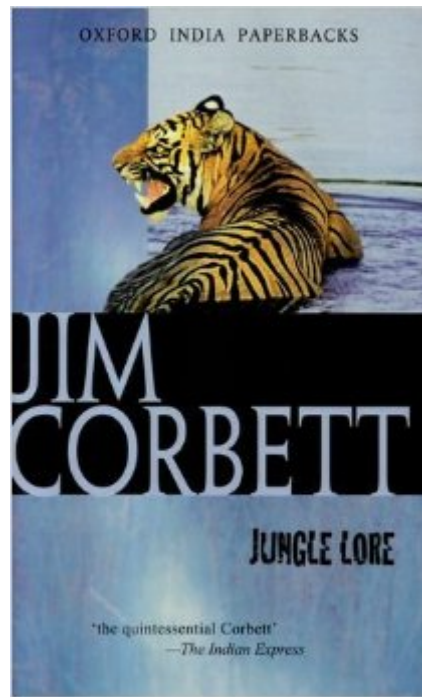


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Jungle Lore



Synopsis

Jim Corbett, naturalist, shikari, and conservationist is famous for his tales of hunting in the Indian Jungle. Many years before the issues of conservation became understood, Corbett was obsessed with the jungle and animals of the Kumaon hills. This new edition of Jungle Lore offers Corbett's own story of his life and career. At the heart of the narrative is a cry for sensitivity to the fragility of nature, and despair over mankind's divorce from his environment--a message as vibrant today as it ever was.

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Customer Reviews

It will take you far, far into past, into the very heart of India, the land of jungles, of love, of true simplicity, Jim Corbett will accompany you into the past with you and lead you into the future, this is a book that reiterates, that nature has no beginning as it has no end..., a revealing insight into one remarkable man, a britisher who was in India to live with its wonderful people and animals and who richly deserves the honour of being remembered even today, in the land he loved, and the place he tread, bears the call, CORBETT NATIONAL PARK.

James E. Corbett grew up in an India that was still a colony of Great Britain. This is an autobiographical account of episodes in his life -- by no means complete, but a taste of what it was like to grow up, not in the culture of British India, but in the jungles that surrounded it. He was a self-taught naturalist and tracker, learning to hunt, track, find direction, and survive in the jungles.

The stories are mostly entertaining -- except toward the end, where I found myself flipping forward in some distaste because of his description of hunting tigers for sport. But Corbett himself demonstrates a healthy reverence for life, and moreover, a strong appetite for learning about the natural world, and for developing his sensitivity to it. The book is largely narrative, but mixed in with it is a little bit of his philosophy of jungle law, and some material about what he has learned through his experiences, supplemented, of course, with more stories. This, like other anecdotal evidence, should be taken with a grain of salt and tested against one's own experience. For instance, he writes that venomous snakes, with one exception, are slower and so have to wriggle more in order to move around, and so their tracks will reflect this, while non-venomous snakes are speedy and agile and will have straight rather than wave-form tracks. A friend of mine who's very familiar with snakes disputes this. But, as Corbett himself says, "Having stated that the book of Nature has no beginning, and no end, I would be the last to claim that I have learned all that is to be learned of any of the subjects dealt with here, or that this book contains any expert knowledge." Undoubtedly, though, through his extensive experience alone, he has learned enough to be a master, in harmony with his jungle.

Jim Corbett is one of my all-time-favorite authors. I have read all his books, but the one I love the most is 'Jungle Lore'. I have the first Indian edition of the book. It belonged to my dad who bought it in 1971 for 2.50 Rupees (which is roughly 5 cents)! Corbett loved the jungle. He is considered the greatest tiger hunter India ever knew, and the reason he was so successful was not only because he knew the Kumaon jungle like the back of his hand, but also because he understood the jungle. He could understand the sounds of animals and birds. He could even make those sounds with great accuracy. He could look at the pug marks of animals on a mud path and tell a whole story of what happened there that morning. He had a sixth sense of jungle which he called his "jungle sensitiveness". This book is not about hunting. This is a book about nature. Corbett writes with lot of humbleness and humor. One cannot stop admiring his courage and his vast knowledge of the jungle after reading this book.

This an autobiographical book is about a turn of the century British Citizen growing up in India, who becomes fascinated about the Jungle and the inhabitants that live there at a very early age. He is mostly self taught by observing nature around him. He is also a great tracker and develops his awareness to a extraordinary level. He is motivated to increase his awareness and tracking abilities by his respect for the Leopard, Tigers and Cobras that fill his jungle.

As a North American reader, this is an account of another world, and another age. As such, it's a fine opportunity to consider what resonates, and what's outdated. I was sad when I finished reading the last page, and could've enjoyed twice as many chapters.

Jungle Lore is a book that any real Corbett fan genuinely needs to read. This is the essential Corbett. This is the book in which Corbett tells about his youth, and growing up in India. It is, however, different from his other books, such as *The Maneaters of Kumuoan*, in that it is not specifically about hunting tigers. Rather, he tells us about how he learned to read the jungle signs, and learn the languages of many of the jungle creatures. In this book, he does ramble a bit, but he also tells about some of his hunting experiences. If you're a Corbett fan, you really need to read this book,

Jim Corbett - who is more famous for his books on hair raising encounters with man eating tigers and leopards - had also written two slightly different books: *Jungle Lore* and *My India*. *Jungle Lore* has fascinating accounts of Corbett's experiences in the Jungles on the foothills of Himalayas in India. From his early childhood when he used to venture into the jungles armed with a catapult (from which he graduated to pellet-bow followed by a muzzle-loader and finally rifles), Corbett absorbed as much as he could about the way of the jungle. He says that jungle lore is not a science that can be learnt in textbooks; it can only be absorbed, little at a time, for "the book of nature has no beginning, as it has no end." Based only on his observations, Corbett describes a wide variety of birds, animals, and reptiles living in the jungles, and classifies them into different categories based on their behavior, eating habits, role in maintaining the balance of nature, etc. Though there are certain sections of the book that describe Corbett organizing "beats" for the aristocracy (British and Indian) to hunt down tigers for sport which appear a little out of character with Corbett's avowed respect for animals (there is even a section where Corbett decides to kill a big male leopard just because he was "worth shooting"), there is no doubt that Corbett, through his books, had done more towards raising awareness on the conservation of the wild life in the jungles of India than anyone else. It's a shame that most of the jungles described in Corbett's books are slowly becoming a thing of the past, and unless desperate measures are taken, rapid population growth and indiscriminate poaching will forever deprive India of the finest of her flora and fauna.

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