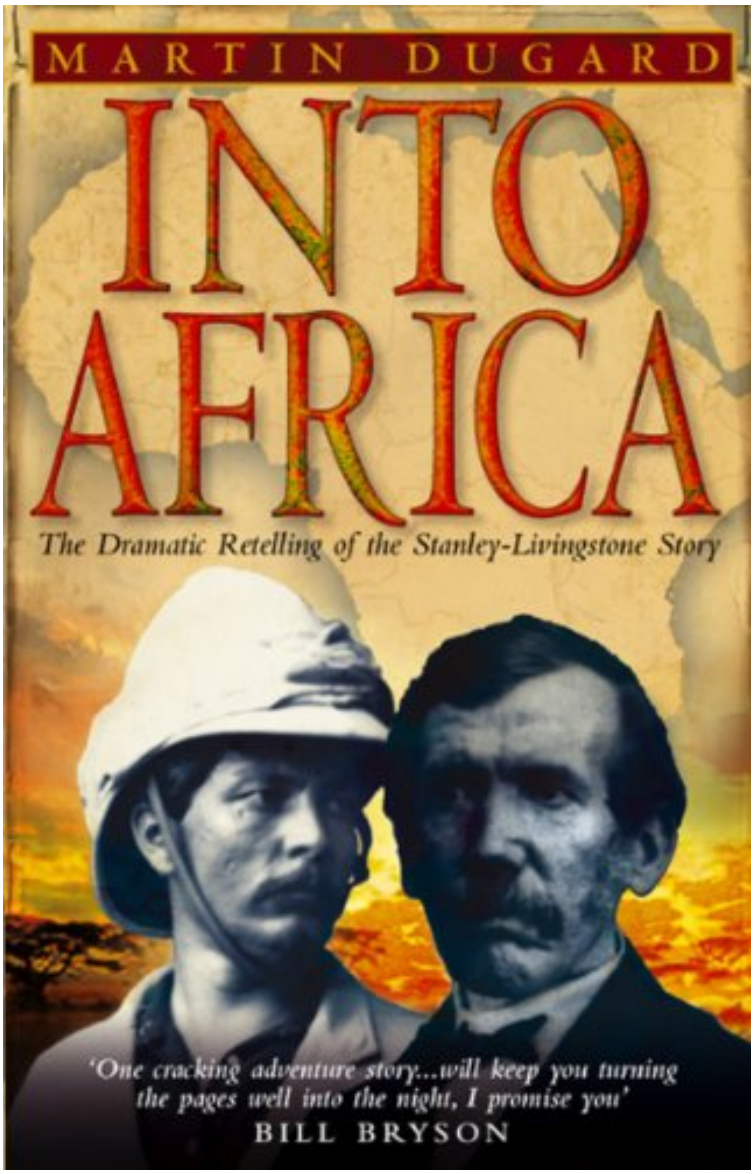
Into Africa: The Epic Adventures Of Stanley And Livingstone



Par Martin Dugard
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurIn 1866 Britain's foremost explorer, Dr David Livingstone, went in search of the answer to an age-old geographical riddle: where was the source of the Nile? Livingstone set out with a large team, on a course that would lead through unmapped, seemingly impenetrable terrain into areas populated by fearsome man-eating tribes. Within weeks his expedition began to fall apart - his entourage deserted him and Livingstone vanished without trace. He would not be heard from again for two years.While debate raged in England over whether Livingstone could be found in the unmapped wilderness of the African interior, James

Gordon Bennet, a brash young American newspaper tycoon, hatched a plan to capitalise on the world's fascination with the missing legend. He commissioned his star reporter, Henry Morton Stanley (born John Rowlands in Wales!), to search for Livingstone. Stanley undertook his quest with gusto, filing reports that captivated readers and dominated the front page of the New York Herald for months.INTO AFRICA traces the journeys of Livingstone and Stanley in alternating chapters. Livingstone's is one of trials and set-backs, that finds him alone and miles from civilisation. Stanley's is an awakening to the beauty of Africa, the grandeur of the landscape and the vivid diversity of its wildlife. It is also a journey that succeeds beyond his wildest dreams, clinching his place in history with the famous enquiry: 'Dr Livingstone, I presume?'. In this, the first book to examine the extraordinary physical challenges, political intrigue and larger-than-life personalities of this legendary story, Martin Dugard has opened a fascinating window on the golden age of exploration that will appeal to everyone's sense of adventure.ExtraitCHAPTER 1The Nile DuelTwo Years Earlier - September 16, 1864Bath, EnglandThe catalyst for the saga of daring took place shortly after eleven in the morning on Friday, September 16, 1864. Richard Francis Burton stood alone on the wooden speaker's platform at the British Association for the Advancement of Science's annual convention, awaiting his debate opponent. His wife, Isabel, sat a few feet behind. He clutched a sheaf of arguments. He was strong but narrow in the shoulders and hips, like a matador. His eyes were so dark brown they were often described as black. His mustache, truly black, flowed over and around his lips to his chin. The legendary Somali scars ran up his cheeks like slender compass arrows pointing north. He remained calm as he watched the doors for John Hanning Speke's entrance. The fair-haired geographical hero with the cold blue eyes was Burton's opposite, and Burton had waited six years to settle their rivalry. A few minutes more meant little.The audience felt differently. It had been a wet, cramped morning and they were lathering into a righteous fury. There had been rumors of a cancellation due to some sort of injury to Speke, but the almost two thousand adventurers, dignitaries, journalists, and celebrity gazers came anyway. They braved a howling rain to get seats for what the newspapers were calling the Nile Duel, as if the debate were a bare-knuckle prizefight instead of a defining moment in history. Burton and Speke would argue who had discovered the source of the Nile River--the most consuming geographic riddle of all time. Curiously, Burton and Speke made their conflicting source discoveries during the same expedition. They had been partners. And even as they made plans to destroy one another, Burton and Speke suppressed deep mutual compassion.They were former friends--lovers, some whispered--turned enemies. Theirs was a "story of adventure, jealousy and recrimination, which painted their achievements in bright or lurid lights and tragic shades," in the words of Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of Bombay. Each man's aim was not just claiming the Nile, but destroying the other socially, professionally, and financially. The winner would know a permanent spot in the history books. The loser would be labeled a delusional, presumptuous fool, with all the public ridicule that implied.Speke was a thin loner whose family home, Jordans, was just forty miles from Bath. He was childlike, entitled, wealthy, bland, deaf in one ear. At thirty-seven, he doted on his mother but had never courted any other woman. Critics acknowledged his prowess