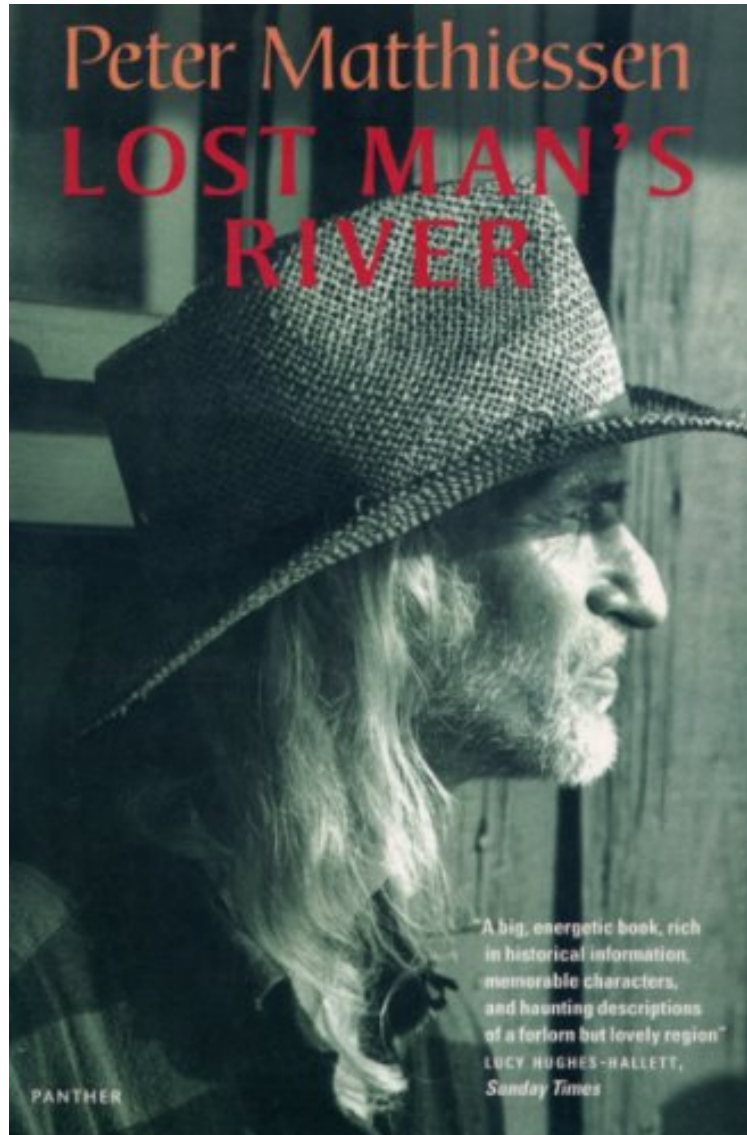


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## Lost Man's River

Von Peter Matthiessen

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Produktinformation Veröffentlicht am: 2012-05-31Erscheinungsdatum: 2012-05-31File Name: B0080K3I06 |  
File size: 74.Mb

**Von Peter Matthiessen : Lost Man's River** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lost Man's River:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Not nearly as good as the first book, but...Von Michael ReynoldsI loved "Killing Mr. Watson," the first book, and thought the genealogy in it was great, though I finally did find myself making a (complex) chart of who was related to who. But even with this knowledge already in hand, "Lost Man's River" seemed to bog down. The modern parts, especially,

