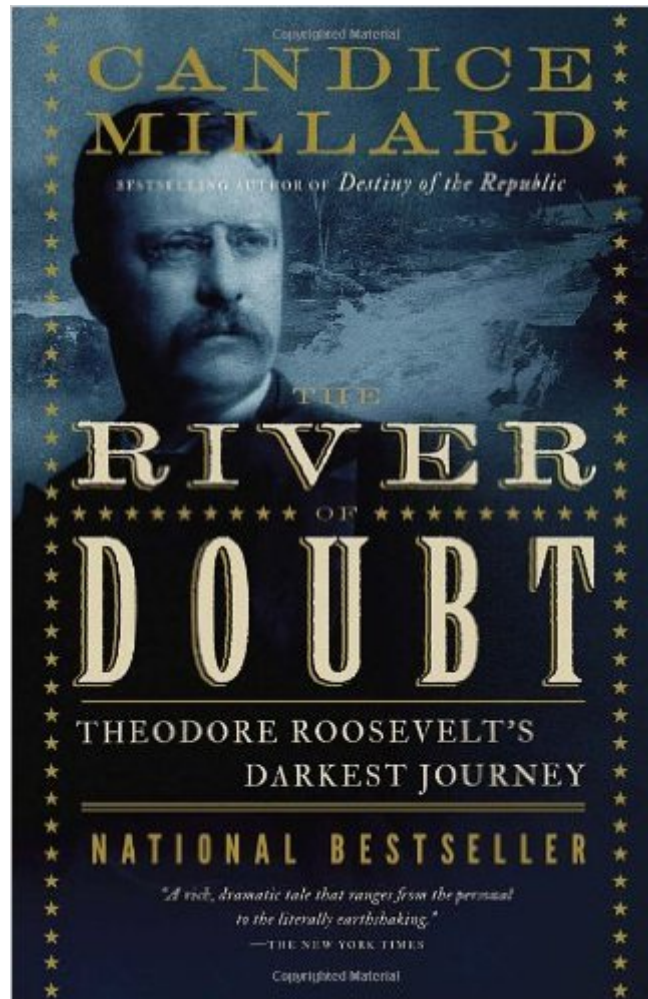


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# The River Of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey



## Synopsis

At once an incredible adventure narrative and a penetrating biographical portrait, *The River of Doubt* is the true story of Theodore Roosevelt's harrowing exploration of one of the most dangerous rivers on earth. The River of Doubt "it is a black, uncharted tributary of the that snakes through one of the most treacherous jungles in the world. Indians armed with poison-tipped arrows haunt its shadows; piranhas glide through its waters; boulder-strewn rapids turn the river into a roiling cauldron. After his humiliating election defeat in 1912, Roosevelt set his sights on the most punishing physical challenge he could find, the first descent of an unmapped, rapids-choked tributary of the . Together with his son Kermit and Brazil's most famous explorer, Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, Roosevelt accomplished a feat so great that many at the time refused to believe it. In the process, he changed the map of the western hemisphere forever. Along the way, Roosevelt and his men faced an unbelievable series of hardships, losing their canoes and supplies to punishing whitewater rapids, and enduring starvation, Indian attack, disease, drowning, and a murder within their own ranks. Three men died, and Roosevelt was brought to the brink of suicide. *The River of Doubt* brings alive these extraordinary events in a powerful nonfiction narrative thriller that happens to feature one of the most famous Americans who ever lived. From the soaring beauty of the rain forest to the darkest night of Theodore Roosevelt's life, here is Candice Millard's dazzling debut.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Anyone who enjoyed Stephen Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage* or any other tale of exploration and

hardship will love *River of Doubt*. Candice Millard's new book chronicles the expedition of Theodore Roosevelt and his Brazilian co-commander, Candido Mariano da Silva Rondon, down one of the last unexplored tributaries in 1914-the River of Doubt. The 400-mile river trip tested every ounce of the ex-president's intellect, courage, and physical stamina. Millard's book, therefore, is more a tale of survival than adventure. Roosevelt and his American companions were woefully unprepared for their journey. They brought boats too large to be of use on a shallow river, and had to rely instead on Indian-made dugouts-canoes designed more for local transportation on flat water than long-distanced descents through rapids. The American and Brazilian members of the group often had to portage these heavy, waterlogged boats around rapids, which cost the group both time and precious food supplies. Food proved to be one of the most vexing problems of the journey. Much of the canned food shipped from the United States was too heavy to be carried to the expedition's launching point in the Brazilian highlands, and had to be discarded. Instead, Roosevelt hoped to augment his increasingly meager rations with game shot along the way. Unfortunately, the rain forest did not offer much bounty and the group ended up eating monkeys and piranhas to survive-creatures far more difficult to kill than deer and antelope. If that were not enough, disease plagued the expedition at every corner. Kermit, the son of President Roosevelt, fought malaria for most of the trip and Theodore almost died when he contracted a deadly bacterial infection from a small flesh wound.

This is a fascinating account of Theodore Roosevelt's expedition through the Brazilian wilderness in *The River of Doubt*. This book was especially interesting for me as my great great grandfather is Candido Mariano da Silva Rondon, the co-commander of the Roosevelt-Rondon Scientific expedition which put the Rio de Duvida, later renamed the Rio Roosevelt, on the map. The author is a former writer and editor for National Geographic magazine and brings that adventurous spirit and knowledge into her writing. She did extensive research for the book into not only the history of the region but also the biology. But this information isn't just tossed into the book for the sake of trivia. Instead she weaves each piece of info into the story. For example, she discusses Roosevelt's foreign policy specifically as it relates to South America while, in the story, Roosevelt's ship is steaming toward Brazil. At other points she discusses fish as large as sharks in order to explain the type of psychological pressures the men were up against as they went along their journey. Also, when helpful for the story, she details relevant biographical information for the purpose of character development. The story reads like a fiction novel though it is a well-documented and footnoted true story. The suspense involved makes it a page-turner that you don't want to put down. All in all, she

fits a broad range of biography, history, and biology into a fascinating true story that reads like a suspense fiction. If you are into to nature, adventure travel, history, or even just quality books, this is the one for you. I didn't know much about my great great grandfather, Rondon for short, until I read the book. Today he is national icon in Brazil. Kind of like a Lewis & Clark type of figure.

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