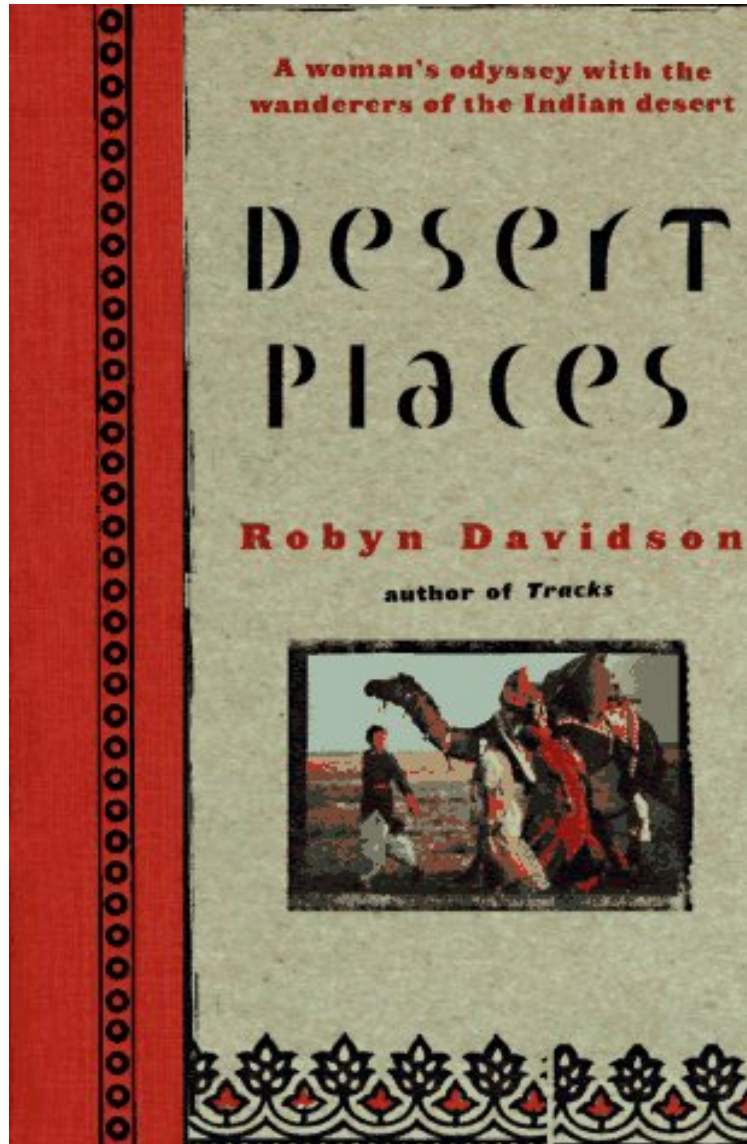


Desert Places

Robyn Davidson

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Robyn Davidson : Desert Places before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Desert Places:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. My favorite adventure authoress ever! By Priscilla S. My favorite adventure authoress ever! What a ride, camel that is and range of fascinating and interesting encounters. After reading her book Tracks I wondered if this would be as good and it is definitely a 5 star book too, similar in some ways and very different in others. There is an under current of maturity that she exhibits, being older in this book, but her having

to accept totally different cultural differences and deal with ever worsening conditions just amazes me how she dealt with it all. I actually took notes as I was reading both books as she comes up with some very applicable and life changing comments. I'm so grateful to Robyn for sharing these experiences with the public so we can, from the comforts of our homes, ride and walk along with her on her journeys. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Determined, Soulful, Curious, Educational By wren Robyn Davidson is one of my favorite writers. She is a gift to the world of women writers. I find in her the same adventurous soulfulness that I have in myself. The contending, exploring, curious nature of an explorer. And a woman, at that! I just love it! I've read Tracks and now Desert Places. Desert Places was much different than Tracks as far as storyline is concerned, but it contains Robyn's great writing, indomitable spirit, and off-the-beaten trail thinking and journeying, which is what I'm after! I think this book is also another sign post for our times. Human evolution is well underway and in India, a place with so much diversity and crowding, this book provides a very educational glance at some of the problems facing India in relation to people groups, resource use land management and the survival and thriving of people groups. Again, a very informative look from one of my favorite (female) authors! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. She's a great writer and having been to India five times By Martina Schwarz She's a great writer and having been to India five times, I could feel it in my bones or rather smell it and feel it around me. Clearly the time of tribal people all over the world has come to an end. We do not have the space or time to accommodate them plus there are too many people in the world currently and the poorest least organized will be the first to go. This point she really brings home strongly. Over populated India is a microcosm of the rest of the world. The rest of us are further down the line but still we are all in the same line....

