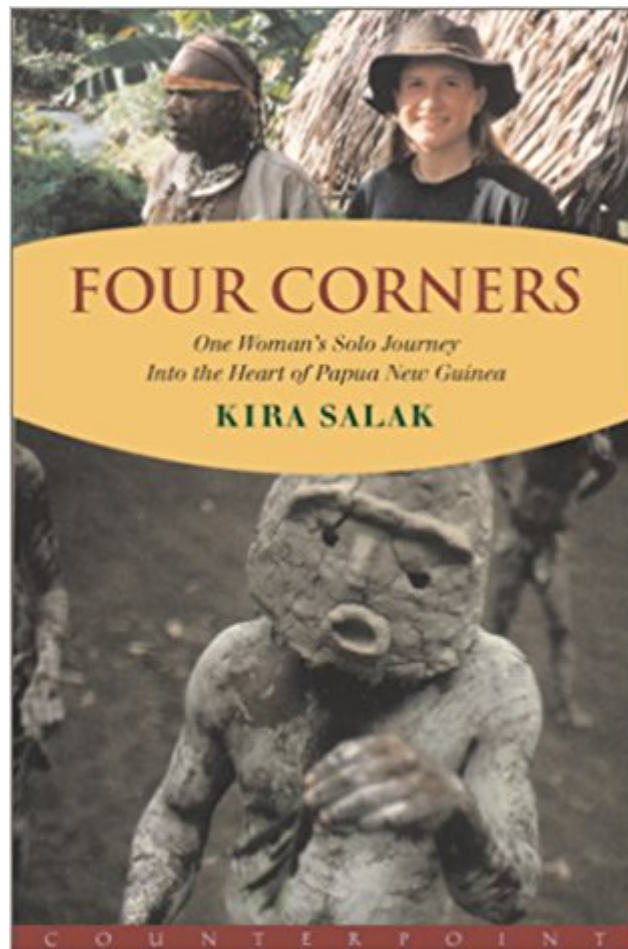




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Four Corners: One Woman's Solo Journey Into The Heart Of Papua New Guinea



Synopsis

A story of extraordinary danger and adventure as a very young woman attempts, alone, a trip across Papua New Guinea. After her first taste of the freedom found in travel at age 19, Kira Salak spent the next several years of her youth as a constant, impulsive traveler. Barely old enough to drink, she leaves her life behind - graduate school, a job, a boyfriend who loves her - to attempt the impossible, her dream of following in the footsteps of British explorer Ivan Champion, the first person to successfully cross the island of Papua New Guinea in 1927. She is motivated by something much deeper than simply wanting to be the first woman to make such a crossing, and as she composes this memoir she still searches for answers. Why would a lone traveler, a very young woman at that, want to embark on such a dangerous and mysterious trip? Where was her fear? Or was this all an attempt to court and indulge her fear for some larger purpose? No one, on the road or at home, could quite understand

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this gripping adventure story, Salak, a graduate student in her 20s, describes a recent trip she took to remote, tropical Papua New Guinea, in the Pacific. Salak retraced the steps of British explorer Ivan Champion who, in 1927, traversed New Guinea and Papua via the Fly River, hiking the highlands and ascending the Sepik River. Solo travelers in this country are rare because of the difficulty of navigating swamps, jungle terrain and mountain trails as well as dealing with torrential rains and relentless mosquitoes. In addition, there is a high crime rate; poor young men leave their

tribal homelands, flock to the city of Port Moresby in search of wealth, and wind up stealing from whomever they can. No stranger to harrowing journeys, Salak has sought out exotic locales since her teens and recounts here how she was nearly raped in Mozambique. As well as detailing her trip, she ruminates on her unquenchable appetite for danger and recalls a childhood spent in a truly dysfunctional family. Amid the breathtaking landscapes and wildlife of Papua New Guinea, Salak daily tested her physical endurance. She encountered a variety of both friendly and indifferent tribal peoples and talked with Pastor Carl, the leader of a guerrilla band fighting the Indonesian takeover of Western New Guinea. Salak has not only achieved her goal of crossing Papua New Guinea, but also her lifelong dream of authorship with this consistently interesting and well-written memoir.

