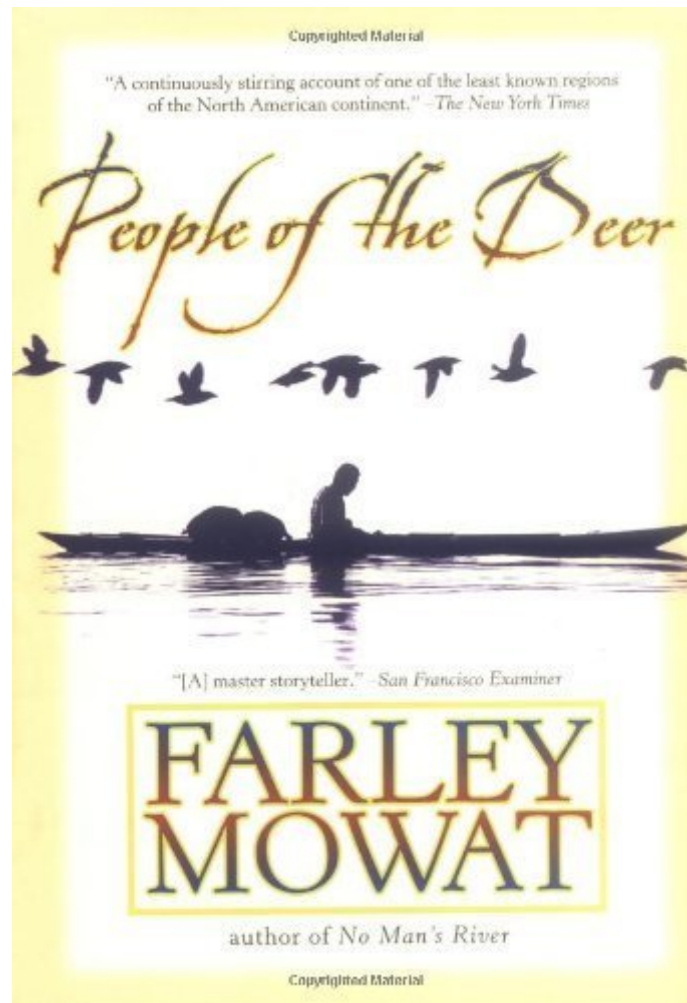


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# People Of The Deer (Death Of A People)



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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.

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