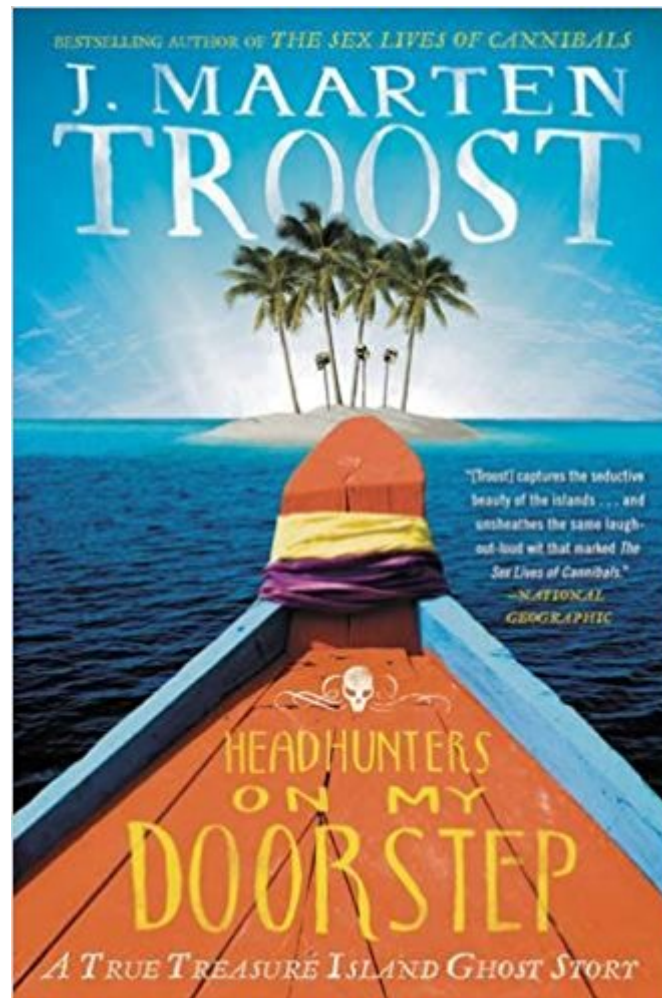




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# Headhunters On My Doorstep: A True Treasure Island Ghost Story



## Synopsis

Follow in the footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson with J. Maarten Troost, the bestselling author of *The Sex Lives of Cannibals*. Readers and critics alike adore J. Maarten Troost for his signature wry and witty take on the adventure memoir. *Headhunters on My Doorstep* chronicles Troost's return to the South Pacific after his struggle with alcoholism left him numb to life. Deciding to retrace the path once traveled by the author of *Treasure Island*, Troost follows Robert Louis Stevenson to the Marquesas, the Tuamotus, Tahiti, Kiribati, and Samoa, tumbling from one comic misadventure to another. *Headhunters on My Doorstep* is a funny yet poignant account of one man's journey to find himself that will captivate travel writing aficionados, Robert Louis Stevenson fans, and anyone who has ever lost his way.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Newly sober travel writer Troost retraces Robert Louis Stevenson's route through the South Pacific from the Marquesas to Samoa in this evocative, funny literary memoir. He recounts his voyage upon the Aranui III cargo ship rooming with a seasick "family of cheerful gnomes from Lyon," battling the urge for a drink and acquiring a traditional Marquesan tattoo on the anniversary of his sobriety. Troost provides insight into addiction and recovery that, in his case, turned him from alcoholic to longdistance runner, and from Buddhism to the Catholic Church. We learn the history of the islands and view the beautiful landscapes of lagoons, atolls, and beaches through Troost's vibrant descriptions. Troost muses on quotes from Stevenson's *In the South Seas*, such as his thoughts on cannibalism, "to eat a man's flesh after he is dead is far less hateful than to oppress him whilst he