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When Salak set off for Papua New Guinea at the age of 24, she had at least some sense of what she was getting into. She was familiar with the reputation Port Moresby had for being a dangerous city; young men known as "Rascals" would descend upon the city, robbing and rioting. But Salak had a desire to test herself, to push the limits and find out what she was capable of. She had already crossed Mozambique during its civil wars and just narrowly escaped brutality at the hands of rebel soldiers. Still haunted by that memory, Salak arrives in Port Moresby but soon sets off for the Fly River, eager to see the peoples who live along its banks. When her guide abandons her, she is forced to find another way to explore the river. She is helped by a variety of people, and even as her trip veers off course, she finds more places and people to intrigue her. Salak's lively writing coupled with her engrossing voyage make this a superior travel memoir. Kristine Huntley

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THIS AUTHOR IS A VERY GIFTED AND TALENTED AND HAS LOTS OF GUTS! THE STORY WAS EXCITING FROM BEGINNING TO END. I HAVE ORDERED HER OTHER BOOK AS A RESULT. WELL DONE KIRA!

wonderful....like new. I so appreciate having this in my library...thanks. Cheryl

What a book! Kira Salak really makes her journey come alive! I've been to Papua New Guinea and reading this book made me feel like I was right back there, even though she went there 20 years before I did.

I first read Kira's fiction book "White Mary", which was excellent. But then I wanted to read about the real story, so I bought "Four Corners". I was not disappointed! This is a real page turner. Kira is amazingly fearless! I loved this book! I will definitely be getting her other book "Cruellest Journey" to read next.

This was an interesting book by a girl who seems to have had somewhat of a death wish at the time. That is to say, she moved through the world with little regard for her own safety and just barely survived disaster. That, in many ways, is the mark of a true adventurer though, and I applaud her, and I enjoyed her book.

This is a fascinating story, and Kira Salak tells it in a compelling and genuine way that makes it very difficult to stop reading. Highly recommend it.

I found Kira Salak's Four Corners a very good book. I have hardly been able to put it down. The only thing I found disappointing was that there were no pictures except for the cover. It would have been so nice to see these places where she went. I do hope we see another book from Miss Salak soon.

A compulsive traveler to remote and dangerous places, Kira Salak is on a journey of self-discovery. The trouble is, she keeps making the same mistakes. Intent on proving that she, a young, single woman, can go anywhere she pleases, she keeps setting the bar higher. In Africa, 1992, age 20, she decides to cross war-torn Mozambique on the lawless, mine-riddled road known as the Bone Yard Stretch. Natives and tourists alike point out the dangers, but Salak convinces a reluctant trucker to take her. A former runner with Olympic aspirations, when the inevitable happens Salak manages to escape her captors. "No one knows where I am....If I died here no one would ever know." Guilt stricken, she realizes that her "self-indulgent, foolish trip" has probably cost the lives of the men whose need for money induced them to risk bringing her. Several years later, Salak is bound for Papua New Guinea with a vague plan to "get from the south to the north of the country via the major rivers." Or, as she explains to a fellow traveler, "Actually, I have no idea what I'm going to be doing. I'm just going to wing it as I go." Again, no one knows where she is and all advice falls on deaf ears. "The only rule I try to follow religiously in life is not to listen to most people." And I suspect the "most" was an editing afterthought. But Salak grows on you. The child of Ayn Rand fanatics, she struggles to overcome a loveless childhood through self reliance and searches for epiphany through ordeal. And she gets plenty of that, from guides who take her money and strand her in the jungle to

hordes of mosquitoes, armies of roaches and plagues of leeches. She nearly repeats her Mozambique experience on a trek to a camp of refugees from Irian Jaya (invaded by Indonesia), suffers serious sunstroke after a harrowing jungle trek, gets lost on land and water and meets an amazing variety of kind and vicious people, native and foreign. This is a colorful odyssey by a quirky narrator who both exasperates and inspires.

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