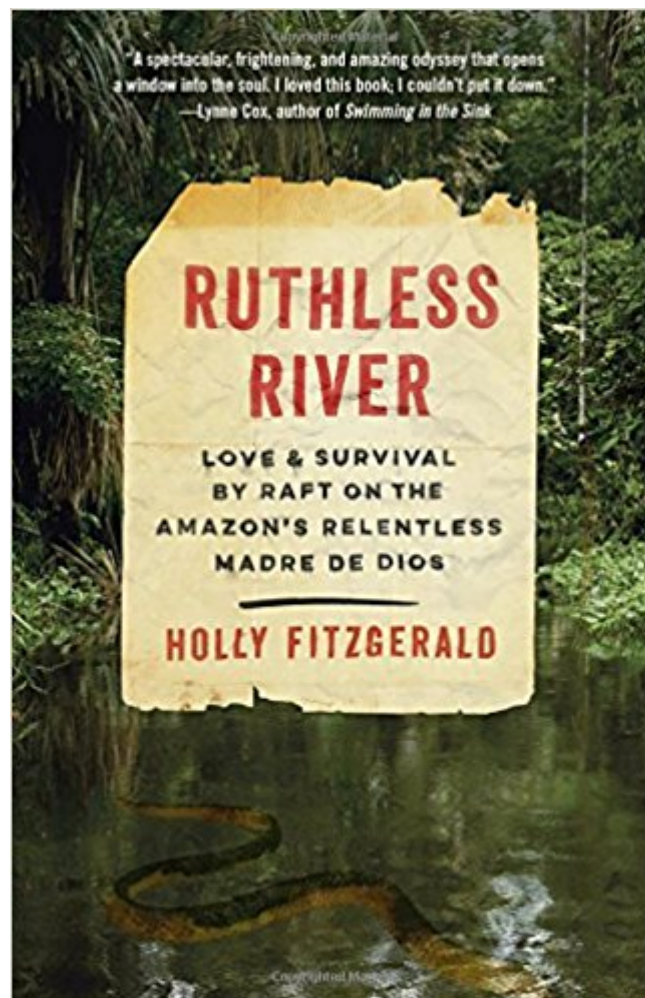




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# Ruthless River: Love And Survival By Raft On The 's Relentless Madre De Dios (Vintage Departures)



## Synopsis

A stunning debut; a Departures original publication. The ultimate survival story; a wild ride—the wildest—down a South American river in the thick of the Basin; a true and thrilling adventure of a young married couple who survive a plane crash only to later raft hundreds of miles across Peru and Bolivia, ending up in a channel to nowhere, a dead end so flooded there is literally no land to stand on. Their raft—a mere four logs—separates them from the piranha-and-caiman-infested water until they finally realize that there is no way out but to swim. Vintage Original. Holly FitzGerald and her husband, Fitz—married less than two years—set out on a yearlong honeymoon adventure of a lifetime, backpacking around the world. Five months into the trip their plane crash lands in Peru at a penal colony walled in by jungle, and their blissfully romantic journey turns into a terrifying nonstop labyrinth of escape and survival. On a small, soon-ravaged raft that quickly becomes their entire universe through dangerous waters alive with deadly animals and fish, their only choice: to continue on, despite the rush of insects swarming them by day, the sounds of encroaching predators at night. Without food or means of communication, with no one to hear their cries for help or on a search-and-rescue expedition to find them, the author and her husband make their way, fighting to conquer starvation and navigate the brute force of the river, their only hope for survival, in spite of hunger and weakening resolve, to somehow, miraculously hang on and find their way east to a large riverside town, before it is too late. . . .

