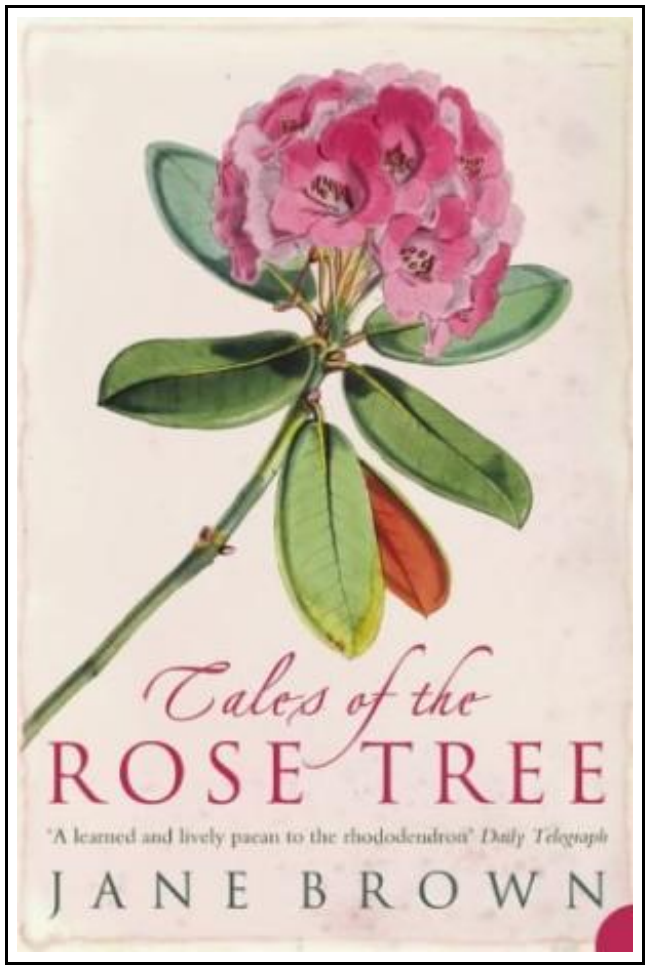
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(Sunny Thompson)

TALES OF THE ROSE TREE: RAVISHING RHODODENDRONS AND THEIR TRAVELS AROUND THE WORLD (PAPERBACK)

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HarperCollins Publishers, United Kingdom, 2005. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 192 x 128 mm. Language: N/A. Brand New Book. A wild and wonderful exploration of the history of the rhododendron, a plant coveted, traded and stolen for thousands of years. From the giant, long-lived rhododendron falconeri, with its peeling cinnamon bark on sculptured trunks to the delicate potted azalea on the garden patio, almost everyone has a rhododendron within reach of their daily lives. But who knows anything about this mysterious plant? Two hundred years ago the rhododendron was dragged to Britain from the dizzying heights of its natural habitat in the Sino-Himalayas by avaricious British collectors. Some of the species mutated; others proved hardy and easy to hybridise. Today the rhododendron has made a greater impact on the English landscape than any other plant. Jane Brown uncovers the rhododendron s story which reaches back hundreds, some say thousands, of years (the dove returning to Noah s ark was, apparently, carrying the leaf of a rhododendron). The Aztecs favoured it for their pleasure gardens (although the Jesuits believed they discovered it); the Chinese use it in medicines; mariners used it as ballast cargo; it has excited royal passions (Edward Prince of Wales surrounded himself with them at Virginia Water in the 1920s) and been the source of personal feuds (in the Rhododendron Society). After the First World War the government thought enough of the plant to fill Windsor Great Park with them in order to cheer up the nation. The epitome of bad taste, the scourge of conservationists or a majestic and ancient beauty forced to exist out of its natural habitat? Jane Brown ultimately asks: What is the rhododendron for?.

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