*Street Reads is published by*

TheStreetReadery.com




Proud Member

July 2026

# Street Reads



## It's Still Summer

**Are we having fun yet?**

Summer is a great time to relax, read AND to learn about infectious diseases spread from host to host by sand flies.

This issue of **Street Reads** was inspired by *The Lost City of the Monkey God*, by Douglas Preston.




**Searching for a "lost" city in the dense jungles of Honduras is full of adventure, and....**

poisonous snakes, agitated monkeys, corruption, and an uninvited guest parasite searching for you to host its habitat.




## Science Facts

From NIH, National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases




It's a finding perfect for spooky season—inside a bloodsucking insect, a parasite uses the blood of mammals to get more fit to infect unsuspecting people. In this case, the story is more troubling because it's a real threat. The parasite is Leishmania, which causes leishmaniasis, a primarily tropical and subtropical disease that can cause skin lesions and organ damage, and can be fatal. The bloodsucking insect that spreads Leishmania parasites is the sand fly, a small, biting vector that infects humans and other mammals with the parasite. Researchers at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) found that the parasite uses antibodies from the human or mammalian host to form mating clumps in the sand fly gut, prompting a process that allows the parasite to adapt and become more suited to infecting people.

## Tips to deal with "The Leish"

Look for lost cities in the jungle ONLY IF NECESSARY.

Dissuade sand flies from biting you by applying MORE THAN ONE method (stab them with a knife on a book while reclined on a hammock and … then what else?)

Check with some people (let's say, uh, experts) that know about infectious diseases BEFORE offering yourself as a meal for a bunch of sand flies. Also, watch out for those snakes, too. They are scary.

After you get bit, try to suck out all the infected blood and spit it out. This will work 100 percent of the time for the hero of any B rated movie. If you are not starring in a cheesy B movie, seek other options for treatment.

Consult an expert physician to get specialized treatment made possible by people who believe in advancing our collective understanding of medical science in a civilized society that places a highest priority on the health and well being of its people, and supports medical research with the funding it needs.