were very forced. Sally, among others, was just not a believable character, and the sex scene made her even less believable. Moreover, when is all this set? The author hints that it was 50 years after Mr. Watson's death, which would necessarily make it 1960, and so makes Lucius age 70 and Rob--admittedly--an octogenarian. But the tone and language, plus the attitudes towards drugs, race, sex, etc. are much closer to 1975 (at least) than 1960. Several characters are depicted as veterans of a war in Asia that "no one ever gave a damn about." Sounds more like Vietnam to me than Guadalcanal or Okinawa. Ironically (and it's a big irony) the most interesting thing about the book is the critical name change for the family that was the "Richard Hamilton" clan in the first book. In this book, the author calls them the Hardens, but it's clearly the same family--even their initials are the same. The names of all the other families are the same in both books. Why the change for this one? It can only be because this is the family that all the others believe to have some African-American ancestry. This was a big issue in the South in 1910, and it is obviously nearly as big an issue now. All the other surnames are of actual pioneer families of the Everglades: Daniels, Jenkins, Brown, Storter, Smallwood, etc. The clear inference is that today's Hamilton descendants objected to the author using their real names and thus labelling them as "passing for white" (whatever that means). It would be interesting to have Mr. Matthiessen confirm this, because it brings one of the book's significant themes into real-time focus.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Killing Mr. ReaderVon RD\_C\_4\_lifePeter Matthiessen has written a snoozer of a book as a follow up to "Killing Mr. Watson." I purchased this book with enthusiasm and began reading it with keen anticipation and soon found myself bogged down in tedium as muggy and uncomfortable as any mosquito-infected hammock in the wilds of South Florida. The author drags the reader, along with vaguely embodied Lucius, son of Mr. Watson, from one to another of complicated and excruciatingly boring genealogy lessons, painfully and pointlessly enumerating the complex web of family members, living and dead, of Mr. Watson, as well as the family members of Mr. Watson's alleged victims, members of families he married into, and the families of women upon whom he sired bastard children. It reminds me of being in the company of a bunch of old men and women from my own rural background, who are sitting around tracing through and arguing over family history. "No, no, that wasn't a Jones he married, it was a Smith, that little Smith girl, Jessie, you know..." Ho-hum. It is bad enough to encounter this sort of boorishness from time to time in real life -- but to seek it out in fiction is a form of masochism which I hope most readers will not find appealing. Sorry, Peter, but you lost this reader this time. I'll never make it to the third novel in the string, "Bone by Bone." It was bad enough going through the life of the ultimately uninteresting Mr. Watson, body by body. "Killing Mr. Watson," was a good read. Digging up and scattering his bones was a big mistake.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The "action" is genealogical; the main character, dead. Von Mary WhippleIf you have ever driven yourself to near distraction trying to trace a family genealogy, with duplicate names, multiple marriages, and family migrations, you might have prepared adequately for *Lost Man's River*, which is, essentially, a detailed family genealogy. And though you may be fascinated by some of the characters, be prepared to do a great deal of page-flipping to try to keep all the characters all straight. There is not much direct action. Except for the ending, the most exciting events take place in the past and surround the death of E. J. Watson when the now fifty-year-old narrator, his son Lucius, was a child. The action that takes place in the present occurs primarily through interviews forty years after E.J. Watson's death as Lucius tries to separate truth from myth. The book is not fatally dull because of the historical, sociological, cultural, and geographical insights the author also provides. Illustrating the conflicting cultures and motivations of very poor whites, blacks, Indians, and "mixed breeds" as they hunt, fish, drink, and interact, often disastrously, in the Florida Everglades, *Lost Man's River* also traces the life, death, and possible salvation of a wild and much threatened natural environment. With its large cast of characters, complex familial relationships, and carefully researched depictions of the forty year time span of the "action," this is a book of enormous reach. It is not surprising that it took the author twenty years to bring it to fruition.

**Kurzbeschreibung** When Watson's son Lucius returns to the treacherous wilderness of the Everglades searching for the truth about his father's death, the coast is lawless: inhabitants, alligator poachers and moonshiners hold close their secrets, and a deep uneasiness drifts through the region like a low swamp mist. From Kirkus SA large, vivid, ambitious novel from one of the country's most accomplished American writers, offering a powerful portrait of life among the hunters, renegades, and wanderers infesting the Florida Everglades in the century's early decades. Matthiessen's (*African Silences*, 1991, etc.) latest is in many ways a sequel to his 1990 novel, *Killing Mister Watson*. In that work, the violent, vigorous figure of Edgar Watson dominated the action. A settler in the still wild Everglades in the early years of the century, Edgar, with his reputation as a killer, was both respected and feared by his neighbors. Then, in 1910, died during a confrontation with a posse. But who actually fired the fatal shot? Had Edgar fired first? And was he in fact a murderer? His son Lucius, an academic, has tried repeatedly to escape from his father's lengthy shadow. Once again, in the 1950s, Lucius is drawn reluctantly back into the struggle to puzzle out what his father was when a cache of documents about him comes to light. In the company of some of his father's cronies and a few of his bitter enemies, all of them old men nursing grudges and powerful recollections of frontier days in the Everglades, Lucius

travels ever deeper into the wilderness. Along the way he hears some extraordinary tales about the lives of the local farmers, hunters, smugglers, and moonshiners, assembles a moving portrait of the destruction of the fragile ecosystem of the Everglades, and finally discovers the painful, complex truth about his father's life and death. Lucius's long, complex relationship with his father's memory is brilliantly handled, as is the portrait of the fate of the Everglades, its wildlife, and its tough, idiosyncratic inhabitants. Interweaving a lament for the lost wilderness, a shrewd, persuasive study of character, and a powerful meditation on the sources of American violence, Matthiessen has produced one of the best novels of recent years. (Author tour) -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. From Library Journal The brutal murder of a prominent sugarcane planter in the early 20th century was the cornerstone for *Killing Mr. Watson* (LJ 6/1/90), Matthiessen's first book in a trilogy about the man, the murder, and its far-reaching impact on several pioneer families in southern Florida. Fifty years after Watson's death, his son Lucius emerges from self-imposed exile, asking surviving witnesses probing questions most would rather leave unanswered. The Watson homestead is at stake, and Lucius aims to clear his father's name of the crimes attributed to him. But as Lucius investigates further, he finds it harder to cling to his version of the truth. Like the earlier book, this work depends on oral histories, and its numerous reminiscences create a rich story; however, the leisurely tone and large cast make for slow reading. Those so inclined to dive in, however, will find passages of unexpected resonance amid the gnarled family trees. Readers should peruse the first (more succinct) book to get the full story before tackling this labor of love from the famed wilderness writer. For larger fiction collections. -- Marc A. Kloszewski, Indiana Free Lib., Pa. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.