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Admiration for Holly FitzGerald's RUTHLESS RIVER "If you built a survival-adventure book in a laboratory, you'd end up with Ruthless River . . . A completely unexpected real-life thriller. "Jon Foro, Omnivoracious (Best Biographies & Memoirs of June) "Adventurous. "Outside Magazine (The Best New Survival Books) "A harrowing survival saga . . . In vivid, absorbing prose, FitzGerald unspools a story that moves from optimism, energy, and a thrilled sense of adventure to abject fear and near starvation. "Nina MacLaughlin, The Boston Globe "Both travel memoir and shocking adventure story, like a real-life Survivor or Naked and Afraid . . . A powerful story about survival, love, and faith in the face of impossible odds . . . Unputdownable . . . absolutely fascinating. "Katie Lawrence, Library Journal "Vivid and consistently compelling . . . An absorbing tale of survival, love, and the generosity of people who helped save their lives. "Kirkus Reviews "A detailed, high-stakes debut memoir . . . FitzGerald weaves in the stories from their past with palpable, evocative details of their daily struggles with starvation, strong currents, and despair, all while the couple's love, self-knowledge, and faith deepen . . . Recommended for fans of survival narratives, coming-of-maturity stories, and travelogues from off the beaten path. "Louisa Whitfield-Smith, Booklist "Adventure, romance, danger, salvation all in a story that's beautifully told and, incredibly, really happened. Pick up Ruthless River, but be careful. You might find it hard to put down. This is one of those memoirs you won't soon forget. "Damon DiMarco, author of Tower Stories: An Oral History of 9/11 "There are lots of adventure stories out there, lots of romances, lots of spiritual memoirs, but I know of no other book that combines all three genres with such grace and beauty. Ruthless River is thrilling edge-of-your-seat, hold-your-breath thrilling but it's so much more than that. It's a meditation on how we find meaning and the strength to survive in an impossible circumstance, and one of the most tender love stories you'll ever read. I love this book. "Kerry Egan, author of On Living "The best real-life survival tale since Cheryl Strayed's Wild . . . A jaw-dropper of a memoir . . . A mind-blower of a debut . . . A survival tale so extreme, so insane, so bizarre, that Hollywood couldn't make it up. It's stranger than fiction. "Lauren Daley, South Coast Today "A spectacular, frightening, and amazing odyssey that opens a window into the soul. I loved this book; I couldn't put it down. "Lynne Cox, author of Swimming in the Sink "One of the great survival tales. An almost unbearable story told with a physical and

emotional intensity that draws the reader in, not just as witness, but as virtual participant.

It's an exhausting, painful, inspiring read. • Michael Palin, author of *Traveling to Work*

HOLLY FITZGERALD was born in Seattle, Washington, and grew up in New Haven, Connecticut. She graduated from Lake Erie College and received a master's degree in counseling from Suffolk University. FitzGerald worked as a counselor with children and adults for many years before teaching and counseling at Bristol Community College, New Bedford, Massachusetts. She lives in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts.

Really interesting page turner, don't read a lot of romance books but, this one is good adventure sort of like "The African Queen ". Worth reading you will finish in a couple nights

Great book with exciting, amazing story!

A great story of courage and survival. A good read.

Absolutely fascinating. Excellent writing.

I couldn't put this read down until it was finished, well written, easy to follow, quite an adventure never to be forgotten

Well written story! Really makes you feel like you are right with them on the river. Highly recommend!

Well written. Amazing survival story. A real page turner.

I'm a big fan of survival and nature adventure stories, and even better when they are true(!), so this grabbed my attention right away. Holly FitzGerald and her husband set off on the adventure of their dreams for a late honeymoon, a year into their marriage. While exploring South America on an extended trip, they planned to cross the continent by boating down the Madre de Dios River, through the jungle, and eventually presumably through the River to the East coast. After some daunting setbacks that might have derailed their optimism, including their plane crash landing

near a Peruvian penal colony, and finding out that the boat ride that they thought existed, really didn't. They forged ahead on a path that grossly miscalculated the dangers ahead. Filled with youth, love, and a spirit of adventure, they naively accepted advice about the simplicity of rafting down the Madre de Dios without a guide, map, adequate supplies, or much knowledge of the rainy season river conditions. The harrowing story of what went wrong next and how they survived, kept me racing through chapters as if my survival was bound up with theirs. The enchanting descriptions of a vast, untamed wilderness with all its exotic beauty and thrills, along with the fierce forces of nature and frightening array of deadly creatures and howls, filled the story with an awesome sense of the majesty of the . The tenderness, humor, and pathos of Fitz and Holly's relationship, perseverance, and undying hope, delights the reader with a compelling and simple story of humanity. And the warm kindness of the local peoples that they meet throughout the story give a charming glimpse of the generosity of their culture and the humor of navigating foreign customs and foods. The story of their survival is incredible, and I don't want to give away any details, but by the time they are rescued, I was so emotionally bound up with the story that I felt the sheer mixture of joy, fear, and finally overwhelming gratitude they experienced, at being saved. There are so many other fascinating dimensions to the story; but suffice it to say that I tore through the book in 3 days (2 which were very busy days, I might add) and I found the story compelling, humorous, suspenseful, and also a great adventure in itself. I only wish there were a bigger map in the book but I found the spot fairly easily on Google Maps satellite imagery and it's truly amazing how isolated they were and how slim the chances of rescue were in the vastness of the wilderness. A great read, an inspiration, and a good reflection on the simple goodness of life and love!

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