



Valverde's Gold: In Search of the Last Great Inca Treasure

By Mark Honigsbaum

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Journalist and historian Honigsbaum was on a research trip in 2000 to Baños, Ecuador, when he heard an intriguing tale: in a cave somewhere in the mountains northeast of Baños, a hoard of gold originally intended as part of the ransom for Inca emperor Atahualpa was said to have been hidden in 1533, and a document known as Valverde's Guide indicated how to find it. Fascinated, Honigsbaum pored through archives; the more he read, the more complex the story became. His recounting of his journey of discovery, about the guides and maps (there turn out to be many), is deliciously detailed and dense, as satisfying as any mystery, since he's genuinely stymied by the riddles he finds. His cast includes a botanist who harvests microscopic orchids resembling bumblebees, an aging Ecuadoran playboy who drinks and lies, and wary descendants of men who held the original treasure maps in their hands. Despite warnings that the treasure's a chimera and that the mountains are perilously labyrinthine, Honigsbaum eventually sets out to find the treasure. What he finds is a spellbinding climax to this tale of adventure and of the age-old lure of treasure. Maps and illus. not seen by *PW*.

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From [Booklist](#)

In 1887, a four-masted schooner struck a reef off the coast of Ecuador, and two of the ships crew--the captain and his second in command--set out to find a hoard of Inca gold that reportedly had been lost for hundreds of years. They had been given a secret map by the English botanist Richard Spruce, and subsequently they discovered a cave filled with exquisite Incan and pre-Incan artifacts made from gold and silver. They hoped to return with more men and equipment to continue the search. One of the men became ill and died, the other returned to England, where he had the pieces appraised by the British Museum. Revealing that in 1892 the second sailor set sail for North America but fell overboard off the coast of Halifax and drowned, presumably drunk, Honigsbaum endeavors to determine the truth of this mystery by trekking into an uncharted range in the Andes. The result will hold the reader's attention from beginning to end. *George Cohen*
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Review

"This treasure tale is true [and] dazzlingly documented, with words to whet one's greed." *The Washington Times*

"Glimpses of the pure, bracing thrill of the quest for lost treasure." *The Boston Globe*

"[The story] skillfully walks the tightrope between serious research and action-packed adventure. . . . An astonishing detective thriller [with] a cast of unusual characters [that] never ceases to amuse . . . Anyone who has ever entertained the idea of seeking a lost Inca treasure would do well to read this book, not least because it introduces the awful reality of tropical cloud forest, and the indispensable need for hope, especially when the only certainty is defeat." *The Washington Post*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony McDonell:

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