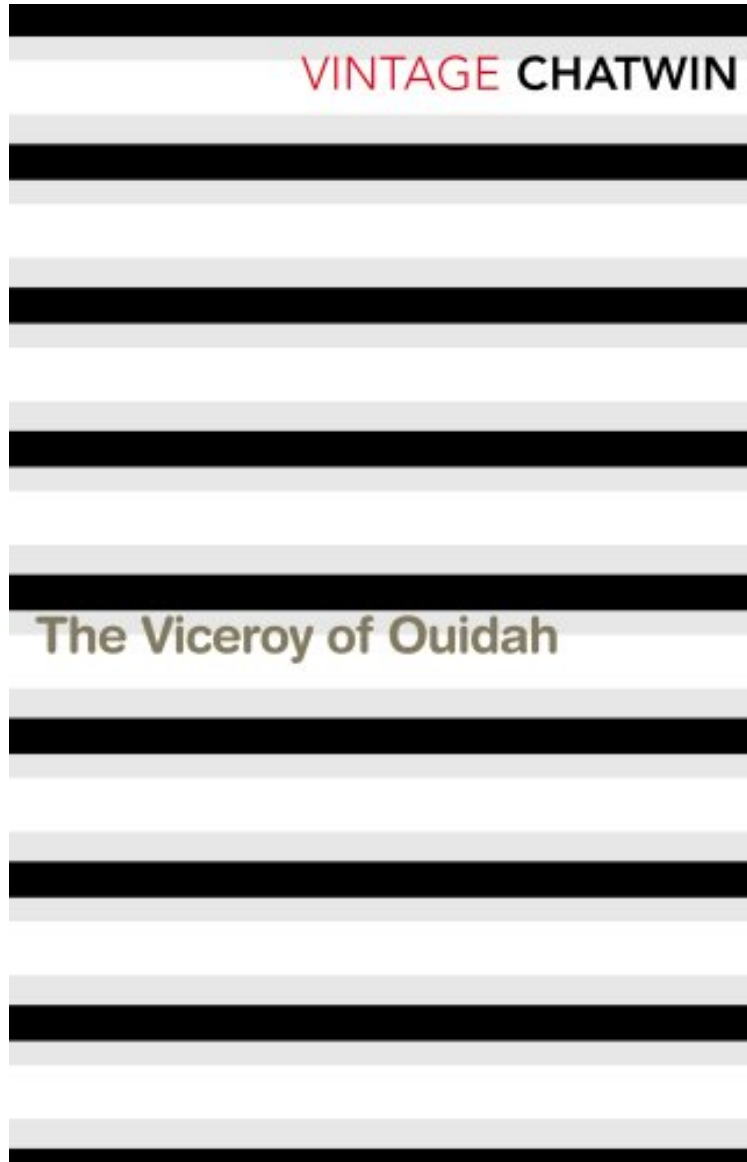


(Download pdf) The Viceroy Of Ouidah (Vintage Classics)

The Viceroy Of Ouidah (Vintage Classics)

Von Bruce Chatwin

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Von Bruce Chatwin : The Viceroy Of Ouidah (Vintage Classics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Viceroy Of Ouidah (Vintage Classics):

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 5 von 5 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Fantastic blend of fact and fiction Von Ein Kunde The Viceroy of Ouidah was Francisco Manoel De Souza, (da Silva in Chatwin's book) who came to Ouidah (also spelled "Whydah"; part of the Abomey Empire, later called "the Slave