lives." He also discusses other literary works about the South Pacific including Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl's *Back to Nature* and Herman Melville's *Typee*. Troost is an excellent travel narrator, clever, bold, and full of captivating visual details. His personal story of recovery is also powerfully told and will surely resonate with many readers. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** It might seem odd that Troost, the Dutch American travel writer, had never read Robert Louis Stevenson's *In the South Seas*, the chronicle of Stevenson's South Pacific voyage to the Marquesas, Tahiti, and Samoa. But, hey, to Troost's nimble, rather offbeat mind, RLS was a bore. He was stuffy. He was probably English. • Troost adds, "So I was an idiot." • This travel memoir charts the author's own South Pacific voyage, replicating (to a degree) Stevenson's. The trip was partly therapeutic. "Troost, a recovering alcoholic, has a big problem with continents ("Bad things happened to me on large land masses. Terrible things") and going somewhere small and isolated seemed just the thing to ease a troubled spirit. But there was also an educational component. Troost was trying to experience the voyage in two ways: as a modern-day adventure, but also as a way to explore an episode of Stevenson's life, to get to know this man and writer he'd neglected for far too long. Like Bill Bryson, Troost deftly combines humor, commentary, and education (an aside about the Marquesas episode of *Survivor*, sparked by the author's discovery that he's standing on a beach that featured in the show, leads smoothly into a look at the old Marquesas • and its odd mixture of wealth and poverty). Troost is a very funny guy, but he also has a lot of serious things to talk about. A splendid travel memoir. --David Pitt --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Really disappointing read. As many others have said, this book is pretty aimless and drones on and on about alcoholism and rehab with a lot of unsuccessful and what I'd consider lazy attempts at humor. While I was a big fan of his earlier books, which were a great mix of actual travel writing and humor, this one provides little of both. When he does focus on the travel writing and the new destinations, the book is enjoyable, but that really only makes up about 25% of what's written. Otherwise it's a lot of bizarre rehab and alcoholism rehashing, over and over, for no one's benefit. I'd pass and read one of his earlier works again.

I've read all of J. Maarten Troost's books. I was delighted to see that he has a new (to me) book out, *Headhunters on my Doorstep*.. It's cleverly written and includes alternating chapters about his

adventure to the Marquesas Islands, his interest in Robert Louis Stevenson and Troost's struggles with alcohol. As a lifelong fan of the South Pacific islands' history and culture it was a joy to learn more about the Marquesas, where CBS Survivor filmed several years ago. If I could, I'd immediately hop on a cruise or cargo ship to Fatu Hiva based on Troost's description. I've had the good fortune to vacation on Bora Bora and Huahine, French Polynesia and Rarotonga and Aitutaki, the Cook Islands, plus nearly 30 trips to the islands of Hawaii, and I can tell you that J. Maarten Troost's books are honest and informative, not to mention belly-laugh-out-loud funny.

Having read the rest of the author's books I was a little surprised at some of the negative reviews. When I read the one that cited his discussing his alcoholism as one of the reasons, though, it made up my mind to buy it. Having found myself in a similar situation several years ago it made the book more interesting to me rather than less. The biggest difference in this book from his earlier ones is the island hopping done to follow RLS travels rather than focusing on particular locale. Once I got used to this though, the combination of travel and biography and local history was pretty interesting. Definitely will be watching for his next one.

Unlike the two previous books, this is just a long extended essay on the author copying Robert Louis Stevenson's trek around the Pacific. Troost became an alcoholic and after getting off work drops him off at rehab. Once out of rehab, the author decides to copy Stevenson. Nothing to this book. Overall, the author is an overgrown, immature, irresponsible idiot just living off his "woman".

It's not his best, but it feels sincere and he's confronted a life crisis. The early chapters feel like the baby steps on a new journey. I've read all of JMT's books and come to expect, like most of the reviewers, that his searing wit sets the tone for his travels. I was not disappointed that he has grown more reflective in his writing. All things change. It is apparent that his drinking brought him to the edge of personal ruin and he thematically connects his story to the adventurous life of RLS. I don't think the novel is preachy and if you consider the early chapters, that he's merely setting up the story in his graciously sobering newfound voice, then you will be rewarded with a good tale. I think the close of this book, in particular, sums up quite nicely how an addict's acceptance to change his ways ties in to a penchant for south seas escapism. I wonder if we'll see something totally different from JMT's next book?

I have read all of his books and loved them. Was honestly a little worried about this one after

reading the reviews. But happily still loved this one. The information about his recovery fits in nicely with his story as it plays a big part in how he copes with his travels at this stage of his life. As a cancer survivor, my prior cancer still plays an active role in my travels and how I see the world. I think any large life occurrence would. So reading about his recovery makes sense to me and honestly I think the people who didn't get that must be blessed with lives where giant bombs haven't been dropped, disrupting everything, every day, every perception. Also learning about the history of the colonization of the south pacific was very interest. Thanks Troost, another home run!!!!

My favorite author...impatiently was waiting for a new book. This one didn't do it for me. It was hopefully a transition book great adventures to coping with alcohol+ addictions. Hopefully Troost can handle his travels without the demon of inhibitors ruing his writing style. Next book I will still buy the day I see it, because he is an awesome writer. My favorite!

Kind of a plot twist when you discover the author has stopped drinking and doing drugs, which used to lead to some lively commentary. It is a sober but humorous adventure sure to please his fans. That sometimes edgy tone is still there.

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