as a sportsman, but puzzled over his penchant for slaughter and fondness for eating the unborn fetus of a kill. They wondered about the character of a man who once gave a rifle as a gift to an African chief fond of shooting subjects for fun, and who allowed a live human child to be steamed like a lobster during a tribal ritual in his honor. Speke felt that the ends justified the means--in this case, finding the source was worth the loss of inconsequential African lives. The source, Speke claimed, was a massive rectangular body of water the size of Scotland. He named it Victoria Nyanza--Lake Victoria--for the Queen.The dark-haired Burton claimed Lake Tanganyika as the source. That body of water lay 150 miles southwest of Victoria Nyanza, separated by mountainous, unexplored jungle. Burton did not dispute that the Nile flowed from Victoria, but he believed that another, yet undiscovered, river flowed from Tanganyika through the mountains, into Victoria.Lake Tanganyika's shape was slender and vertical on the map, like a womb parting to give birth to the great Nile. Its choice as Burton's geographical talisman was apt, for his character tics veered toward the sensual. The accomplished linguist had a fondness for Arab prostitutes and would someday write the first English translation of the Kama Sutra. In 1845, as a young army officer stationed in India, he'd been ordered to investigate Karachi's homosexual brothels. Burton's detailed reportage implicated fellow officers and evinced suspicion about his own sexuality--both of which combined to ruin his career. So he'd become an explorer. His knowledge of languages and Islam allowed him to infiltrate cities like Mecca and Harar, which were forbidden to non-Muslims. The resulting books about those escapades were best-sellers in the mid-1850s, earning Burton a reputation for daring while introducing Oriental thoughts and words to his readers. It was Burton who made the term safari--Swahili for

"journey"--familiar to the English-speaking world.The mob packing the auditorium, so eager for spectacle and rage, knew the Burton and Speke story well. The time had come for resolution. When the eleven o'clock starting time came and passed, the crowd "gave vent to its impatience by sounds more often heard from the audience of a theater than a scientific meeting," sniffed the Bath Chronicle. The audience gossiped loudly about Speke's whereabouts and stared at the stage, scrutinizing Burton with that unflinching gaze reserved for the very famous. In an era when no occupation was more glamorous than African explorer, Burton's features were already well known through photographs and sketches from his books. But for many in the audience, seeing his face up close, in person, was why they'd come. They felt the same about Speke.There was a third explorer many hoped to glimpse, a man whose legend was arguably greater than any living explorer. "The room," the Chronicle noted of the auditorium, "was crowded with ladies and gentlemen who were radiant with the hope of seeing Dr. Livingstone." The British public hadn't caught a glimpse of their beloved Livingstone since the halcyon days of 1857 when he seemed to be everywhere at once. His exploits had been a balm for the wounds of the Crimean War, the ill-fated Charge of the Light Brigade, and the bloody slaughter of British women and children during the Indian Mutiny. Livingstone reminded Victorian Britain of her potential for greatness. The fifty-one-year-old Scot was their hero archetype, an explorer brave, pious, and humble; so quick with a gun that Waterloo hero the Duke of Wellington nicknamed Livingstone "the fighting parson." Livingstone was equally at home wandering the wilds of Africa and making small talk over tea with the Queen. The public made his books best-sellers, his speeches standing room, his name household. Livingstone was beloved in Britain, and so famous worldwide that one poll showed that only Victoria herself was better known.Livingstone, though, wasn't scheduled to appear at the Nile Duel. His first public appearance since returning from an exploration of Africa's Zambezi River six months earlier was officially supposed to take place the following Monday. He would lecture the British Association on the details of that journey. Ticket demand was so enormous that Livingstone, standing before a massive map of Africa, would give the speech live in one theater as Clements Markham of the Royal Geographical Society read it concurrently to the overflow crowd in a second