



The Marsh Arabs (Penguin Classics)

By Wilfred Thesiger

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“Five thousand years of history were here and the pattern was still unchanged.”

During the years he spent among the Marsh Arabs of southern Iraq, Wilfred Thesiger came to understand, admire and share a way of life that had endured for many centuries. Travelling from village to village by canoe, he won acceptance by dispensing medicines and treating the sick. In this account of his time there, he pays tribute to the hospitality, loyalty, courage and endurance of the people, describes their impressive reed houses, the waterways and lakes teeming with wildlife, the herding of buffalo and hunting of wild boar, moments of tragedy and moments of pure comedy, all in vivid, engaging detail. Untouched by the modern world until recently, these independent people, their way of life and their surroundings suffered widespread destruction under the regime of Saddam Hussein. Wilfred Thesiger's magnificent account of his time spent among them is a moving testament to their now threatened culture and the landscape they inhabit.

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Review

"It is one thing to tell the story of an expedition . . . it is quite another to convey the atmosphere. . . . This is a richly rewarding book." —*The Observer*

"His voyage through desert waters will remain, like his *Arabian Sands*, a classic of travel writing." —*The Times (London)*

About the Author

Wilfred Thesiger (1910-2003) was a British explorer and travel writer. He was born at Addis Ababa, Abyssinia (now Ethiopia). Educated at Eton and Oxford, he worked in the Sudan Political Service and later, for a year, as a Political Officer for the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie. He is best known for two travel books: *Arabian Sands* (1959) and *The Marsh Arabs* (1964).

Jon Lee Anderson (introducer) is one of America's most respected foreign correspondents and a staff writer for *The New Yorker*. He is the author of *The Lion's Grave: Dispatches From Afghanistan* (2002) and *The Fall of Baghdad* (2004).

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