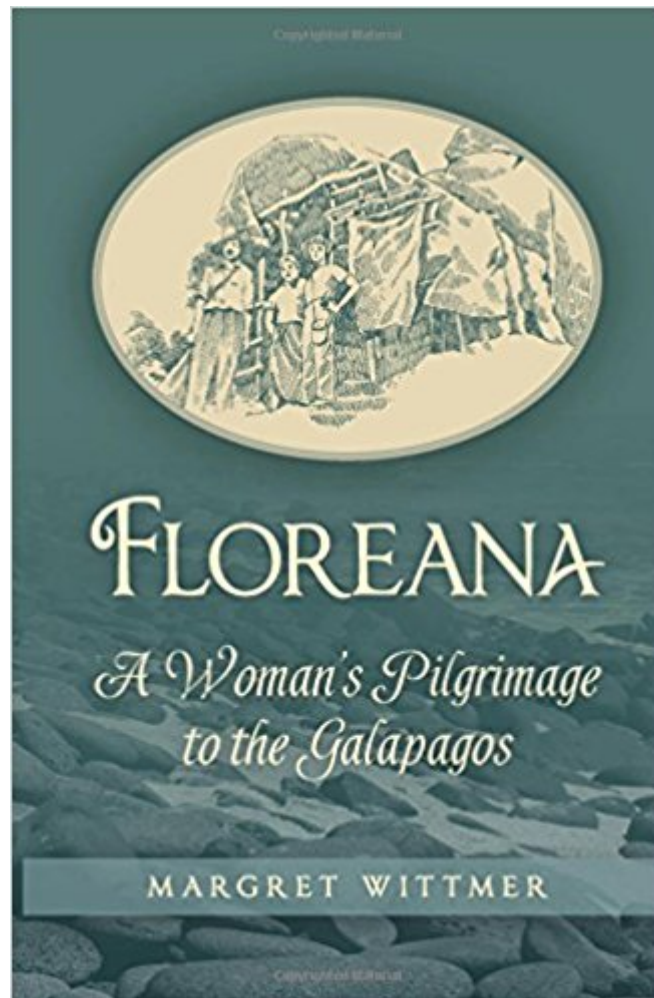




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Floreana: A Woman's Pilgrimage To The Galapagos



Synopsis

The remarkable first-hand account of

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jill and I went to the Galapagos Islands in 1996, something we had wanted to do for several years. In preparation, we collected information on the islands by previous travelers, and this is the first of many books we read about these isolated islands in the Pacific, roughly 600 miles west of Ecuador on the South American mainland. Wittmer, her husband Heinz, and her stepson Harry originally landed on Floreana in 1932. The only other people on Floreana were two fellow German nationals: Dr. Ritter, a self-avowed vegetarian and nudist who was determined to prove his theory that a human could live double their normal span if they followed his ideas on purity of mind and spirit, and his most devoted disciple, Dora. They initially lived in a natural cave previously used by pirates in the 1800s, then built a successive series of homes. Wittmer gives birth to the first human native of Floreana, they battle wild cattle for possession of their garden, encounter the "Empress of Floreana," and survive at least three different Equadorian governors, one of which tries to have them evicted. Their visitors include American millionaires on round-the-world cruises, the crew of cargo vessels that kindly stop to deliver and pick up mail in a sort of marine pony express, several scientists and naturalists including the famed explorer Thor Heyerdahl, and presidents of both Ecuador and the United States. Wittmer's account is not so much about the islands than it is about herself and her family's struggle to survive on the island. That doesn't mean you don't come away from Floreana with an understanding of the islands--you do, but the point-of-view is that of the

settler, rather than what one has come to expect of from the Galapagos (say, Darwin's scientific accounts from Voyage of the Beagle).

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