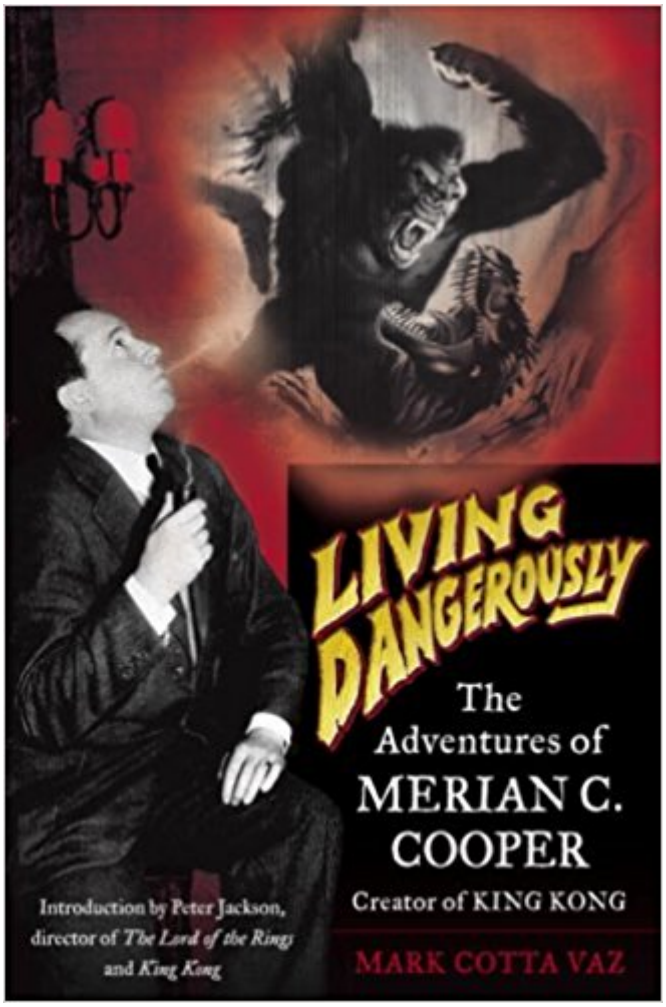
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Living Dangerously: The Adventures Of Merian C. Cooper, Creator Of King Kong



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Synopsis

Explorer, war hero, filmmaker, and cinema pioneer Merian C. CooperÃ¢â ¬â œthe adventurer who created King KongÃ¢â ¬â œwas truly larger than life. Ã¢â ¬Å“Pictures cannot be made from an executiveÃ¢â ¬â„¢s desk,Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬Å“CoopÃ¢â ¬Â• declared, and he did more than talk the talkÃ¢â ¬â œhe walked the walk to the far corners of the globe, with a motion picture camera in tow, in an era when those corners were truly unknown, untamed, and unforgiving.CooperÃ¢â ¬â„¢s place in history is assured, thanks not only to the monstrous gorilla from Skull Island but because the story of KongÃ¢â ¬â„¢s creator is even bigger and bolder than the beast he made into a cultural icon. Spellbound since boyhood by tales of life-threatening adventure and exotic locales, Cooper plunged again and again into harrowing expeditions that took him to places not yet civilized by modern man.Cooper was one of the first bomber pilots in World War I. After the war, he helped form the famous Kosciuszko Squadron in battle-torn Poland. He then turned his attention to producing documentary films that chronicled his hair-raising encounters with savage warriors, man-eating tigers, nomadic tribes, and elephant stampedes. In addition to producing King Kong, he was the first to team Fred Astaire with Ginger Rogers, arranged Katharine HepburnÃ¢â ¬â„¢s screen test, collaborated with John Ford on HollywoodÃ¢â ¬â„¢s greatest Westerns, and then changed the face of film forever with Cinerama, the original Ã¢â ¬Å“virtual reality.Ã¢â ¬Â• He returned to military service during World War II, serving with General Claire Chennault in China, flying missions into the heart of enemy territory.This book is a stunning tribute to a two-fisted visionary who packed a multitude of lifetimes into eighty remarkable years. The first comprehensive biography of this unique man and his amazing time, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s the tale of someone whose greatest desire was always to be living dangerously.

