



The Descent

Jeff Long

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Hell exists.

In Tibet, while guiding trekkers to a holy mountain, Ike Crockett discovers a bottomless cave. When his lover disappears, Ike pursues her into the depths of the earth....In a leper colony bordering the Kalahari Desert, a nun and linguist named Ali von Schade unearths evidence of a proto-human species and a deity called Older-than-Old....In Bosnia, Major Elias Branch crash-lands his gunship near a mass grave and is swarmed by pale cannibals terrified of light....

So begins mankind's realization that the underworld is a vast geological labyrinth riddling the continents and seabeds, one inhabited by brutish creatures who resemble the devils and gargoyles of legend. With all of Hell's precious resources and territories to be won, a global race ensues. Nations, armies, religions, and industries rush to colonize and exploit the subterranean frontier.

A scientific expedition is launched westward to explore beneath the Pacific Ocean floor, both to catalog the riches there and to learn how life could develop in the sunless abyss. Is there a natural explanation, as the scientists hope? Or is there a true supernatural basis? Are the "demons" part of our evolutionary family tree? Is their enigmatic leader merely a freak genius, or could he be the legendary Satan?

Fathom by fathom, Ike guides the expedition--and Ali--deeper into the deadly stone wilderness. In the dark underground, as humanity falls away from them, the scientists and mercenaries find themselves prey not only to the savage creatures, but to their own treachery, mutiny, and greed. Meanwhile, on the surface, a band of aged scholars scours archaeological digs, museums, artifacts, and rare texts for clues to Satan's existence. Is he lurking in wait for the expedition, or is he roaming the earth? Or is he dead? One thing is certain: Miles inside the earth, evil is very much alive.

In the tradition of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, **The Descent** is an epic adventure through fantastic landscapes, among creatures for whom man is both god and meat. It is a horrifying mystery penetrating the realms of faith and reason, a raw and original questioning of the divine and the demonic. And finally, The Descent is the story of a man and woman who enter the maze of the underworld and find at its center the human heart.

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