

# Film Review: 'The Lost City of Z'\*\*\*\*

The Lost City of Z

Direction: James Gray

Screenplay: James Gray

Cast: Charlie Hunnam, Robert Pattinson, Sienna Miller, Tom Holland

Length: 140 minutes

Rating: 15

Adapted from 'The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon', the non-fiction book by David Grann, this film details the life of explorer Percy Fawcett in his search for an ancient lost city in the Amazon rain forest of South America.

On behalf of the Royal Geographical Society, Colonel Fawcett (Hunnam) undertakes a journey to the uncharted territory between Brazil and Bolivia to draw up a border between the two countries before war ensues. While his wife Nina Fawcett (Miller) supports their family at home, Corporal Henry Costin (Pattinson) accompanies him on this exciting adventure. As thunder clouds beat and crack high above, they advance into the storm on a battle for discovery.

On this first exploration to unknown South America, Fawcett discovers artefacts that maybe evidence of an advanced civilisation which fires his lifelong hunt of the lost city becoming his destiny. On the second voyage, Fawcett and company make contact with one of the many ancient tribes of the untouched rainforest but betrayal, sabotage and attempted mutiny threaten to overshadow this otherwise overwhelming spiritual experience.



'The Lost City of Z' now starts to focus on the fragile stability of human nature, an idea returned to intermittently as the great adventure continues. He returns once again with help from his eldest son Jack Fawcett (Holland) but both men disappear into the woods without a trace. It not known whether Fawcett found what he was forever searching for. His fate remains a mystery unsolved to this day.

While the upper class in London describe the uncontacted tribes as 'savages', ironically, the wealthy intelligentsia is equally savage; arrogance, ignorance, prejudice and selfish behaviour exist and flourish in abundance. Meanwhile, the uncontacted people have successfully cultivated the rainforest independently where it was previously thought unimaginable by 'civilised' society due to the overpowering climate and inhospitable landscape.

From the natural wonders of the Amazon rainforest to the green escapes of the English countryside, as well as the affluent sophistication of rich high society to the bloody front lines of the Battle of the Somme, this film explores the many worlds that Fawcett inhabits, both physically and metaphorically.

He finds the formality of the British establishment constricting, so acts the part that is the custom to play, but discovers the rawness of the jungle an entirely freeing experience, releasing him from the routine of home. He is therefore conflicted between enjoying the independence that travelling provides, that would also mean constantly fighting to survive, or adopting life of family responsibility but one that gives him the security to love and help his wife and children.

Christopher YOUNG provides the mellow music, flowing and flexing with the long blue rivers, while Darius Khondji presents us with golden cinematography, from hot and wet in the wild jungle to musty and smoky in the big city. Gracefully executed and absorbingly atmospheric, this film is a unique

accomplishment of classical artistry.

In 'The Lost City of Z' we find a triumph of filmmaking.

'The Lost City of Z' is in cinemas now.