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Floreana



Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 126 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

I read this book after seeing the recent film, "Galapagos Affair: Satan Came to Eden" and being very intrigued about the murder mystery that took place among the 1930's residents of this island. I read this book by Margaret Wittmer in hopes of getting insights into that mystery. An extremely obnoxious, manipulative and sadistic fake "baroness" was possibly murdered, along with one of her boyfriends, in the early 1930's on this island. There were only 7 other people living on the island at the time, and Margaret Wittmer, her husband, and her two sons, were 4 of those. The other three were Lorentz, a spurned boyfriend of the "baroness", and Dr. Rittner and his associate Dore Strauch. Both Margaret and Dore wrote books about their lives on the island, including their experiences of the "baroness" and her boyfriends, and each other. I had hoped to read the accounts by both women, but the book by Dore is not accessible, as it is out of print and very expensive. Reading the book didn't actually shed much light on the murder mystery....but it was fascinating to read Margaret's account of life on this remote island, a primitive life that began in tents and caves, and over the years turned into running a post office on the island.

This is the only book in years that I gave 5 stars. It was fascinating to me how this German couple settled on this small island with no conveniences at all. They had to learn how to do everything themselves, from finding water to making shoes. Trials and tribulations, failure and success, sickness and health. At the end they prevailed, and now their descendants are living and working on Floreana and the surrounding islands. It's a totally amazing story. Sometimes it's good to have a book like this in hardcover, to more clearly see the illustrations, and go back or forth a few pages. So I am ordering it. It really is an amazing story.

Before reading Margaret Wittmer's memoir I didn't know anyone actually lived on the Galapagos

Islands. She and her husband succeeded on harsh, remote Floreana where others had give up and gone back home. Her writing style is nothing special but the subject matter is extraordinary. This family went from city life in Cologne before WWII to primitive subsistence farming, while at first living in a cave where Margret delivered her first baby. Even in their remote location the family managed to meet presidents and royalty, murderers, scoundrels and lifetime friends. Despite danger and deprivation and through backbreaking work and ingenious innovations, the Wittmers grew a family and a community which thrives to this day. I thought this would be an okay read and maybe a little boring in spots, but every page was fascinating!

This book was a bit slow and I wasn't sure I would finish it, but the further I read the more interesting it got. What would possess a German family to move to a nearly deserted Galapagos island in 1932? They faced much hard work in the beginning, just to keep from starving. Then many decades of more hard work. I kept reading just because I couldn't believe how much they accomplished. Written first-person by the wife, Margaret Wittmer, it covers in detail nearly everything that ever happened in their lives. This book is definitely not for everyone.

This book is very informative and interesting. It is so well written that you will thoroughly enjoy reading it. You learn so much about the islands and all the hard work it took to make a life there. You have a real adventure with the people in this book. Will keep your till the end.

This is the personal account of a woman who moved as a young, pregnant wife to the Galapagos when it was almost totally uninhabited. She and her husband were required to work incredibly hard in order to survive in such treacherous circumstances, which to be frank, one might wonder what they were thinking at first. But the life they seem to have built, the strong family which is their legacy, are testament to their tenacity and strength. There are wonderful descriptions of the fauna and flora of the Island, the other residents, and also their many visitors. Makes me want to visit the Galapagos myself, one day.

This story is clearly not written by a professional author writing for the public. It reads like the personal diary that it is. I am amazed by the bravery and stamina of this family. As a matter of fact, it seems almost impossible. From literally nothing, the couple built a plantation with their own labor, raising 3 children, and managed to feed and entertain boat loads of people. The author grows their vegetables, raises chicken, and does all the cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing. All of this was

done on a nearly uninhabited and uninhabitable Galapagos island. Pretty amazing.

I recently visited Floreana Island (one of the Galapagos islands) and I purchased this book to learn about the first settlers on the island. It was a very good book and an interesting account of their experiences.

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Floreana: A Woman's Pilgrimage to the Galapagos Floreana

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