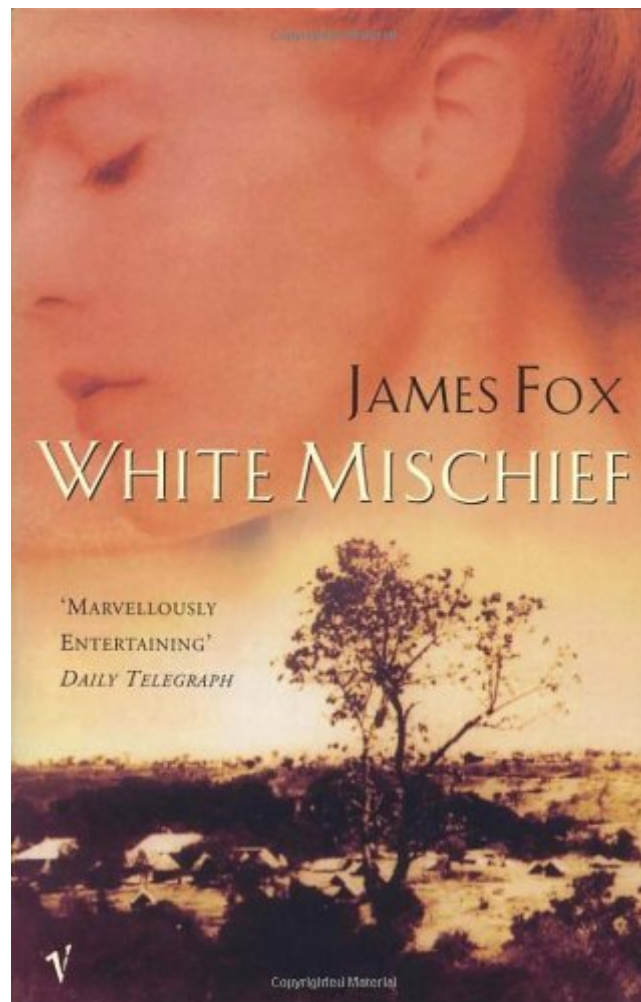


The book was found

White Mischief



Synopsis

Just before 3am on January 24th, 1941, when Britain was preoccupied with surviving the Blitz, the body of Josslyn Hay, Earl of Erroll, was discovered lying on the floor of his Buick, at a road intersection some miles outside Nairobi, with a bullet in his head. A leading figure in Kenya's colonial community, the Earl had recently been appointed Military Secretary, but he was primarily a seducer of other men's wives. Sir Henry Delves Broughton, whose wife was Erroll's current conquest, had an obvious motive for the murder, but no one was ever convicted and the question of who killed him became a classic mystery, a scandal and cause celebre. Among those who became fascinated with the Erroll case was Cyril Connolly who joined up with James Fox for a major investigation of the case in 1969 for the Sunday Times magazine. After his death James Fox inherited the obsession and a commitment to continue in pursuit of the story both in England and Kenya in the late 1970s. One day, on a veranda overlooking the Indian Ocean, Fox came across a piece of evidence that seemed to bring all the fragments and pieces together and convinced him that he saw a complete picture...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a simply fascinating book for anyone interested in colonial Africa, murder mysteries and just plain good writing. The author James Fox, an erudite Eton graduate, does much more than simply describe the wild African setting, the fascinating murder involved and the absurdly decadent lifestyle of the characters involved. He also tracks the process of his research and the input of the quirky British author, Cyril Connolly who simultaneously studied the events at hand. Fox uses the murder of man-about-town Lord Erroll as a backdrop to chronicle the deterioration of a British subculture in the early 1900's. While war was being waged in Europe, this group of moneyed and titled hedonists (who left their kiddies back home) lived a surrealistic life of partying, drinking, drugging and partner swapping. Such a detached lifestyle virtually requires a murder or two as a logical conclusion. Although the accused, Lord "Jock" Delves Broughton, is acquitted in an African trial (with lots of perjury involved) Fox makes no secret of his opinion that Boughton was the culprit. That does not dampen the book one bit because it is the cast of characters and how they talk about each other that is the best part of the book. The only problem I had with Fox's ultimate theory is that he bases it upon an interview with an eccentric, elderly woman who was only 15 years old at the time of the crime. Although she claims the suspect confessed the crime to her immediately after its commission, she did not reveal that alleged fact to anyone until Fox interviewed her in the 1980's. As a legal professional, I find that kind of evidence inherently not credible.

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