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Customer Reviews

With Peter Jackson’s King Kong remake due in December, this boisterous, chest-thumping biography of film pioneer Cooper (1893Ã¢â ¬â œ1973), producer-director of the original 1933 film, is certain to attract attention. Vaz (The Art of the Incredibles; etc.) captures the mythic magic of Cooper’s cinematic creations, and Cooper himself emerges as an equally legendary character. He attended the U.S. Naval Academy, but left before graduating and joined the 1916 hunt for Pancho Villa. A 1921 newspaper article tallied his WWI experiences: "All Warsaw is at the feet of the American ace who was twice shot down from the clouds, twice endured the squalor of prison camps, twice was reported dead." Cooper and his partner Ernest Schoedsack traveled the world shooting documentaries, scoring a box-office hit with the Oscar-nominated Chang (1927) before moving on to dramatic filmmaking. After "human dynamo" Cooper took over as RKO studio chief, he joined the WWII Flying Tigers and received a U.S.A.F. brigadier general promotion. Launching Cinerama in 1952, he was awarded an honorary 1953 Oscar. The charismatic Cooper, "a man living his own movie," is no longer an obscure, remote figure, thanks to Vaz’s exhaustive research and skillful writing. 90 photos. (Aug. 2) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

An experienced writer on movie special effects and special-effects movies has put together a readable, frequently gripping biography of Merian C. Cooper (1893-1973), whose exploits sometimes put one in mind of Indiana Jones but who is best known as producer--director, with Ernest B. Schoedsack, of King Kong. Before that cinematic milestone, he had been a pilot in World War I and a POW in Germany. His career began with wildlife films that involved frequent journeys to remote regions and, occasionally, acute danger. Nor did he rest on his laurels after King Kong. He returned to flying in World War II, undertaking combat missions when nearly 50 years old as chief of staff of the Flying Tigers in China. After the war, he returned to Hollywood as a senior executive at RKO. The book offers abundant facts, adequate prose, a lavish selection of photographs, and remarks by a panoply of famous interviewees. An altogether appealing addition for film-history collections, even if Lord of the Rings director Peter Jackson weren’t about to release his own King Kong. Roland GreenCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved

Cooper was a very interesting person and participated in some amazing adventures. The book is well researched and provides plenty of references. The writing struggles a bit to engage the reader. I finished it and am glad I did, but found myself less interested as the book progressed.

Heard of this on a Faith Middleton Book Review. Sounded good, so I bought it for my brother for Christmas. Of course I thumbed through it before wrapping it. What a Guy, that Merian C Cooper!

Well written and documented. Takes one back to the days before everywhere on earth was mapped, and when mystery still lurked in the 'unexplored.'

A scrupulously researched and heart-felt bio, if not always the best written. The author gets cuaght up up in his topic and overreaches his writing abilities.Cooper was one of those amazing men whose life encompassed war, travel, explornography, mythopoeia, cinema, big business, and, at least to his own eye, international relations. The book does a wonderful job of seeking out all the details of these endeavors and tying them into a fine package. Deservedly best known for King Kong (1933 and only), Cooper was certainly a man of his century.

Good price

Mark Vaz has not only captured the life of Merian C. Cooper, but in doing so has also captured pieces of World War I, the Hollywood motion picture industry from the late 1920's through the 1950's, the origins and growth of the commerical aviation industry, and World War II.Along the way, we find Billy Mitchell, David O. Selznick, Juan Trippe, Claire Chennault, Jimmy Doolittle, Jock Whitney and a cast of thousands; we also find King Kong, Technicolor and Cinerama.It's a book that is easy to read, and hard to put down.

At this point in time Merian Cooper is known as the creator of the original movie King Kong. But that is just the tiniest tip of the iceberg of his AMAZING life. We owe a debt to Mark Vaz for unearthing all these facets to Merian Cooper. There is no one quite like Cooper in the breadth of his undertakings, maybe Teddy Roosevelt, maybe Sir Richard Burton, maybe Benjamin Franklin but none came close to not only undertaking such dissimilar projects but being so successful at everything he touched. He was a decorated WWI aviation hero,a Polish freedom fighter, POW in a

Russian prison camp,WWII aviation hero, instrumental in the planning of the Dolittle attack on Japan,instrumental as planner and fighter with the Flying Tigers, instrumental staff member for Chennault,Whitehead,and Kenny, friend to Douglas MacArthur,finally earning himself a place as US dignitary on the Missouri as the Japanese signed the Instrument of Surrender. That's just his war record. He help form Pan Am Airways. His movie credits are just as astonishing, perfecting and developing many filming techniques that are taken for granted today, one of the first proponents of color movies, one of first proponents of Cinerama. He was also an explorer and big game hunter. He's not just successful in these endeavors he in eminently successful. So why does our collective memory know so little about Cooper in this day and age? My own theory is that after WWII he was a staunch Cold Warrior and big supporter of Joe McCarthy. History has gone on to prove that the entertainment and journalist business was peppered with communists and their sympathizers. Cooper died but the information industry hasn't changed much and they collectively turned a blind eye to a truly extraordinary life. It's a great story, way more than 5 stars.

It has been said that when America was younger, there were more opportunities. It is also said that with big government one gets littler people and with small government one gets bigger people. Here is a hero that demonstrates the truth of both concepts. What a remarkable man and a remarkable story. The hollyweird that lionizes child rapists and obese communists won't recognize a hero for what he is so no more Merian C. Coopers and no more Audie Murphys. You'll remember and if you do, weep for the loss. Hurrah Mr. Cooper. Hail and farewell. Whatta story! Highly recommended.

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