



[Flying Pen Press](#) is pleased to present an interview with Gaddy Bergmann, whose final book in *The Feral World* trilogy, [Riders of the Mapinguari](#), will be published tomorrow, June 17, 2009.

Gaddy Bergmann was born in Petah Tikva, Israel on August 15, 1975. At the age four, he moved to Denver, Colorado, the lovely city where he grew up and now resides. Gaddy has a bachelor's degree in Environmental, Population, and Organismic Biology from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and a master's degree in Zoology from the University of South Florida in Tampa. Gaddy has performed research in both ecology and microbiology. While in Florida, he worked on fish biology in several regions of the state, including the Everglades. Gaddy has also worked in education, teaching elementary, secondary, and university students in the subjects of math, science, and composition. An admirer of animals and wildlife since childhood, he was inspired to write *The Feral World* books by the beauty of the natural wonders he saw all around him.

How is *Riders of the Mapinguari* different from the preceding two books, *Migration of the Kamishi* and *Trials of the Warmland*?

The first two books in *The Feral World* use the narrative conflict of Person vs. Nature, but *Riders of the Mapinguari* is different in that it uses Person vs. Person. In the first two books, the reader follows Blake and Lana as they struggle to survive in their beautiful but

dangerous environment. In the third book, however, an army from the south, led by the ruthless military leader Therus Mulokh attacks Blake, Lana, and their people, the Corpushi. It's the Corpushi's desperate resistance against this mighty army that drives the plot of *Riders of the Mapinguari*.

What is *Riders of the Mapinguari* about?

Like the previous books, *Riders of the Mapinguari* is about the wondrous power of nature, but it has other themes as well. It's also about the dangers of greed and intolerance, and how they threaten whole societies. It's also about the rewards of knowing one's true self, and having the guts to fight for one's homeland.

What ties the three *Feral World* books together?

Several themes arc through the *Feral World* trilogy. These are

- a. The beauty of nature,
- b. The virtue of humility,
- c. The virtue of balance,
- d. The virtue of knowledge, and
- e. Appreciating the consequences of one's decisions.

Who are the good guys in this story?

Blake and Lana are the main protagonists. They are featured throughout *The Feral World* trilogy, starting with their simple lives in the northern Great Plains, all the way to their epic battle against the Terran army in the Warmland to the south. This story, however, also focuses on Blake and Lana's fellow Corpushi tribesmen, such as the young warriors Murdoch and Spartan, as well as Chief Zaar. The reader first meets these people in *Trials of the Warmland*, and then becomes more intimately acquainted with them in *Riders of the Mapinguari*.

Who are the bad guys in this story?

The antagonists in *Riders of the Mapinguari* are the Terran Invaders, who are a conquering people from south of the Warmland. They are led by Supreme Commander Therus Mulokh and his First Officer Garbek Plutah. Both men are bent on wiping out the small tribes of the Warmland, including the Corpushi, and capturing the region for themselves. Their army is thousands strong, and their technology is superior to that of the local people. Worst of all, though, is their secret weapon: the mapinguari.

What are the challenges face by the people of the Warmland?

The Terrans wish to kill, enslave, or evict all the native inhabitants of the Warmland. This task is relatively easy for them because of their powerful army, but Blake and the Corpushi decide to try to resist anyway. Defeat for the Corpushi means destruction of their peaceable way of life, or even annihilation. The Corpushi also see themselves as stewards and defenders of the Warmland. They know that if they lose, they might not only disappear, but so might the Warmland as they know it. This is why they are willing to risk everything and fight back. The Terrans, however, are more than a match for the natives. The Corpushi have to be innovative if they hope to defeat the much more powerful Terran army.

What is a mapinguari?

According to legend, a mapinguari is a giant, shaggy creature from South America, whose range stretches from the rainforests of Brazil to the plains of Patagonia. Mapinguari can stand upright on their hind feet, which supposedly point backward, making their gait quite strange. Mapinguari are said to have a foul odor and a terrifying scream, as well as one big eye in the middle of their heads, and a big mouth in the middle of their bellies.

Except for the part about having only one eye and a gaping mouth in the belly, the legend of the mapinguari is strongly reminiscent of giant ground sloths: real prehistoric mammals that went extinct only a few thousand years ago. Some scientists, like ornithologist David Oren, think that a species of ground sloth known as *Mylodon darwini* could have given rise to this legend. Native people no doubt saw these creatures in the distant past, and their folk tales might simply be a memory of those ancient encounters from long ago. On the other hand, it's also possible that a small relict population of this animal still survives today. If so, then investigators might be able to find and protect them.

In *Riders of the Mapinguari*, however, the Terrans domesticate and train these giant sloths so they can crush other peoples and expand their empire. If giant sloths had survived into modern times, perhaps they could have been used like war elephants in this way.