The Rebari are a nomadic tribe in India's Thar Desert. Like nomads everywhere, the Rebari are being forced into accepting a more sedentary life. Their traditional trading and pilgrimage routes have been transected by borders and canals or blocked by atomic bomb testing sites and irrigated farm lands. But once a year, they arrive in Pushkar, partly as a pilgrimage to bathe in the most sacred lake in India, partly to buy and sell their animals, partly to enjoy the biggest annual fair in Asia. Robyn Davidson crossed the pathless Thar Desert with the Rebari. Interwoven with the journey of the Rebari is the story of Minu, a highly spirited upperclass Indian woman, forced into an arranged marriage with the ex-king of Ghanerao, locked up in the women's quarters of the palace and subject both to the strict laws of Purdah and to psychological warfare with her in-laws.

.com As Robyn Davidson writes in Desert Places, the Thar, a 230,000-square-mile expanse of formidably dry country in northwestern India, is a harsh land of "granite outcroppings, naked but for a few gullies of monsoon forest or a single, white-painted elephant stationed on a summit eternally surveying the farmlands below." Among the people who populate the Thar are the Rabari, who are quickly becoming modernized and dispossessed, wanderers on the fringes of urban civilization, people who are at home nowhere. After making a false start as a book of adventure travel, Desert Places becomes a work of cultural ecology and of amateur anthropology, reporting on the final days of a traditional nomadic culture once utterly at home in an inhospitable land. From Publishers Weekly Inspired by an enchanting encounter with camel herders at a Hindu festival in Pushkar, travel writer Davidson (Tracks) took a magazine assignment to accompany the nomads of Rajasthan (a region in western India) on their yearly migration cycle. Arriving in Jodhpur on the eve of the Gulf war under the aegis of her friend Narendra, a prince who equips her with an entourage of servants and an obstreperous camel-keeper named Chutra, Davidson soon discovers that the ancient culture of the nomads (who are known either as Rabari or as Raika) is slowly being eradicated, faced with diminishing grazing lands, new political boundaries and the spread of subsidized agriculture and Western culture. This book, as breathtaking but circuitous as the adventures it chronicles, begins to gather steam when Davidson is finally accepted by a dang (a migratory group) and sets off to follow them across the desert. She spends a few months sharing the shepherds' life of extreme deprivation, traveling 30 miles a day on a diet of little more than fetid water and camel's milk, sleeping two hours a night and battling illness and exhaustion, before deciding to return to Jodhpur on foot? which proves an even more perilous journey that ends when her camels die after eating poisonous weeds. By the book's end, Davidson's romantic vision of the peripatetic life has given way to a bitter account of her own dashed expectations and of the exploitation of India's nomads. Although her understanding of nomadism as an emotional and geographical phenomenon remains only partly digested, this book will nevertheless prove absorbing to even the most sedentary of bookshelf-travelers. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal The nomadic way of life is on the brink of extinction. In this work, Davidson, an author (Tracks, LJ 2/15/81) and Australian journalist who resides in England, vividly recounts her stay among the Rabari, sheep- and camel-herding nomads in northwestern India. Davidson ate, slept, and walked endless sunbaked miles with them. She does not remain clinically aloof from her traveling companions but tells of getting poked, prodded, taken advantage of, and laughed at. Neither cynic nor sentimentalist, she was at times disgusted with the earthy Rabari, whose behavior, she notes, was a baffling mixture of aggression and passivity. At other times she was deeply moved by their kindness and spiritual equanimity. Since her travels with the Rabari consisted of several fragmentary journeys rather than one long trip, her account lacks a certain sweep and sometimes seems repetitive. Nevertheless, her book is valuable for its detail and insight. Highly

recommended for public libraries and anthropology and South Asian collections. Mary C. Kalfatovic, Telesec Lib. Svc., Washington, D.C. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.