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Floreana: A Woman's Pilgrimage to the Galapagos

Margret Wittmer

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#688867 in Books 1990 2007-07-24Original language:GermanPDF # 1 8.47 x .61 x 5.53l, .65 #File Name: 155921001X240 pages | File size: 42.Mb

Margret Wittmer : Floreana: A Woman's Pilgrimage to the Galapagos before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Floreana: A Woman's Pilgrimage to the Galapagos:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Intriguing adventuresBy Green StoneI 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.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The most interesting book I have read this year.By bianchiThis 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 in the 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. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Maybe it sounds a little "dry", but this memoir is fascinating! By Cynthia R Smith Before reading Margret 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!

The remarkable first-hand account of

From Publishers Weekly Although the adventure detailed in this autobiography is extraordinary, the account itself is rendered less so by the author's emphasis on personalities over events, with a humorless determination to expose the flaws in others, and by her lack of introspection about her role as a pioneer/explorer. In 1932, when Wittmer (then pregnant), her husband, Heinz, and his son, Harry--Germans in search of an Edenesque environment--arrived on Floreana, a remote island in the Galapagos, they first dwelled in caves once inhabited by pirates, the "roads" were tracks made by wild donkeys and their only neighbors were a misanthropic back-to-nature theorist and his disciple. The Wittmers learned self-sufficiency by doing--and sometimes by doing again, as when wild bulls tore up crops or they discovered they were thatching their roof the wrong way and it was not watertight. Soon an eccentric baroness mysteriously appears, proclaims herself the island's "empress" and just as mysteriously disappears, leaving a shooting in her wake. President Roosevelt even came to visit them (although they missed him), and they entertained Thor Heyerdahl's archeological expedition. Wittmer still resides on the island she settled. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. In 1932, Margaret Wittmer leaves Germany with her husband and step-son and travels to Floreana, a small, almost unpopulated island in the Galapagos chain, where they settle, clear land, and, after five months of living in old pirates' caves, move into the house they finish just in time for Margaret to have a baby. Over time, the Wittmers acquire a number of remarkable neighbors, including convicts, military personnel and a mysterious baroness who aspires to build a hotel for millionaires. They receive visits from people as diverse as Franklin D. Roosevelt and Thor Heyerdahl, who comes to investigate a reported "head" much like the ones on Easter Island, only to find it was carved by Margaret's husband. There are wild bulls and boars, a dog named Lump that serves as a babysitter, a distant war, a daughter who would rather have a machete or a hoe than a doll, years of settled life, and finally grandchildren. At times the entire situation borders on the unbelievable, but Margaret Wittmer provides equal measures of intrigue, fantasy and common sense as she writes in her down-to-earth and often very humorous fashion about her years on Floreana. -- For great reviews of books for girls, check out Let's Hear It for the Girls: 375 Great Books for Readers 2-14. -- From 500 Great Books by Women; review by Erica Bauermeister Language Notes Text: English, German (translation)