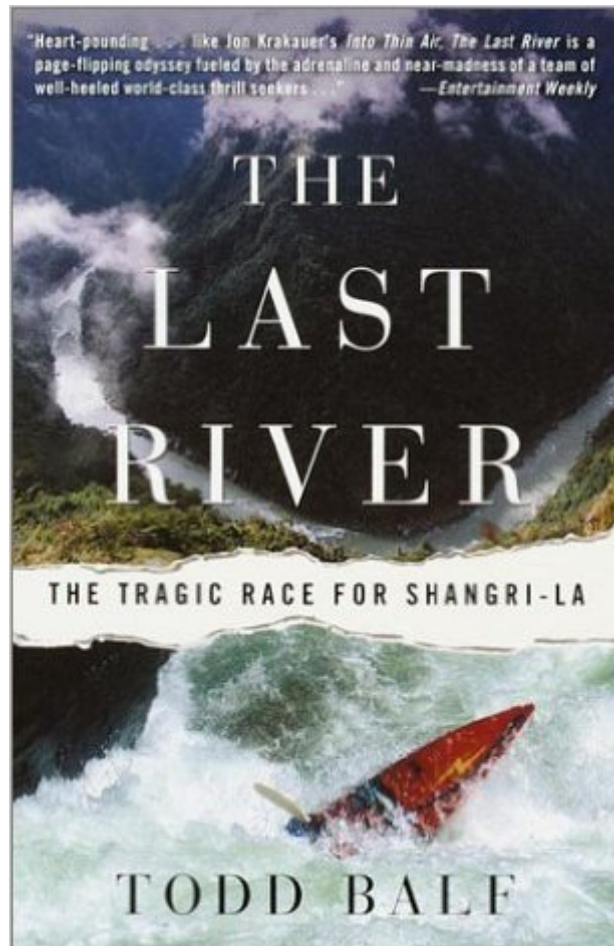


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The Last River: The Tragic Race For Shangri-la



Synopsis

The Last River: The Tragic Race for Shangri-la is a breathtaking account of the ill-fated October 1998 expedition of an American whitewater kayaking team who traveled deep into the Tsangpo Gorge in Tibet to run the Yarlung Tsangpo, known in paddling circles as the "Everest of rivers." For Wick Walker and Tom McEwan, extreme whitewater pioneers, best friends, and trip leaders, the Tsangpo adventure was the culmination of a twenty-five-year quest for glory. Yet the team's magnificent dreams crumbled when their ace paddler was swept over a thunderous eight-foot waterfall, never to be seen again. Here is a fascinating exploration of both the seething big water and perilous terrain of the legendary Shangri-la, and the men who dared challenge the furious rapids that raced through this 140-mile-long canyon. The Last River invites us to view the Himalayas from a totally new perspective -- on a historic river so remote that only the most hardy and romantic souls attempt to unlock its mysteries.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The essence of this book is its characters. If you want the typical second-by-second action, the literary equivalent of "slow-motion" - tense faces, surging muscles, tall waves bearing down, and all that - then this isn't your book. I mean, the river scenes are there, but they aren't the essence. If you want a cheap thrill, read something else. For Balf, this expedition wasn't like that. It wasn't about cheap, take-home, made-for-tv summiting. Sure, they called it "The Everest of Whitewater," but these were no twenty-something testosterone freaks selling an image. These were middle age guys, Harvard and Yale grads, writers, chemists, intellectuals. They all had wives and kids. Yet, at

the same time, they were unmatched paddlers - pioneers and legends. Roger Zbel is famous for running the big Eastern rivers in flood when all the young dudes were scared off, and he has dominated extreme kayak racing for 15 years, ever since he and his buddies pretty much invented it, along with the whole new discipline and culture of squirt boating. Tom McEwan was the first big waterfall runner, and he has first descents in many countries. He's considered untouchable in a boat, and he runs his own kayak school nowadays. Jamie McEwan was an two-time Olympian paddler, and a Bronze medalist, the only American male to win a medal in whitewater solo craft. And on the river Doug Gordon was the best of them all . . .Balf knows that. He knows that Tom McEwan could drop off a thirty-foot falls without much thought, that Roger Zbel could run class V in his sleep, that all these guys had been near death on the river.

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