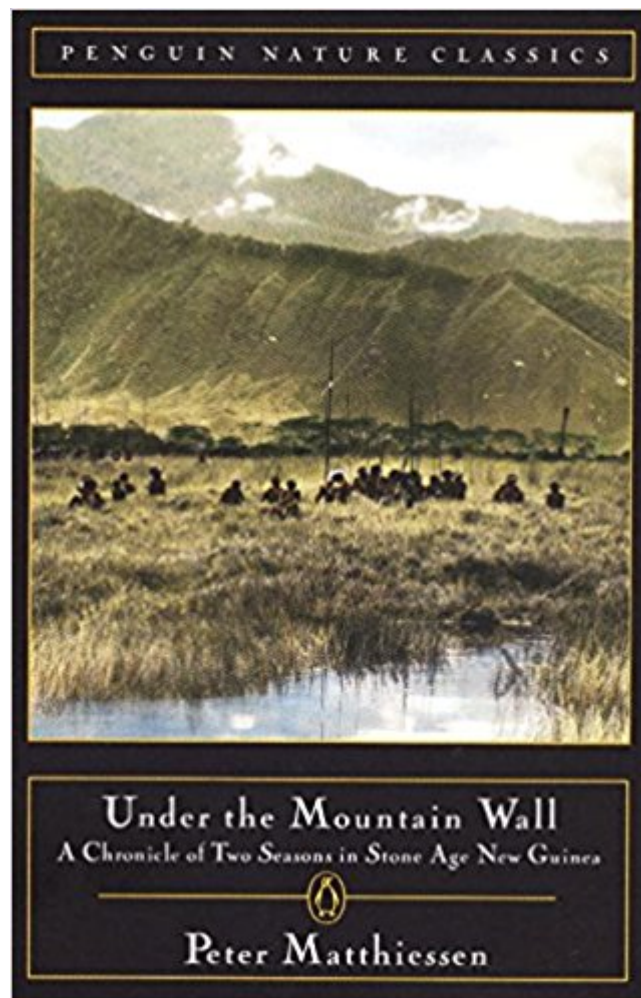




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Under The Mountain Wall: A Chronicle Of Two Seasons In Stone Age New Guinea



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Customer Reviews

This book was the 2nd Peter Mathiessen book I read (after reading his superb "Sand Rivers") and it's images have stuck with me ever since. Those first two books of his that I read made me a fan of this author's works and I still am after more than a dozen more books. What Mathiessen provides in this tome is a two year look at a vanishing society. Much to his dismay, but to Christianity's delight, the missionaries were on their way to the locale of his book at the time he was leaving New Guinea. "Under the Garden Wall" provides photographs and vivid descriptions of this so-called "Stone Age" society. The author has saved this society in perpetuity by this book. The descriptions were honest, not lurid or sensational. He described the way the people lived without embellishment. It is a good read because Mathiessen was and is a superb wordsmith, the author cared about these people and their ways were foreign but their motivations familiar. Any student of sociology, anthropology and/or history is aware of the driving force of sex, and the tendencies toward violence, in all societies. To the extent these were present among the subjects of his study, he reported on them. Ritual mutilation is one of the most offensive subjects covered, but, again, any student of the aforementioned three disciplines is aware of various and sundry forms of ritual mutilation practiced by many peoples presently, historically and pre-historically. On this offensive custom Mathiessen reports objectively. One of the beauties of this particular book is that Mathiessen, who has a tendency to push his personal beliefs, strays from the objective only in his handling of the coming of the Christian missionaries.

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