Coast", Dahomey, and currently, Benin) in the 1750's and eventually became the main broker between African slave sellers and European slave buyers. He played a significant role in the nation's history, and was actually named Viceroy of Ouidah by an Abomey king. Chatwin's "The Viceroy of Ouidah" (his first novel, written after visiting West Africa) is a very well written book. I found it a pleasure to read, hard to put down (it is one of the few books I have read in a single sitting). It is a short book: nothing in Chatwin's text is extraneous; every sentence advances his story, which is an intriguing blend of fact and fiction, past and present. Werner Herzog made a film titled "Cobra Verde" (1988, starring Klaus Kinski) which is based on "The Viceroy of Ouidah". In his "Wonders of the African World" book and television program Henry Louis Gates, Jr. travels to modern-day Ouidah and encounters the descendants of De Souza, who still live on his estate.² von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Scintillating prose about ghastly times Von Bob Newman As an aspiring travel writer who has yet to publish anything, I turned green with envy on reading Bruce Chatwin's novel. In terse, spare prose, he summons up images that seem drawn from photography or haiku rather than from ordinary literature. He presents distant times (late 18th and early 19th century) and places (Brazil and Dahomey) linking them seamlessly with the steamy, sordid present--the paranoid military dictatorship of Benin in the crumbling West African post-colonial 1970s. Every page is redolent of color, smell, sound, and imminent disaster: every scene appears like a bead in a necklace of decay, corruption, cruelty and disaster. There are no wasted moments, no lagging sections. A poor boy from the Brazilian backlands becomes a rich, powerful slave trader in West Africa, but his background betrays him at home, his connections in Africa ultimately do the same. His largely illegitimate family continues into the seedy Benin of the present. My only criticism of this work is that Chatwin chose to concentrate solely on the Brazilian side of things, leaving the Africans as part of the backdrop--more acted upon than actors. Dahomey was a fascinating society and besides the anthropological researches of M. Herskovits, one can read Frank Yerby's "The Dahomeyan", though Yerby's prose pales in comparison to Chatwin's. A far better book, one which focuses on the Dahomeyan connection to Brazil as well, is Judith Gleason's "Agtime", a possible antidote to the slant taken by Chatwin. Otherwise, this book contains superlative writing on every page, writing redolent with human nature, the mysteries of the soul, and the mundane horrors of much of human history. "The Viceroy of Ouidah" has the power to open periods and locations for readers that have seldom featured in Anglo-American writing. It is a stunning book.¹ von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A formidable fictional biography of a slave trader Von Alfred J. Kwak In only 101 pages, Bruce Chatwin (BC) evokes the life and times of Francisco Manoel da Silva (FMdS), who was a Brazilian slave trader in the African kingdom of Dahomey from 1812 until his death in 1857. His brilliant novella starts with a powerful description of the annual celebration of his passing away in Benin by his many present-day rather impoverished descendants, who today form branches of a true Diaspora. They are convinced that somewhere, somehow the supposed tremendous richness accumulated by the founder of the dynasty, is hidden, buried somewhere. BC's novella is a dazzling piece of reading and in today's terms politically incorrect, as it should be: each character is simply an extension of the era's principal protagonists' world views about the need for human sacrifice, for warfare, for profit from dealing in human bodies. E.g., the Dahomey king argues: tradition rules there shall be war every dry season. What to do with captives? Behead them to reassure the elders, the Dead Kings that I have not gone soft in the head, or sell them in one piece to FMdS to live on in Brazil? There is a lot of madness in this book. BC's previous job at Sotheby's guarantees total authenticity for the novella's visual impact by effortlessly naming the artefacts en vogue at the time, the imported brands, fabrics, household items, luxuries, tools, pieces of dress, etc. Similarly, BC has done exhaustive archival and field research in Britain, Brazil and Benin, as Dahomey is called today. In fact, during his early research there, he was mistaken for a mercenary after a failed coup and almost executed. In his posthumously published collection of journalistic writing called *What Am I Doing Here*, he admits the incident delayed the writing of this truly fabulous novella. In 1988 Werner Herzog turned the novella into a movie called *Cobra Verde*, with Klaus Kinski playing FMdS. Director and star made four previous films and this (final) cooperation was not rated their best. Which proves that the book is always better than the film.

Kurzbeschreibung In 1812, Francisco Manoel da Silva, escaping a life of poverty in Brazil, sailed to the African kingdom of Dahomey, determined to make his fortune in the slave trade. Armed with nothing but an iron will, he became a man of substance in Ouidah and the founder of a remarkable dynasty. His one remaining ambition is to return to Brazil in triumph, but his friendship with the mad, mercurial king of Dahomey is fraught with danger and threatens his dream. *Pressestimmen* "Dazzles and mystifies, with its lush anger, its impacted memory, its gorgeous desolation." --The New York Times "A vivid, lush, seductive book that absolutely captures the look and light and life of the Brazilian wastelands and the hot, breathless African Slave Coast jungles. What an imagination Bruce Chatwin has!" --The Wall Street Journal "Chatwin has a powerfully visual and aural style; sights and sounds crowd his sentences to the point that the book almost breathes." --The New Yorker "Chatwin's book is both a luminous historical document and an exploitation of the surreal past. The author's talent for invoking history's black magic is evident." --

TimeWerbetext'Quite simply dazzling' Observer