



Amazonia

James Rollins

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The Rand scientific expedition entered the lush wilderness of the Amazon and never returned. Years later, one of its members has stumbled out of the world's most inhospitable rainforest: a former Special Forces soldier – scarred, mutilated, terrified, and mere hours from death – who went in with one arm missing...and came out with both intact.

Unable to comprehend this inexplicable event, the government sends Nathan Rand into this impenetrable secret world of undreamed – of perils to follow the trail of his vanished father...toward mysteries that must be solved at any cost. But the nightmare that is awaiting Nate and his team of scientists and seasoned U.S. Army Rangers dwarfs any danger they anticipated...an ancient, unspoken terror – a power beyond human imagining—that can forever alter the world beyond the dark, lethal confines of the Amazon rainforest for better... and for worse.

Amazonia Details

Date : Published March 1st 2002 by Avon Books (first published 2002)

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Author : James Rollins

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From Reader Review Amazonia for online ebook

The Pirate Ghost (Formerly known as the Curmudgeon) says

Holy holes in the fence Batman! I found another big time fun read on the rapidly growing favorite reads shelf that fell through the cracks!

Time for another short review. (Does two make a trend?...oh, I hope not..)

This was my first introduction to James Rollins and thank God for that! She must have been listening!

All James Rollins stories, save two, that I can think of get the same opening statement..."Fast Paced." This is no exception, however, in this one, I think the balance between speed of plot and details is handled better than in other Rollins Novels. There is a character that I'm sure becomes Joe Kowalski in later books that I just love, but he goes by a different name here (similar background). All action adventure stories need a Joe Kowalski type...he's great!

I don't like the "Treasure" they find at the end of the story as much as in other James Rollins books, but I loved the adventure to it and back and I like the Hero and Heroine, also better than in other books (save Subterranean might have had a heroine whom I liked better). There is a lot of action, a lot of scientific mystery and mysterious amazing sub plots and twists and turns

And, of course, monsters with HUGE SNAPPING TEETH! (cough)... I mean.. yes, quite frightening creatures that lurk in the depths of the Amazon basis. (cough) The villains were cool, not as interesting as Ice Hunt, but close enough. And at the end we see the beginning of the Sigma Force Novels starting to get organized... a foreshadowing of serial fun to come (Starting with Sandstorm).

But I digress. Summary-Good book, well paced for action adventure, some violence but generally what I'd call "Made for TV Movie" level violence, very manageable. If not a great plot, great execution of plot (about the writing)

...and of course...

HUGE...Big...Monster with.. these huge big Gnashing TEETH... claws that could rip... (sigh) Look at the Bones MAN!....

and a guy who could be Joe Kowalski's twin brother... everything a good adventure needs!

David says

Doesn't really hold a candle to the other books I have read by Rollins, Ice Hunt and Sandstorm.

Tim says

Sometimes a story is better when there is less of it. Less violence is my suggestion for this story in particular.
6 of 10 stars

Eve says

Full disclosure: I used to LOVE James Rollins' books in middle and early high school. They were fun, action packed, interesting, and just on the verge of fantasy...fantastical realism, I'd say. Of the 4 I read, this one was my least favorite, because it wasn't as fun and interesting as the others. This was well over 10 years ago, so I decided to give this one a reread as it fit a book challenge. As a kid, I probably would have given this 4 stars. As an adult, the book's issues are much more apparent to me.

First of all, I was a bit put off by Rollins' consistent referring to the indigenous people as "Indians," but of course I'm not totally sure what the accepted nomenclature is for the tribes of the Amazon. These people seemed to be respectfully portrayed at times aside from the dubious naming, but there were also some issues and elements that make me question the author. For example, he uses the Yanomamo tribe throughout the book as the main tribe the hero is familiar with. The author's background is not in Latin American indigenous people, and there are no acknowledgments at the end of the book, so I wonder where he got his information from re: this tribe. One thing I did discover in searching for them is that the map shown at the beginning of the book does not seem to match up with the map of where the Yanomamo live. The other tribe, the Ban-ali, is a ~super scary and mysterious, almost mythological tribe for most of the book. This is a made-up tribe, as far as I could tell, but the mythos surrounding the tribe was that of a ruthless and scary tribe, which is a bit side-eye worthy coming from a white author.

