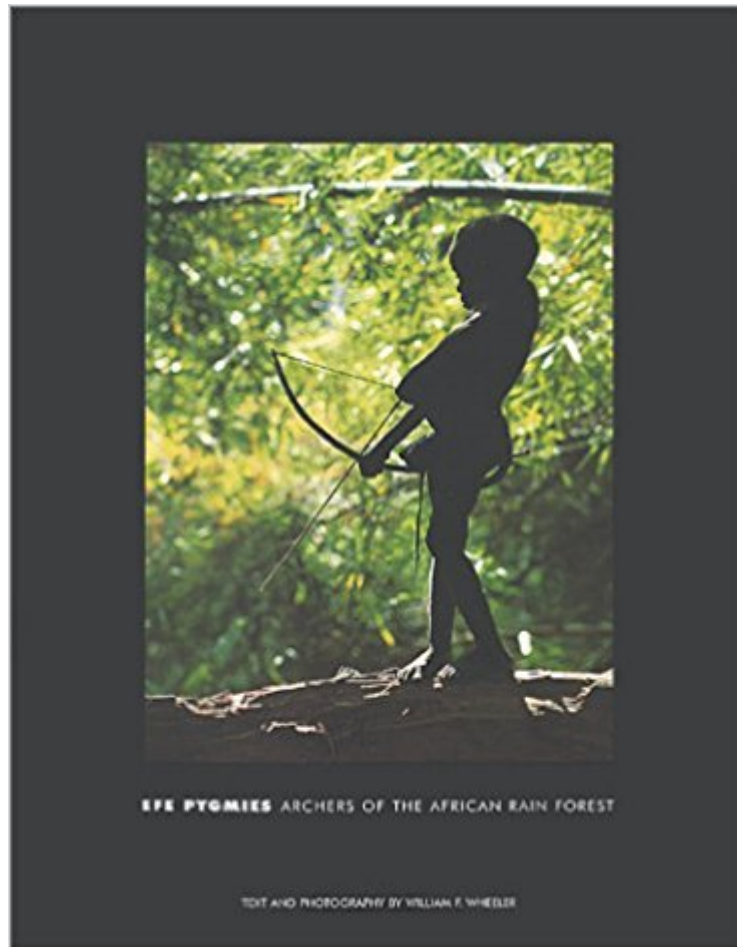




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Efe Pygmies : Archers Of The African Rain Forest



Synopsis

Efe Pygmies is a portrait of an endangered people and place. This volume presents a visual portrayal of the Efe pygmies of the Congo, the world's oldest pure-blooded ethnic group and one of its most remote. Through this book's photography and text, the world can now discover a way of life that has remained intact for thousands of years deep within the reaches of the Ituri rain forest. This volume reflects the seasonally based life of the Efe: boys and men at hunt, family life in the camps, dancing and music making, and bark and body painting. Providing a unique perspective on a people who have been virtually inaccessible until now and capturing the mysterious, sensual quality of the rain forest itself, this special edition is a unique treasure that sheds unprecedented light on an endangered people and environment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

William F. Wheeler, M.D. has traveled extensively throughout Africa; he has been to the continent twenty-four times, logging some forty thousand miles; this book reflects a five-year period in which he trekked extensively and lived with the Efe Pygmies. His images of Africa and its nomadic people have appeared in books, magazines, galleries, and museums across the country. A collection of his photographs of the Efe are on permanent display at the San Diego Zoological Society. He lives in California.

Efe pygmies: Archers of the African Rain Forest is a sumptuously illustrated tome that will long grace my coffee table. The main part of the book - a subtle photographic study depicting the Efe

subsisting precariously but harmoniously in the depths of the Ituri forest - is preceded by a brief but fascinating scene-setting section of white-on-black text. The author presents vivid visual and verbal images of his subjects making baskets, carrying hunting nets, filing their teeth, smoking tobacco, playing music, dispatching a net-caught antelope, touchingly expressing grief at the death of a newborn, and fleeing from their leaf huts into the night beneath a cracking and crashing, lightning-weakened tree. Skillful, intimate photography makes us yearn for the easy laughter and simplicity of these gentle, peaceful people, yet we are simultaneously made aware of the dangers and discomforts they must constantly face. It is a fitting tribute to a people as "primitive" and untouched by global culture as any on earth, and the precariousness of their independence. Moreover, it is a compelling and persuasive insight into our own hunting and gathering origins, and the thoughts, feelings, and reactions we all share as part of the human family. While William Wheeler's book may not lead us to put on treebark loin cloths and chase wildlife through the forest, it is an evocative portrayal of another culture, one that can teach us something about how to live surrounded by danger and dark forces and yet keep on reverentially singing, laughing, and living for the moment. Although the Efe are clearly too humble and happy a people to bother sending missionaries to us for our edification, this beautiful and moving book affords a glimpse of what such a mission might convey.

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