



The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival

John Vaillant

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It's December 1997, and a man-eating tiger is on the prowl outside a remote village in Russia's Far East. The tiger isn't just killing people, it's annihilating them, and a team of men and their dogs must hunt it on foot through the forest in the brutal cold. As the trackers sift through the gruesome remains of the victims, they discover that these attacks aren't random: the tiger is apparently engaged in a vendetta. Injured, starving, and extremely dangerous, the tiger must be found before it strikes again.

As he re-creates these extraordinary events, John Vaillant gives us an unforgettable portrait of this spectacularly beautiful and mysterious region. We meet the native tribes who for centuries have worshipped and lived alongside tigers, even sharing their kills with them. We witness the arrival of Russian settlers in the 19th and early 20th centuries, soldiers and hunters who greatly diminished the tiger populations. And we come to know their descendants, who, crushed by poverty, have turned to poaching and further upset the natural balance of the region.

This ancient, tenuous relationship between man and predator is at the very heart of this remarkable book. Throughout, we encounter surprising theories of how humans and tigers may have evolved to coexist, how we may have developed as scavengers rather than hunters, and how early Homo sapiens may have fit seamlessly into the tiger's ecosystem. Above all, we come to understand the endangered Siberian tiger, a highly intelligent super-predator that can grow to 10 feet long, weigh more than 600 pounds, and range daily over vast territories of forest and mountain.

Beautifully written and deeply informative, *The Tiger* circles around three main characters: Vladimir Markov, a poacher killed by the tiger; Yuri Trush, the lead tracker; and the tiger himself. It is an absolutely gripping tale of man and nature that leads inexorably to a final showdown in a clearing deep in the taiga.

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