The worst offense was the portrayal of Tshui, the villain's "woman" (literally how she was referred, as if she were his property) from the Shuar tribe. She was always silent, naked, and sexually eager. The only other thing we knew about her was that she was deadly and would make shrunken heads out of the people she and the villain killed. The misogyny is disgusting, and the fact that she's the only indigenous woman in the book (aside from a scene at the very beginning) makes the issues with her portrayal even more glaring. There is also a female Asian researcher on the team (unspecified country of origin) who is portrayed as highly intelligent but meek, with a soft and sweet voice. Great, more stereotypes. (view spoiler)

It's not just WOC that Rollins mistreats, though the white woman is certainly treated better by comparison. In all of the Rollins novels I've read, there's gotta be a woman for the main hero. The woman in this one is a redhead from Boston named Kelly O'Brien. Can't get much more stereotypically Irish than that, can you? (This only stuck out to me because in another of his books, the main woman is actually from Ireland and her portrayal smacks you over the head with it, so I'm starting to wonder if there's a trend). The "Gary Stu" hero, Nathan, and Kelly meet for the first time by Kelly trying to treat an indigenous child with modern methods, for which Nathan yells at her for being stupid and careless. No joke. Yes, there's a point made here to respect different medical treatments from self-contained tribes like the Yanomamo even if they don't make sense to modern medicine, but it's made by the main woman getting lectured by the hero the second she appears, which doesn't sit right with me.

A large part of her character revolves around her having a daughter back home. Of course, the daughter is infected by the disease they're trying to cure, which puts Kelly in an emotionally compromised position. Throughout the book, she has a couple heroic moments, but is largely a non-entity aside from her occasionally exchanging glances with or getting comforted by Nathan. Of course, a few days into the expedition, they sleep together and it's the ~most wonderful thing ever.~ The next day, they're separated

when the villain captures her and a few others, and the villain blows up the area where Nathan was. Kelly's thought, thinking Nathan is dead? "I will seek revenge for you Nathan, or die trying." Umm, hello? Shouldn't your first priority be getting back to your sick daughter, not seeking revenge for this dude you just met a few days ago? What terrible writing for that character.

Of course, (view spoiler)

I actually reduced this from 3 to 2 stars as I was typing this review. It's a moderately interesting read regarding the medical mystery plot points with plenty of action, but the characterization really ruins any good things this book has going for it. The cultural sensitivity or lack thereof is a topic with which I'm not well-versed, but I have a bad feeling about the portrayals in this book, and I wonder how accurate the things portrayed are to the tribes he describes. I tried searching for indigenous views on the book, but couldn't find anything through Google. **If anyone has recommendations for resources to read on this topic, please let me know!**

I'm curious now to go back and read the books I loved by him to see if I encounter similar issues. Something tells me I will, since his books are very formulaic from what I remember about the others. Self-insert Gary Stu hero, flat (and often stereotypically "kickass" and independent, yet they fall for the hero anyway) female character for the hero to fall in love with, diverse secondary characters to meet a quota (poorly), mysterious "other" people (usually of color), outrageous scenarios that no one should survive, and yet the main couple does and lives happily ever after. This guy is basically the Dan Brown of Indiana Jones-type action/adventure novels.

Lee says

With the intrigue, mystery and it's huge landscape of uncharted territory of the Amazon, Rollins takes you on a fun adventure. With a good explanation's on the plant life, their different uses for healing by the natives, to all of the different critters that can be deadly, to the irritating insects...it's not a place I would like to spend a night in. Add in the search for a "miracle" drug, a huge pharmaceutical company that will stop at nothing to be the first to get their hands on it, the action is nonstop.

Danny Tyran says

This story is a mixture of genres: horror (with huge jaguars, flying piranhas,...), suspense à la Indiana Jones, science fiction (with pandemic, miraculous medicine, cut arms and legs growing back, man coming back from the dead,...) and rivalries between big pharmaceutical companies and US government (Rangers included). It's entertaining, but no more than that.

