



The Bridge in the Jungle

B. Traven

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Regarded by many as B. Traven's finest novel, *The Bridge in the Jungle* is a tale of a simple, desperately poor people coming together in the face of a death that affects them all. The locale is "huts by the river, " a nameless Indian settlement deep in the Mexican bush, too small to appear on any map. A festive gathering that has attracted many Indians from neighboring settlements is about to begin, when death marches silently in. A small boy has disappeared. As the intimation of tragedy spreads among the people gathered in the jungle clearing, they unite, first to find the lost boy and then to console the grieving mother. Traven never allows an iota of sentimentality to enter his story, but the reader finishes *The Bridge in the Jungle* with renewed faith in the courage and dignity of human beings.

The Bridge in the Jungle Details

Date : Published March 25th 2002 by Ivan R. Dee Publisher (first published January 1st 1967)

ISBN : 9781566630634

Author : B. Traven

Format : Paperback 228 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Adventure, Classics, Literature

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From Reader Review *The Bridge in the Jungle* for online ebook

Giuliana says

I read *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* a few years ago and loved it immensely. As usual, I can't resist a smart social satire just like I can't resist a fish-shaped knick-knack. I also love John Houston's epic rendition of the novel, which you, dear friend, should definitely watch if you haven't already.

While reading the book, I also learned about its mysterious author, whose identity is still under much speculation. Nobody knows his real name, his date of birth (and death), his country of origin, and, of course, all the rest. When Houston started filming *The Treasure*, he thought he could finally meet the elusive writer. However, he could only encounter B. Traven's representative, who never revealed Traven's identity and had the wonderful taste to disappear after the film was completed. He eventually reappeared in Mexico City, but still kept his mouth shut on the Traven affair. (Why, oh why, couldn't I live at the time of the film noir?)

The Bridge in the Jungle is a short novel about a mother losing her child in the Mexican jungle. I like it so far, but I'll keep you posted.

Paulina Sanchez says

What a journey!

Definitely a hard read for me, at least emotionally. The story takes place in a small town next to a river where a bridge lets machinery through for the search of petroleum. The town is ready to have a dance on a weekend and they have ordered musicians to come and play. However, the musicians don't arrive by the time they were supposed to but the townspeople are trying to have a good time anyways. Then, a boy goes missing and the search for the boy becomes the new center for their reunion.

It's a story that tells us about the love mothers have for their children, the role men play in that love, how religion plays in times of grief, and most importantly, the sense of community these indigenous towns have.

It's a great read but one that I did have to take a bit slowly. I highly recommend it!

Gebanuzo says

Todos vivimos sobre una misma línea, dispersados en tiempo y espacio distintos, pero al final bajo las mismas reglas ¿de dónde proviene lo inexplicable? Todo aquello mágico e irracional, B. Traven nos sitúa en una comunidad selvática mexicana, nos lleva de la mano a presenciar la manera en cómo se vive ahí, aquello que se valora, aquello que se tiene, aquello que se ama, aquello que se escapa, aquello que no se entiende, aquello mágico y aquello tan humano; pertenecer, andar y marcharse.

Me es curioso el hecho de que puente en la selva forme parte de una colección para pequeños, ya que es algo trágica, pero bueno al final la vida es así.

Everybody lives in the same line, disperses on different time and space, at the end by same rules. Where the unexplained things come from? Magic and irracionable stuff. B. Traven take us to a mexican jungle community to explore the way how life is there. Everything they have or not, things they love, appraise, or hate, and all the magic and human stuff; be part of, keep walking, and gone.

Steve Carter says

The Bridge in the Jungle

A novel by B Traven

I seldom read a book twice. There are too many other books that I will never get to.

This is an exception.

I first read The Bridge in the Jungle about 35 years ago. It was probably my first Traven.

I have revisited Traven recently consuming the Jungle series, the six linked novels that show the horrible exploitation of the indigenous population in the jungles of Mexico and the inevitable vengeful results.

The Bridge in the Jungle is not about exploitation, slave labor conditions, and rebellion.

This short novel takes place over a night at a little jungle outpost that is having a fiesta.

It is about an accident on the bridge that the whole party, the whole group, get swept up in.

The simple story of a mother, her son, and the whole group is told in great detail.

It is also the story of humans brought into rapid change. Modernity is coming and it has very unexpected hazards. As I modern reader, with more modern coming every day, anxiety over the new is familiar.

It is written from the POV of a North American traveler, adventurer, but one who has been around the place for awhile, enough to be knowledgeable. But he is still an outsider looking on and telling us what he sees.

Traven has a very fine way with this outsider stance. I feel it allows him to deliver a very clear picture, and in the jungle novels, describe more effectively the torturous life in the mahogany camps, without trying to color the picture with subjective emotional reactions. That way we can feel directly without his feelings in the way.

But this novel is rather gentle. It is not at all about humans acting violently and harming one another. It is about people coming together, it is a very human story.

This is a great novel that should have a wider audience.

Valeria says

Es un hermoso libro. Al principio me costó un poco interesarme realmente en la historia, porque narra una historia sin eventos: mexicana, de pobreza, machismo, ignorancia, de gringos y su choque cultural, y su oportunismo, y su vergüenza al vivir algo muy diferente a lo que viven en sus tierras. Como digo, es una historia sin eventos porque, como mexicana, me siento familiarizada con ella, es el tipo de historia que he escuchado toda mi vida, tanto que a veces olvido que es una vida que no conozco en carne propia, olvido que yo también siento vergüenza, y la disfrazo de desinterés.

