that they would actually 'rediscover' a species that vanished nearly 80 years ago in a few short weeks was just plain weird. Sure, I understand that they wanted to be positive, but it was just a bit too much. What I did enjoy was the investigation into Tasmanian wildlife, the story of the demise of the Tasmanian Tiger and the very Tasmanian people that they met along the way. The author did an excellent job of portraying truthfully the openness and strange habits of the people of Tasmania, without being condescending. The book also contains pictures created by Alexis, which he made with various organic materials he picked up along the way which was an added bonus. Although this book had some faults, and did start to drag a little in the middle, I think what made it for me was the familiarity of the places, the people, and the overall relaxed atmosphere of Tasmania. I think it would also make an interesting read for non-natives - after all, where else in the world would you find an animal with a duck bill, that lives underwater, lays eggs in it's pouch and has poisonous spurs on its hind legs, for which there is no anti-venom?

An entertaining tale of the search for the "extinct" Tasmanian Tiger. The travel around Tasmania while looking for many other endemic Australian mammals only whetted my desire to travel to Tasmania. I only gave it four stars because the author constantly referred to herself and her traveling companion as we. Never once were names mentioned. Several times I reread the early chapters because I wasn't sure if this was a use of the "royal" we or if there were two people. Very distracting and frankly annoying. But a book well worth the read.

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