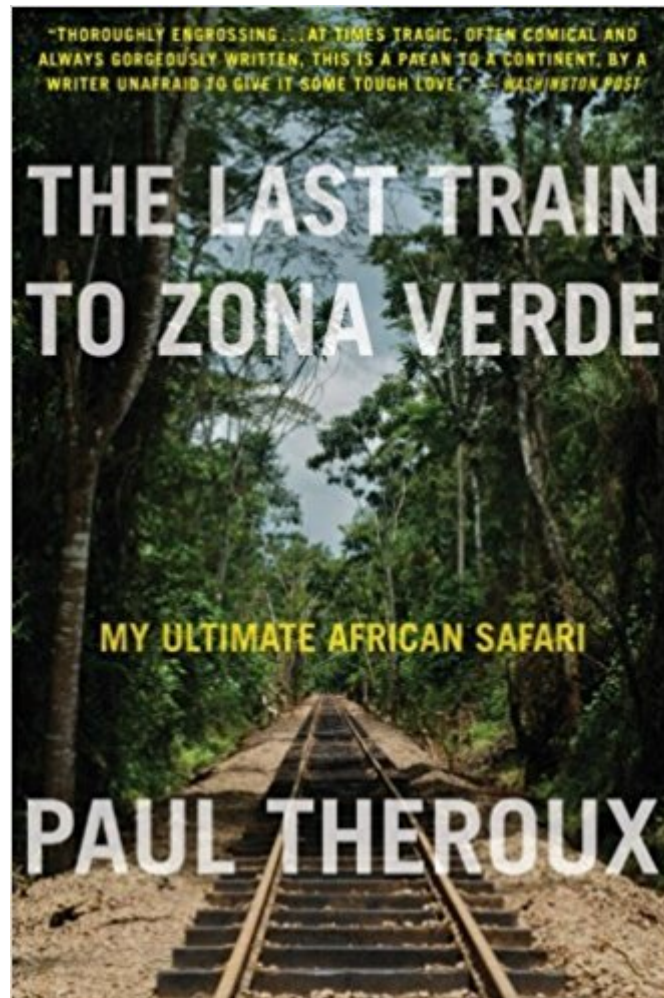




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The Last Train To Zona Verde



Synopsis

"Theroux is at his best when he tells [people's] stories, happy and sad . . .

Theroux's great mission had always been to transport us beyond that reading chair, to challenge himself—and thus, to challenge us." —Boston Globe Paul

Theroux's best-selling *Dark Star Safari* chronicled his epic overland voyage from Cairo to Cape Town, providing an insider's look at modern Africa. Now, with *The Last Train to Zona Verde*, he returns to discover how both he and Africa have changed in the ensuing years. Traveling alone, Theroux sets out from Cape Town, going north through South Africa, Namibia, then into Angola, encountering a world increasingly removed from tourists' itineraries and the hopes of postcolonial independence movements. After covering nearly 2,500 arduous miles, he cuts short his journey, a decision he chronicles with unsparing honesty in a chapter titled "What Am I Doing Here?" Vivid, witty, and beautifully evocative, *The Last Train to Zona Verde* is a fitting final African adventure from the writer whose gimlet eye and effortless prose have brought the world to generations of readers. "Everything is under scrutiny in Paul Theroux's latest travel book—not just the people, landscapes and sociopolitical realities of the countries he visits, but his own motivations for going where he goes . . . His readers can only be grateful." —Seattle Times "If this book is proof, age has not slowed Theroux or encouraged him to rest on his achievements . . . Gutsy, alert to Africa's struggles, its injustices and history." —San Francisco Chronicle

Customer Reviews

Starred Review Having traveled overland from Cairo to Cape Town in *Dark Star Safari* (2003), Theroux intended, 10 years on, to resume the trip, this time heading north up the west side of Africa, avoiding the "safe and well-trodden routes." Though he found some happy moments in "the kingdom of light," the journey was to be darker, harder, and, a rarity for Theroux, unfinished. He does find hopeful change in Cape Town, beautiful desolation in Namibia, and elegance in the bush in Botswana (albeit at extortionate prices). But when he crosses the border into Angola: chaos. After witnessing scene after scene of disorganization, poverty, and despair; after decrying the disconnect between the country's oil-rich rulers and its unemployed, idle citizens; after finding "cities that were indistinguishable from one another in their squalor and decrepitude," he concludes there is nothing more he can learn from their suffering. Ending what seems an impossible trip, he heads for home. Ultimate in the subtitle means not best but final. As Theroux, in an autumnal state of mind, ponders his own mortality, it will be

difficult for readers to imagine the world of letters without him. His ability to map new terrain, both interior and exterior, and to report from places that seldom make the news, remains undiminished. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Theroux's back-to-Africa novel, *The Lower River* (2012), was Booklist's Top of the List. But any book by the eminent author draws interest, and a national tour is planned. --Keir Graff --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Thoroughly engrossing -- from Cape Town to Namibia to the Okavango Delta, Theroux is his inimitable, delightfully grouchy and incisive self. At times tragic, often comical and always gorgeously written, this is a paean to a continent, by a writer unafraid to give it some tough love." --Washington Post

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