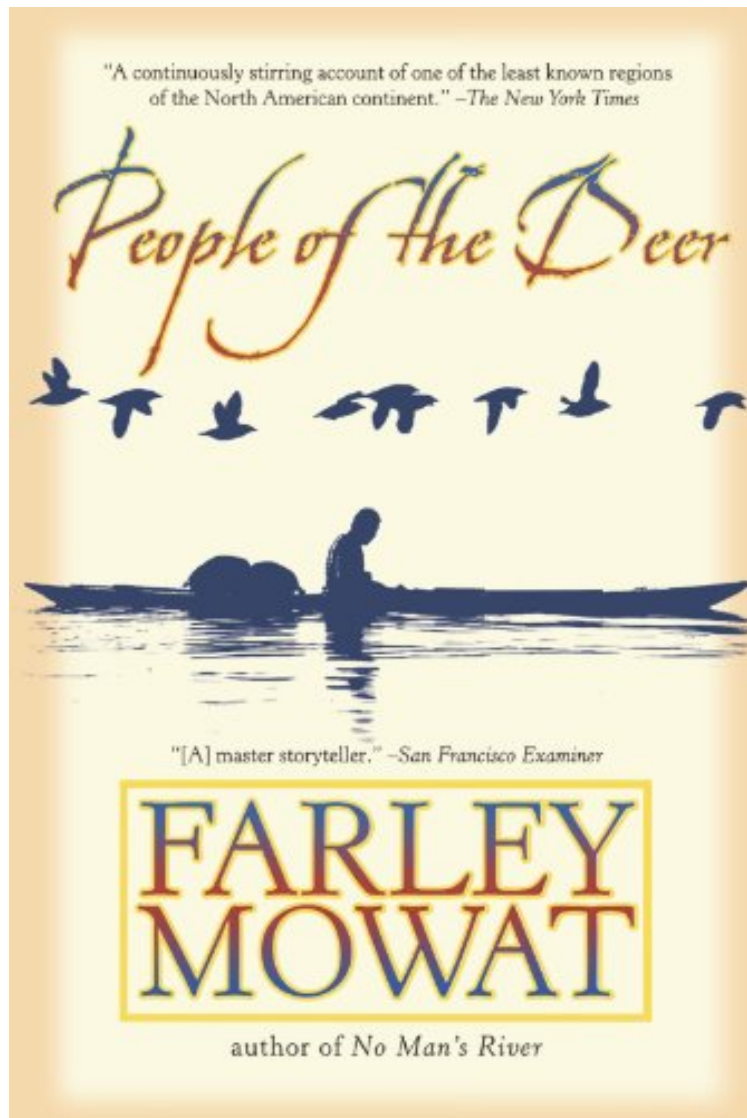


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People of the Deer (Death of a People)

Farley Mowat

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Farley Mowat : People of the Deer (Death of a People) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised People of the Deer (Death of a People):

45 of 46 people found the following review helpful. Remarkable first book from promising author! By Owen Hughes First published in 1947 and available in a wide variety of editions since then, Farley Mowat's first and most distant book is still remarkably readable in the world of the 21st century. It concerns one of the stranger human sagas of the last century, that of the discovery and destruction of a remote Inuit society, the Ihalmiut, in Canada's north. The setting of the book is far enough away in time for us to marvel at how little things have changed since. The