Connor says

[4 Stars] I thoroughly enjoyed this novel! The science involved was absolutely fantastic, and I loved every second of it. Don't worry if you don't know much science though because it's all explained really well as you're reading. I also love to come across characters with my last name. Kelly and Frank O'Brien for the win. It definitely kept me on my toes for the whole duration learning about the native cultures and the different

elements of the Amazon rain forest, not to mention all the crazy intense trials the characters have to go through. It's brutal. I think, for a thriller, this book took me longer to get through than I expected. It's just over 400 pages, so it's really not very lengthy. I also didn't fall in love with the characters (Manny and Tor Tor being the exceptions.) I just didn't feel for them if - no, when something terrible would happen to them. I definitely recommend it, and I hope to pick up some more James Rollins books in the future.

Nu-Jahat-Jabin says

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Jason Parent says

Amazonia is the perfect cross between a high action horror-thriller and a smooth science fiction adventure tale. Yes, all those things. A creature feature mixed with Michael Crichton mixed with Outbreak set in an Indiana Jones/Alan Quartermaine world.

Read this. It's awesome. My only qualms was a somewhat rushed ending.

RedemptionDenied says

3.5 stars.

Not too bad. It's just that towards the end it got a bit too crazy - even for me. I guess I have my limits.

Lindsey Rey says

It's official: I am going to read every single James Rollins book in existence!

Fuad Al Fidah says

J.K. Grice says

How can you not have fun with a book like this? Great adventure, twists & turns, as well as interesting science behind the story. If you enjoy some of the early books by Preston & Child (RIPTIDE, THUNDERHEAD, THE ICE LIMIT) you're bound to have a good time with AMAZONIA

Farzana Raisa says

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Jonetta says

This was the September selection for discussion in my *Shelfari Mystery & Suspense* group. I've wanted to read something by James Rollins but wasn't certain that this was the first I should try. Fortunately, the friend who recommended it (who has never steered me wrong) knew better as this was an exciting experience.

The set up

The story takes place in a remote area of the Amazon jungle. A team is sent there to try to find out what happened to a science expedition four years prior. One of the members from that expedition suddenly showed up in one of the villages and died soon after. His physical transformation was inexplicable and the government organized a mission to investigate. Project Amazonia included a team of scientists, U. S. Rangers and the son of the leader of the earlier expedition.

The issues

The Amazon jungle is like no other environment, with botanical riches that can nurture, heal and destroy you if you don't know what you're doing. The normal hazards facing the team weren't the only problems this group faced as a mercenary was tracking them with evil intentions. They also had to contend with extraordinary situations as they reached and went beyond the region where the first expedition was last tracked.

What I really liked about this story

Aside from the nail-biting excitement from not knowing what new fresh hell lay around the next bend, the story was rich with cultural lore and botanical insight. I've known intellectually the value of the plant life in the Amazon but this was a fascinating education. It all was used to create a fantastical situation that rivaled any adventure film I've ever seen, laid out in a way that made it seem plausible.

The mix of characters was equally interesting, especially with two women on the team. The obstacles they confronted were beyond frightening and as no one was sacred in this story, I never knew who wasn't going to make it to the next challenge. And, there was even a little romance, which I didn't anticipate.

What I didn't like so much

Not everyone survives this exploration and at times, I felt like the bad guys were always winning or having the advantage. It started to get me down after awhile. I needed more wins for the good guys.

The bottom line

Amazonia is an incredible story that was tons more interesting and exciting than I ever imagined. I liked the writing style and the characters were well developed. Without giving away too much, this book is equal parts fantasy and adventure as it is mystery and suspense. The treasures and secrets of the Amazon are immeasurable and the story leveraged every part of it. The action started on the first page and it never let up. I'm really glad I read this book.

Will M. says

What a **huge** disappointment. My rating now might change depending on my further assessment of the novel. I'm still contemplating whether I should give it 1 or 2 stars. Most of my 1 star are for my dnf books, so I might go ahead and give this a 2. Lucky bastard, but like I said, it might drop down to 1star one day.

The main problem would be the characters. Almost all of them were flat and dull. Dull to the point that you wouldn't mind them dying. To be honest Kelly and her daughter were the only ones well developed. That says a lot about this novel, she's not even the main character. Nate was terribly boring, despite his knowledge of the Amazon and all. No sympathy felt while reading this.

