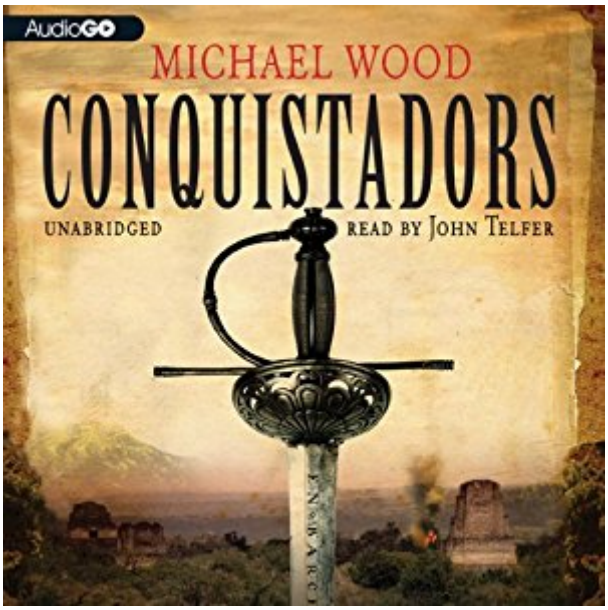
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Conquistadors



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Synopsis

Following in the footsteps of the greatest Spanish adventurers, Michael Wood retraces the path of the conquistadors from ia to Lake Titicaca, and from the deserts of North Mexico to the heights of Machu Picchu. As he travels the same routes as HernÃƒÆ'Ã Â¡n CortÃƒÆ'Ã Â©s, Francisco, and Gonzalo Pizarro, Wood describes the dramatic events that accompanied the epic sixteenth-century Spanish conquest of the Aztec and Inca empires. He also follows parts of Orellana's extraordinary voyage of discovery down the and of Cabeza de Vaca's arduous journey across America to the Pacific. Few stories in history match these conquests for sheer drama, endurance, and distances covered, and Wood's gripping narrative brings them fully to life. Wood reconstructs both sides of the conquest, drawing from sources such as Bernal Diaz's eyewitness account, CortÃƒÆ'Ã Â©s's own letters, and the Aztec texts recorded not long after the fall of Mexico. Wood's evocative story of his own journey makes a compelling connection with the sixteenth-century world as he relates the present-day customs, rituals, and oral traditions of the people he meets. He offers powerful descriptions of the rivers, mountains, and ruins he encounters on his trip, comparing what he has seen and experienced with the historical record. As well as being one of the pivotal events in history, the Spanish conquest of the Americas was one of the most cruel and devastating. Wood grapples with the moral legacy of the European invasion and with the implications of an episode in history that swept away civilizations, religions, and ways of life. The stories in Conquistadors are not only of conquest, heroism, and greed but of changes in the way we see the world, history and civilization, justice and human rights.

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Customer Reviews

Not detailed as i was expecting. Overall it was a good DVD with Michael wood retracing the steps taken by the Cortez and Pizzario.Prompt and efficient service.

This book is a great treatise on a few of the best known conquistadors. Giving a great wealth of information but concisely, without all that extra baggage of needless minute details that bog down a good biography. VERY well written.Do not be fooled by the narrow-mindedness of the few that badmouthed this great book. Wood treats the subject of the Spaniard’s incredible cruelty towards the natives in total objectivity, in fact it should have gone into more detail of the inhumane barbarism perpetrated by the Conquistadores in this sad period of history, read Las Casas and you’ll understand. It was pure genocide with unbelievable torture and suffering.But the book also covers Cabeza deVaca, the only conquistador that was truly a Christian, and realized the Indians were human beings and deserved humane and equal treatment... so much so that he, later on, actually put his own life in jeopardy in their protection from other conquistadors. I’m of direct Spanish descent, so I have no axe-to-grind here, just straight-forward honesty about a very dark period in history of some vey brave, but evil men.I’ve read MUCH on the subject, and loved this book.

This was a well written and very informative book. It covers the travels of four of the most prominent adventurers of the 16th century-- Cortes, Pizaro, Orellano and Cabeza de Vaca-- conquistadors whose exploits would be almost incredible, if not backed and fully documented in the history of the Americas. The book is well illustrated and is certainly not in the typical genre of a history text. As a matter of fact, it incorporates a sense of travelogue and unusual feeling of reality, because author Michael Wood actually retraces the steps of the gentlemen he writes about. The scenes are vividly described (and often illustrated) as Wood makes many discoveries himself. The book was later created as a PBS video.

This is an extremely well-written book that gives a cursory history of the Spanish conquest of Latin America. We read of the fall of the Aztecs and the Incas, as well as other trips of discovery undertaken by the Spanish explorers in the early part of the 16th century. The book is too short to give a detailed discussion of each of these events, but it does "hit the highlights", as it were. For anyone interested in further reading or study, there are a multitude of works available, but for the casual reader, this is an excellent introduction to what may be considered the beginnings of Europen-style civilization on this continent.

Conquistadors by Michael Wood is the companion book to the BBC/PBS series of the same name. This is a wonderful book and one which changed my way of thinking about the place of Columbus and those who followed him to North and South America.From the guile and brutal pragmatism of Cortez to the 16th century equivilant of The Sopranos found in the Pizarro family Wood paints a detailed, exciting, and mostly sad picture of Spain's conquest of the New World. But, the reader will be moved by the bravery of Orellana, he who first navigated fully the River. And even more moving is the shipwreck, travels, and discovery of our common humanity in the adventures of de Vaca.In this book you will read the good and the bad. You will also come to the conclusion, as I did, that the English and French incursions into North America pale compared to what the Spanish did and accomplished, for good and bad, in the Gulf of Mexico, Mexico, Central America and South America. And like the last Conquistador you will conclude that the Spanish conquest of America was indeed a crime against humanity. This book contains great photographs and wonderful descriptive commentary by the author. It is a must for every history lovers library and should be in every American school.

very good history book

This book is crazy

I give this 2 stars because Michael Wood states his opinion way too much. When I read history I want to read facts and make my own judgment about who was good and who was evil in history. In this book Wood constantly remindes us how bad europeans are and how good the Inacas and Aztecs must have been. This book is more about ethnic worshipping than about history. It still has some facts so that is why it gets 2 stars, otherwise it would be even worst. The author seems to relish every moment a european got killed, but bemoans every inca lose. Not to mention he tries to degrade every achievement the spanish accomplish.If you are a ethic worshipper with low self-esteem that has a reverse persecution problem, then this is for you.On the other hand if you are interested in history and making your own opinion about history, and if you have pride in being european then DO NOT BUY THIS PIECE OF TRASH.SO STAY AWAY FROM THIS BOOK.

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