Entonces, la historia cambia, hay un evento en la historia que me puede mucho, y empiezo a poner interés. Y es ahí cuando veo una gran historia de amor, de magia y de dolor. Sin afán de spoilear, quiero dejar claro que esta no es una historia feliz, si la quieres leer debes prepararte. Pero, boy is it beautiful. Hermosas descripciones, hermosos personajes, y deja plasmado un gran mensaje, si uno está dispuesto a escucharlo.

Lei a B. Traven en la secundaria y lo amé. Amé sus ojos, su forma de ver a México y la atmósfera que crea en sus historias; tan incómoda pero tan bonita, que hace que me sienta orgullosa de ser mexicana. Hace mucho que quería leer este libro y me alegra haberlo hecho por fin.

Long live Ret Marut!

P.D. no se porque está clasificado para niños... Me da curiosidad, pero no es queja.

jeremy says

the story of who b traven may have been is as engaging as his books.

traven's dedication in *the bridge in the jungle*:

to the mothers
of every nation
of every people
of every race
of every creed
of all animals and birds
of all creatures alive
on earth

Roderick says

A great 20th century writer!

Antonio Ramos revillas says

Un explorador norteamericano se interna en la selva mexicana que abarca los estados del sur del país. Lo que descubre es un a grupo de comunidades que viven en suma pobreza, pero también con una vida espiritual donde el sincretismo entre la religión nativa y la católica sirven de estructura para comprender los actos y sucesos que los rodean. Con una prosa dotada de imágenes, sensaciones, preguntas, diálogos directos e indirectos, vacilaciones de los personajes y el detalle moroso de ciertas descripciones, Traven nos lleva a una noche junto a un puente en el que primero desaparece un niño. ¿Habrá muerto? ¿Se habrá ido? ¿Lo raptaron? Es una gran novela en el que la selva se muestra con toda su acritud, y los hombres, los indígenas, se desenvuelven con todo su amor, dicho como su espiritualidad para poder sobrellevar el peso de la vida en esas latitudes.

Lawrence FitzGerald says

The mysterious B. Traven. See my review at Notes From the Swamp.

Steve Evans says

This amazing book may be the unsung masterpiece of the 20th century. First published in English while the Second World War was raging, and coloured by the author's radical politics, it sort of escaped notice, unlike some of his other works, most notably *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, which was a great success as a film in the author's lifetime.

Yet it is this parable of the effect of western civilisation on non-western culture that has proved, for me at least, to be the most enduring of Traven's works. Going into its subject matter more deeply would spoil the potential for the powerful effect it can have on a reader, though even re-reading did not diminish the heart-wrenching of its central event for me. Its theology, as its politics, will be troubling for many people; it has resonated in me since I first read it in the 1960s and will go on resonating in me till I die.

Underneath it is as political as Traven's other so-called "Jungle novels", but it is often not included along with them as it does not have the overt revolutionary theme that characterises the others, like *Rebellion of the Hanged* and *March to the Monteria*. But it really belongs with them.

Anyone not knowing of Traven will find more about him in my review of *The Death Ship*, or by searching under his name for books about this surprising man.

Rita says

B. Traven had his eyes fully open to oppression from capitalists and slavers. He disappeared into Mexico and never came back. His work makes clear that he rejected the "American Christian way" and heaped scorn on it. Well, I'm with him.

This work tells the story of a little settlement close to the pumphouse belonging to the railroad, where a little boy stumbles on bridge and drowns during the Saturday night fiesta, so that nobody notices he has disappeared for a while. All the inhabitants of the settlement, and the villagers from far around, come to help the mother and father with their grief and the burial. It is told with the pen of an artist, whose eyes saw such beauty in the simplest, and poorest, but richest, of lives.

the gift says

this is definitely my favourite b traven- sort of a discovery for me this year, though it is not as if he is unknown, such as in germany, but as with ross macdonald five years ago, stefan zweig four years ago, jmg le clezio two years ago, leighton gage last year, it was only each current year i had read much of him...

as far as five rating, accurate if you understand this is immediate response, only read once, and somewhat affected by other works recently read. how much of this is the author's varied, secretive, bio- it pleases me to think he is german, writing of mexico, of yankee imperialism, speaking for the poor peasantry and others

around the mexican revolution. so he does not really belong to anyone. but this is the fifth book of his read, and i think his bio is no longer a big effect...

easy to read, short, sharp, sometimes gently satiric, sometimes rending the heart. and like some other works read of his, this is first-person narrative. there is no extensive plot, not much political, not much religious, aspects to this minimal and simple story about that universal sadness of loss of a child. and this is told directly, no dialect, no imposed narrative pattern, without claims to great, new, traditional, or any elaborate, artistry. i was trying to read faulkner just before, and if there is more an opposite sort of work, i do not know it. so the five is measured against that one...

experiencing this story, the simplicity, material, physical description- this makes the few moments of psychological description, the story of how deep will they drill those yankees, the dance that does not quite come off, the high status a few skirts or a separate kitchen creates, the mother descending from worry to terror to grief, all become more effective. there is a dream sequence exactly like a dream, all the more powerful, with no complicated symbolism, no exaggerated force, no more magic than what they think magic...

there is no more real, tragic, emotional moment than the schoolteacher giving his sort of howling eulogy, no moment i have ever read before...

Charles says

Kubler-Ross described the five stages of grief in 1969. Traven in this novel published in 1938 describes anecdotally the same progression. What Traven is describing is a death in a very small remote village in a Mexican jungle. Even though the setting is one of the smallest human groupings, the death and the ceremonial swirl in its aftermath describes a very universal human set of reactions.

I think Traven is a relevant writer.

ger says

A simply superb book. Classic Traven and one of his best. A book about life, faith, humanity, culture and connection set around a tragedy amongst the poor in the jungle.

Jose Moa says

A boy lost in a party
