

## ***The Amazon Incident***

**W. Thomas Richards**

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W. Thomas Richard's "The Amazon Incident" is an adventure saga in the best traditions of the genre. Set deep in a South American forest, this book features a host of memorable characters, a riveting contest of good against evil, and a vast cache of hidden treasure as the ultimate bounty.

Ten years after Colombian drug lords bury a billion dollars worth of gold artifacts, Wilford and Patricia Lewine, a retired American couple traveling in Colombia, accidentally pick up five Christmas ornaments that contain clues to the treasure's location. But the drug cartel is intent on recovering its treasure, so a plane carrying the Lewines - and other passengers, including a group of nuns and U.S. Senator Domingo, a potential Presidential candidate - is shot down. The survivors rapidly realize that they need to move through the forest to keep one step ahead of the cartel's men, especially a brutal thug nicknamed Mad Wolf. "In his mind he envisioned slow torture that would make the Lewines sorry they were ever born...Mad Wolf was a heartless killer. The survivors would regret the day they took the ornaments."

Even as the stranded party pushes through to survival, the Lewines' grandchildren in America mount a rescue operation, guided by the guardian angels of their forefathers. Of the Lewine cousins, the three young women are the real heroes of this novel. Rhiannon, aged eighteen, is an ace pilot who is intent on going from school to the Air Force Academy. Nineteen-year-old Jessica, a pilot and Kung Fu black belt like Rhiannon, is an adventure sports enthusiast, heavily into rock climbing and skydiving, and hopes to pursue her "dream of exploring the sea." Madeline, who is seventeen, is a fearless driver, an adept mechanic, and has great organizational skills. Together they form an indomitable team, willing and able to take on every adversary that their adventure throws at them.

Richards writes at an urgent pace, propelling the reader headlong through his tale and almost making the pages turn themselves. But he never compromises on detail, so "The Amazon Incident" is rich with description and vivid narration. The author's own extensive travel experiences help him in describing, for example, the Amazonian forests accurately and with eloquence. "The next afternoon the leaves of the jungle trees fluttered in a gentle breeze," he writes at one point. "The sun tried desperately to peek through the clouds, but the moisture was too thick."

The strongest assets of "The Amazon Incident," however, are its characters. Richards etches every one of them out in loving detail, making them come sharply to life. Wilford and Patricia's affectionate banter, the Mother Superior's keen Irish wit, the Lewine cousins' gutsy endeavors, the drug lords' ruthlessness - the author imparts unique qualities to every person that features in his book. It is the people, as much as the pace of the plot and the skill of Richards' storytelling that make "The Amazon Incident" such a pounding, exciting adventure thriller. A sequel - "Calamity at the Devil's Door" - chronicles more exploits of the Lewine family.

*BookWire Review*

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