

Mosaic Caverns

Christopher Zyck

CJZ Mediaisland

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Scientists explore the unknown in the intriguing thriller Mosaic Caverns, in which the truth of human history is buried deep in the South American jungle.

Christopher Zyck's mystical adventure novel *Mosaic Caverns* follows a pair of scientists on a jungle expedition where they come face to face with the origins of the human race.

Catherine, a bioarchaeologist, is alerted to a dig site whose finds have great implications, changing scholars' understandings of early hominids. The dig helps Catherine to reconnect with Jürgen, a fellow scientist, with whom she shared a romantic past two decades ago. Catherine and Jürgen's discoveries point to the migration of an extinct human species. And when they enter the fascinating Mosaic Cavern deep in a South American jungle, they learn not just more about humanity's deep past but receive an unexpected glimpse into its future.

Catherine is a brainy academic whose risk-taking and love of life make her a compelling heroine. She is on a quest to understand humanity and is so immersed in these goals that even her passing conversations turn into deep discussions of the nature of God and Christianity. She wants to understand ("subtext is my self-critique," she notes), and that yearning leads her to take amazing risks, including a dive off the Colombian coast during which she encounters a submerged body. And Jürgen is a kindred soul, present to complement her search, though their early conversations are awkward as they try to reconnect after many years apart. In time, they meet a third central figure—a fascinating presence with much to reveal.

Still, the narrative prioritizes people's musings on God and science, in addition to its archaeological mysteries; its characters' relationships are a secondary concern. Intrigue develops as Catherine and Jürgen make their way to the caverns; the environment is described in dark terms that evoke danger and discomfort, in which they work to keep "chunks of iguanas from splattering" into their boots. Warfare is constant in this locale, in which struggling villagers are left to die.

As the scientists move closer to their fate, the novel's violent scenes increase, as do the book's intellectual thrills. Surrounded by men with guns, Catherine and Jürgen begin to understand what they've found, and their earlier discussions about the nature of God and human beings take on fresh urgency. In the novel's final, satisfying moments, they struggle to come to grips with their new reality—and their growing love for each other.

Scientists explore the unknown in the intriguing thriller *Mosaic Caverns*, in which the truth of human history is buried deep in the South American jungle, making a more holistic, hopeful depiction of God possible.

JEREMIAH ROOD (August 2, 2023)

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