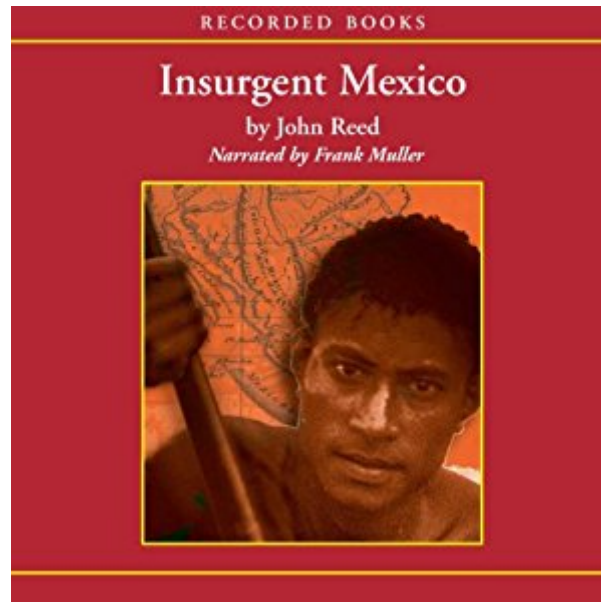


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Insurgent Mexico



Synopsis

This scarce antiquarian book is a facsimile reprint of the original. Due to its age, it may contain imperfections such as marks, notations, marginalia and flawed pages. Because we believe this work is culturally important, we have made it available as part of our commitment for protecting, preserving, and promoting the world's literature in affordable, high quality, modern editions that are true to the original work. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book has been notorious since its publication in 1914. The author was a vagabond leftist reporter for the American radical press, and did not go to Mexico City riding in relative comfort on the press train accompanying the Division del Norte of General Francisco "Pancho" Villa during his successful Constitutionalist southward campaign against the Federalista forces of the usurper General Victoriano Huerta; he who had murdered president Madero and his vice president, and seized power in Mexico City in conjunction the forces of Zapata. Instead, Reed, in accord with his common man leanings, while on campaign, lived among the "grunts", Mexican campesinos who made up the bulk of Villa's forces. There are incisive pen portraits of the Constitutionalist leaders, descriptions of the wretched living conditions of the people, observations on the siege of Torreón, N.L. and nearby Gomez Palacio, neighboring key strategic cities on the railroad south from Juarez to Mexico City. This is not history or reporting but a collection of impressionistic and justifiably biased essays. Still very valuable for the feel of the times and has been translated into many languages. The author later went to Russia and wrote "Ten Days That Shook the World." (c.f.) about the October Revolution.

In this account of his adventures in the advance to Mexico City with Pancho Villa's armies, John Reed gives an excellent account of what it was like to have been there. Luckily enough for him, historians, and adventure lovers alike, he was on the winning side and survived to tell his tale. His tale is his aspect of the venture among the soldiers who fought the battles, rode the trains, suffered the hardships of civil war, and tasted the glow of victories won on the way to the capitol city. It's gritty, putrid, rough and tumble and the food isn't great but at the end you get a heck of a kick from surviving it all.

***** 5 Stars ***** You could read it as a great adventure novel, but that would be wrong. One of the 20th century's earliest, bravest and most gifted war correspondents, John Reed brings you to the planning tent with Pancho Villa, and many other Constitutionalist leaders (as well as many starving and confused peons) - just as he did in 1913 for several newspapers. The book is composed of many news dispatches from a Mexico in insurgency, but he has woven them together to make a compelling, accurate and memorable story. This is as good as real-time history gets. Very highly recommended. Please also read his more famous "Ten Days That Shook the World," his reporting from the Russian Revolution. He was killed there in 1920. Thanks for reading.

Do yourself a favor and do not purchase *Insurgent Mexico* as published by General Books. Please look further since this is a great book and should be read as intended by the author, not as published by General Books. Entire sections of the book are missing, the spelling is atrocious and the typeface unreadable. According to General Books, "we have recreated this book from the original using Optical Character Recognition software to keep the cost of the book as low as possible. Therefore, could you please forgive any spelling mistakes, missing or extraneous characters that may have resulted from smudged or worn pages?" Evidently I am not forgiving enough, especially since the book is available at a reasonable cost from other publishers. Caveat emptor!

John Reed - a Harvard man - was a beginning journalist-writer-poet and still a young man when he was sent to Mexico to cover the revolution there. His Spanish was pretty good, apparently, since he seemed able to communicate with peons and generals, alike. Most Mexicans seemed to like him; some of his friends addressed him as, 'Hey, Meester!'. The generals liked him, because he took their pictures and reported about the war to readers in America. He needed authorization to travel

freely in the war zone, so Villa signed a useful 'carte blanche' for him. He once requested a horse, so he could be among the first attackers in an upcoming battle, but Villa refused: "Too many bullets flying around up there!". When the war began, Villa (governor of Chihuahua) evicted all the Spaniards from his state: "They introduced Christianity, one of the great superstitions of all time, and they've been around for 300 years and have still done nothing for the people!" Once Reed asked about his position on 'women's suffrage'. Villa replied that women were not tough enough to make hard decisions. Then Reed asked Villa to ask his wife what should happen to 2 saboteurs, they'd just captured. She first refused, saying that was not her job. Villa insisted that it was, that their fate rested on her decision, alone. She replied, "Shoot them!". Villa told Reed he'd rethink his position on women's suffrage. Villa told Reed that he had no desire to be president - because he was an uneducated person and, despite his fame and popularity, in some presidential capacities, he'd be an embarrassment to his country. He didn't want that. He was fighting not for political power, he said, but so that every man could have some land of his own and justice. There are many more interesting moments in this book! If you enjoy history, or Mexico, you'll enjoy John Reed's book. A better title, I'm thinking, would have sold a lot more books, RWA, Severn, MD.

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