auditorium. The Chronicle's special edition would publish the text in its entirety.Rumors, however, said Livingstone would make an appearance at the Nile Duel as moderator. His appearance would confirm the Duel's heft and counterbalance smirks of innuendo. For celebrity gazers and scientists alike, Livingstone, Burton, and Speke on the same stage would elevate the proceedings from grudge match to intellectual field day. Those three greats hurling geographical barbs would make the long hours in the rain more than worthwhile.Ironically, the crowd was unaware that the larger-than-life Livingstone was enduring a season of tumultuous upheaval. His problems had begun with the five-year journey up the Zambezi. The expedition had accomplished a great deal. But many of his companions died during the journey--including Livingstone's wife, Mary, who had been so desperate to be with him she left the safety of England to venture into Africa to find him, then joined the expedition halfway through the journey. Because of the deaths, the failure of a highly touted project that would have established Christian missions in the African interior, and reports that Livingstone was an inept leader, the British Government viewed the Zambezi expedition as a debacle. Hence, the Times questioned Livingstone's judgment, he was persona non grata at the Foreign Office--his place of employment--and influential Christian politician William Gladstone quietly severed their relationship.Financially, Livingstone was almost destitute. Even as friends urged him to retire and spend time with his children, he needed one last great geographical discovery so he could write the best-selling book about his travels that would provide for him and his children. "I don't know whether I am to go on the shelf or not," he wrote to a friend, acknowledging that the Foreign Office might never let him lead another expedition, but vowing to return to Africa nonetheless. "If I do, I make Africa the shelf."Most devastating of all, however, was that Robert, his prodigal eldest son, had secretly sailed to America to fight for the Union Army in their Civil War. Robert Livingstone had been taken prisoner during the siege of Richmond and been sent to a Confederate prisoner of war camp. There was no news of his whereabouts or physical condition. Livingstone, tragically, had castigated Robert for being aimless and base not long before the boy fled to America and enlisted.In Bath that morning, the British public knew nothing of Livingstone's personal travails. In its eyes, Livingstone was not a legend in decline, but a luminary whose lined, tanned face they longed to glimpse. As eleven o'clock came and went, however, Livingstone, like Speke, was nowhere to be seen. Burton and the audience watched the doors, straining for a glimpse of their entrance. What would happen in the next few minutes would alte...From Publishers WeeklyIt is rare when a historical narrative keeps readers up late into the night, especially when the story is as well known as Henry Morgan Stanley's search for the missionary and

explorer David Livingstone. But author and adventurer Dugard, who's written a biography of Capt. James Cook among other works, makes a suspenseful tale out of journalist Stanley's successful trek through the African interior to find and rescue a stranded Livingstone. Dugan has read extensively in unpublished diaries, newspapers of the time and the archives of Britain's Royal Geographical Society; he also visited the African locations central to the story. Together these sources enable him to re-create with immediacy the astounding hardships, both natural and manmade, that Africa put in the path of the two central characters. Dugard also presents thoughtful insights into the psychology of both Stanley and Livingstone, whose respective responses to Africa could not have differed more. Stanley was bent on beating Africa with sheer force of will, matching it brutality for brutality, while Livingstone, possessed of spirituality and a preternatural absence of any fear of death, responded to the continent's harshness with patience and humility. Descriptions of the African landscape are vivid, as are the descriptions of malaria, dysentery, sleeping sickness, insect infestations, monsoons and tribal wars, all of which Stanley and Livingstone faced. More disturbing, however is Dugard's depiction of the prosperous Arab slave trade, which creates a sense of menace that often reaches Conradian intensity. This is a well-researched, always engrossing book.