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The Last True Explorer: Into Darkest New Guinea

Philip Temple

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Forty years ago, a young New Zealand mountaineer headed into the unknown interior of West New Guinea (now Irian Jaya) on one of the last great journeys of exploration. Travelling at first with the legendary German mountaineer, Heinrich Harrer (author of Seven Years in Tibet), Philip Temple made the first ascent of the Carstensz Pyramide, which has come to be regarded as the technically most difficult of the 'Seven Summits of the Seven Continents'. Later he was the last to witness the tool-making rituals of a stone-age culture before it was overtaken by the modern world. Facing daunting physical odds, he went on to explore a swathe of unmapped central New Guinea Highlands, and he risked his life to recover the human remains from a US aircraft that had crashed on a sheer mountain.

Copiously illustrated, Philip Temple's narrative is one of the great stories from the classical age of exploration. Dramatic, humorous and colourful, it is also a valuable anthropological record, for he tells of living among the Dani people before their primitive way of life was overtaken by the outside world

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