contemptuous attitude of European man for the aborigine seems hardly to have altered over the years. We are still hard put to understand the needs of the first peoples and how to answer them. Farley Mowat has combined a fine sensitivity for the natural environment with a sharp eye for the details of man's place within it. It must be exceedingly rare in the history of anthropology that such an inexperienced investigator has taken such pains to get to the source of his information. Mowat lived among the Ihalmiut for over a year to write the book. During that time he witnessed the rapid deterioration of the small group which remained, and tried to examine the causes of their decline. With very deft prose for such a young writer, he points out the difference between the intentions and the actions of the European discoverers of The People (as they refer to themselves) and the consequences of such disparity. The Ihalmiut were exploited in much the same way as any other tribal band found wandering by the early explorers. However, as Mowat points out, this was an exceptional group which had survived the extreme rigours of a barren land (known to us simply as The Barrens) for so many generations, only to be felled by contact with the very race which might have provided them with so much assistance. The Ihalmiut are long gone from their homeland but their story serves to remind us of our often difficult relationship with the land and the people on it. Perhaps, as a race of city-dwellers, we need to consider our place in the natural environment more than ever. Mowat's work is a just accounting of where we stand in relationship to nature. Nor does he suggest that we should all go and live in the tundra. Yet *People of the Deer* is a source of considerable inspiration for those now ready to reflect on the unbalancing effect of contemporary values.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Two books everyone should read
By Cowgirl
This first person account was written in the late 40s and published in 1952. The style is closer to Victorian than modern. Each sentence paints an item, and each paragraph completes a landscape. Don't expect Hemingway. But since I grew up reading everything I could find in bookcases inherited from my grandparents, I enjoy Farley Mowat's style. This was his first book about the People. The story is sad - so sad that the reader must put down the book every now and then to get back to the present. Mowat wrote a follow-up to the story of the People, "*The Desperate People*", published in 1959. The style fits our modern age better, but the story of the People gets worse. Be sure to buy and read both.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful and yet sad...
By Michael Valdivielso
When published in 1951 this book was a cry for help - not just to help the Ihalmiut but to help ourselves. A well crafted book of one man's understanding, in a limited way, of the hard, harsh life of the Eskimos who live along side the deer, the lakes, and the spirits of the Barrens. The book is full of his memories, some sad, some wonderful. We get images of summer, with its life, the birds, eggs, and kids going out with toy slings to help gather food. We learn about the way the People lived, worked, and loved inside their families and society. We hear their tales of where they came from, how the animals were brought into the world by a woman, and how dangerous it is for men, both to their body and their soul, when they are all alone. Once there were thousands of them - sharing their tools, enjoying the raw meat of the kill, enjoying the happiness of never needing anything. Wonderful. Depressing. Sad. Lovely. Is there anything we can still do about this? Is there anything we can do for ourselves?

In 1886, the Ihalmiut people of northern Canada numbered seven thousand; by 1946, when Farley Mowat began his two-year stay in the Arctic, the population had fallen to just forty. With them, he observed for the first time the phenomenon that would inspire him for the rest of his life: the millennia-old migration of the Arctic's caribou herds. He also endured bleak, interminable winters, suffered agonizing shortages of food, and witnessed the continual, devastating intrusions of outsiders bent on exploitation. Here, in this classic and first book to demonstrate the mammoth literary talent that would produce some of the most memorable books of the next half-century, best-selling author Farley Mowat chronicles his harrowing experiences. *People of the Deer* is the lyrical ethnography of a beautiful and endangered society. It is a mournful reproach to those who would manipulate and destroy indigenous cultures throughout the world. Most of all, it is a tribute to the last People of the Deer, the diminished Ihalmiuts, whose calamitous encounter with our civilization resulted in their unnecessary demise.

"This is a fascinating and beautiful book." From the Publisher
A beautifully written book... Mowat's challenge cannot be ignored."
-Saturday Night
From the Inside Flap
THEY WERE IN HARMONY WITH THE LAND BUT THEY WERE ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION
Sixty years ago, the Ihalmiut numbered 7,000. When Farley Mowat visited them, their population had dwindled to forty. For two years, Mowat shared their hard life--the bleak winters, the shortages of food, the fervent struggle to withstand the intrusion of white men--and came to understand them. Here, Farley Mowat indicts those who have abused the Ihalmiut. But, foremost, he pays tribute to the last of the People of the Deer--the proud, valiant Eskimos, desperately trying to survive.