Another huge problem would be the plot, or the substance of it. This novel had huge potential, but wow, it failed big time.

The Amazon. That alone drawn me in to read this novel, and obviously I was expecting a lot. I was expecting to read more of the animals, insects, and other weird made up creatures, but instead I was shoved with plants, and a few mildly interesting creatures.

Don't get me wrong, the plants mentioned in the novel were fairly interesting, but it wasn't adequate to make the novel as amazing as it should've been. Like I said, we're talking about the Amazon here, **anything** can

happen. It being a huge mystery, James Rollins could've given us more than what he did. I can't further express how disappointed I am, because the list would go on and on if I am to talk about the inadequacy of the Amazon experience I was looking forward to.

Next issue would be the "secret" of the Amazon. It was okay, but nothing to be amazed about.
(view spoiler)

Before anyone comment on maybe I'm not fond of this genre, I will stop you right there and say that I'm a huge Sci-Fi fan, especially of this genre to be precise. Amazon, jungles, underwater, desert, etc. Those things interest me, especially the animals and weird horror filled things that could be unraveled. Mystery filled Sci-Fi adventure is an amazing genre for me, I've read some books, and also seen some movies regarding these, and I liked them.

So to sum it all up, I really didn't like this novel. It had a huge potential to be one of my favorites, but it ended up being one of the novels I wouldn't recommend to anyone. I didn't like it, but I guess it was also okay in a way. Mildly interesting botany facts, and a few mildly interesting creatures. If I were you though, I'd read something else of James Rollins. I've read some of his other novels, and really liked them. I did have huge expectations before reading this, so maybe that contributed to this awful disappointment I'm feeling right now.

2 bloody awful stars.

Adam says

Another awesome book by James Rollins who really knows how to churn out quality page turners. Amazonia is a techno action adventure with some cool sf elements thrown in. The main character is Nathan Rand Whose father died while on a mysterious expedition to the Amazon. Nathan is part of a large team sent in to discover what happened to the previous group and hopefully unravel the central mystery.

Michael says

I bought this book because the author has a reputation for weaving geography into his writing, and being a geographer myself, I wanted to see how well geographic themes worked.

If you are familiar with Clive Cussler, then these novels will resonate. Nathan Rand is this novel's "Dirk Pitt," an intrepid scientist who sets out on an expedition to discover how a former soldier makes it out of the

Amazon covered up in cancer yet, miraculously, has regrown a limb. Said soldier was the sole survivor of an expedition to the Amazon whose members also included Rand's father, who never returned to civilization.

I'm not particularly picky about my fiction, especially "fun" fiction, such as novels like these.

Action is fast-paced, and the body count mounts early. Episodes of violence reach nearly ridiculous levels, stretching the imagination a little. These are not fantasy books, but yes, in a way, they are.

Rollins definitely uses some literary license in pursuit of an interesting story, for sure. That is where Rollins, Crichton, and Cussler sort of ride in their prose.

Rollins also melds together many current themes, cancer research, deforestation, the loss of biodiversity and the impact on disease research, and the treatment of native peoples. His characters are often found eloquently speaking about the dangers of cutting down the rain forest, how many species are lost, and the loss of research material that could potentially alleviate current or future diseases of mankind.

And, in the process, people get shot, killed, eaten, shot and eaten, eaten and burned, shot and partially eaten and blown-up, and turned into fertilizer.

If you've got a plane-ride, bus-ride, or an extended hospital stay, and you want something to keep your attention for a while, this book might do it.

Tanner says

Even though I gave this book three stars. For the most part I did find myself enjoying the story. It was an interesting read unlike most of the other books I read.

You follow main character Nathan Rand and his adventures. You also follow the O'briars Kelly and Frank.

And the characters were my biggest problem with this story. They were very bland. And I did not connect to any of there story's what so ever. And for me liking and connecting with the characters is a huge thing for me when I read a book.

My other big problem with the book is that it was a little long. And at certain points it bad way to much filler and things that just didn't need to be there.

While I did mention the length being a negative the book was a fast read for being five pages short of a 600 page book.

Overall I did enjoy this book and I do plan on reading more James Rollins because I did find this book overall being a good read. I just wish the characters were a little more well developed.

Moumita Hride says

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