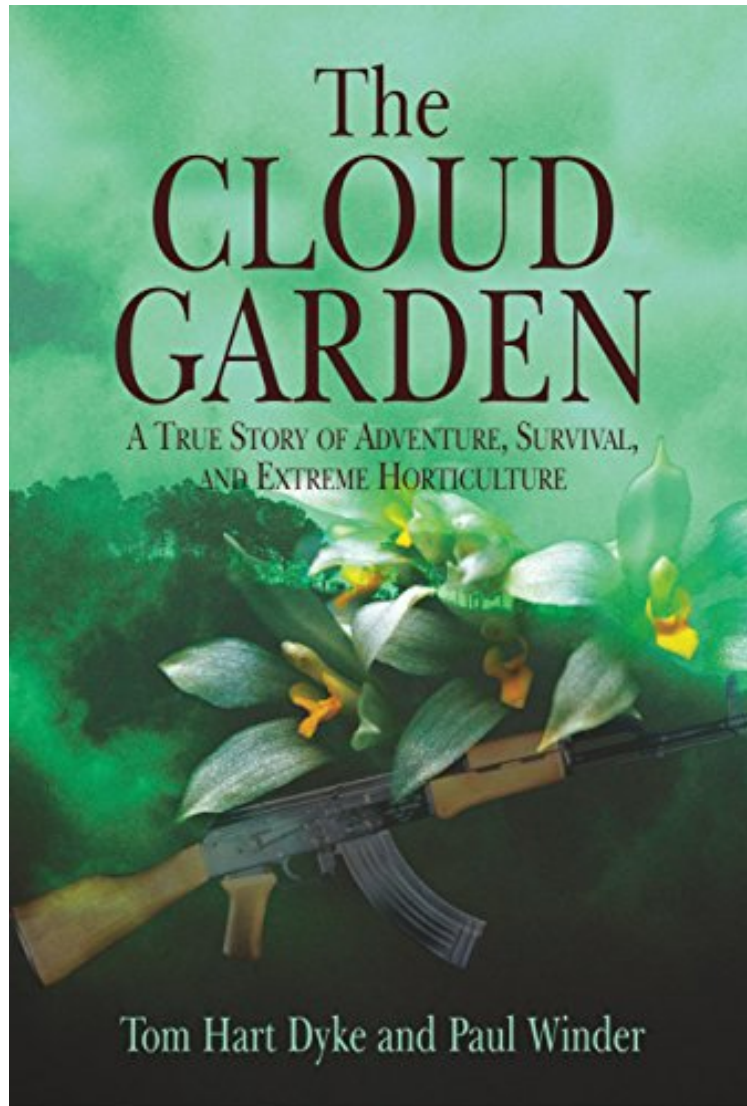


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The Cloud Garden: A True Story of Adventure, Survival, and Extreme Horticulture

Tom Hart Dyke, Paul Winder
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Tom Hart Dyke, Paul Winder : The Cloud Garden: A True Story of Adventure, Survival, and Extreme Horticulture before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Cloud Garden: A True Story of Adventure, Survival, and Extreme Horticulture:

9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Interesting story of survival lacks suspense By Bobby D. The book's topic caught my interest as did a good magazine review. (The copy we purchased from .com was without pages 118 to

179 so check before you begin to read. .com was great and sent us a replacement volume which also was missing the same pages. We finally found a bookstore that exchanged it for a correct version.) The story here is about two young men who choose to hike into the guerrilla held The Darien Gap between Panama and Columbia. The gap where there is no longer any Pan-American Highway. At the end of their telling (I'm not giving anything away, after all the authors wrote the book so you know they survived) the authors make the comment that the British press caught on to the story because of Tom Hart Dyke's love of flowers. It was the "hook" all newspapers look for in such stories, and that is also the hook they use in telling their story. But your not going to learn much about Orchids from this story is told in parallel first person narrative which centers on their immature decision to tempt fate and danger and then tests their ability to survive. In a strange way the book reminded me of Jon Krakauer's excellent "Into the Wild" about a youth who graduates from College and ends up alone, dead in the wilds of Alaska. Both books share that same desire to decipher why some young males make such choices. Overall I would recommend the book as an interesting first person adventure, but it is strangely lacking suspense and I really was let down that we really learn nothing about the band of guerillas who hold them captive. I certainly missed that insight which is so strong in the novel "Bel Canto".0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I could never have done it!By P. BurkeI have no idea how Tom Hart Dyke and Paul Winder survived this horrible ordeal. Me? I would have killed myself just to get the heck out of all the heat and humidity let alone being somewhat charming and cajoling to the folks who kidnapped me and constantly threatened to take my life. But these fellas seemed to be guided -- somehow -- in that they had enough influence over their captors to be allowed to leave a situation where many others might have never returned from. Good for them and a good read, too. I especially liked how the book was set up to give each one a voice to a situation they were both facing. Interesting to see both takes on it. Glad I sent for it and read it. A wonderful look into the human spirit and strength. Cheers!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy michael leaheyAmazing story but the narrative structure is a little clunky

Kidnapped by terrorists, held hostage at gunpoint, two flower-hunting Britons live to tell their amazing tale.

From Publishers WeeklyThe 16,000-mile Pan-American Highway runs from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, interrupted only by the 54-mile Darin Gap, a dense jungle along the Panama/ Colombia border. Few cross this lawless wilderness, where drug traffickers and guerrillas hide out. When British botanist Dyke and London banker Winder met in Mexico four years ago, they teamed up to tour the Gap, despite the region's danger. Dyke hoped to find rare orchids, while world traveler Winder sought a new challenge. After six days, they were ambushed by a guerrilla group near Colombia. Held hostage, they encountered flesh-eating worms and considered escape possibilities, amusing themselves by nicknaming their captors, listening to BBC World Service and entertaining the guerrilla camp with a performance of Eric Idle's "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life." The fun was short-lived. Baffled by Tom's orchid-hunting enthusiasm, the kidnapers believed the two were CIA agents or drug dealers and came from great wealth. When a \$3-million ransom was requested, the authors refused the demands and were eventually released with no explanation. Written with humor and suspense, this is a vivid account of their nine-month ordeal. Dual first-person viewpoints are seamlessly spliced together, and the format provides a prismatic presentation of contrasting attitudes, allowing each author to comment on the other. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "The 16,000-mile Pan-American Highway runs from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, interrupted only by the 54-mile Darin Gap, a dense jungle along the Panama/ Colombia border. Few cross this lawless wilderness, where drug traffickers and guerrillas hide out. When British botanist Dyke and London banker Winder met in Mexico four years ago, they teamed up to tour the Gap, despite the region's danger. Dyke hoped to find rare orchids, while world traveler Winder sought a new challenge. After six days, they were ambushed by a guerrilla group near Colombia. Held hostage, they encountered flesh-eating worms and considered escape possibilities, amusing themselves by nicknaming their captors, listening to BBC World Service and entertaining the guerrilla camp with a performance of Eric Idle's "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life." The fun was short-lived. Baffled by Tom's orchid-hunting enthusiasm, the kidnapers believed the two were CIA agents or drug dealers and came from great wealth. When a \$3-million ransom was requested, the authors refused the demands and were eventually released with no explanation. Written with humor and suspense, this is a vivid account of their nine-month ordeal. Dual first-person viewpoints are seamlessly spliced together, and the format provides a prismatic presentation of contrasting attitudes, allowing each author to comment on the other."-- Publishers Weekly