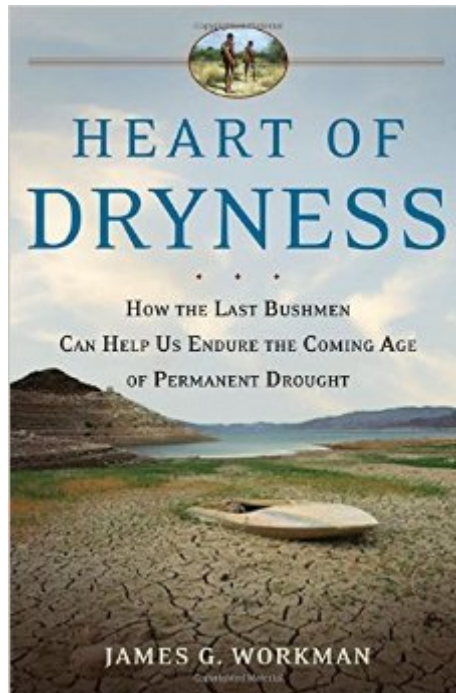


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Heart Of Dryness: How The Last Bushmen Can Help Us Endure The Coming Age Of Permanent Drought



Synopsis

The dramatic story of the Bushmen of the Kalahari is a cautionary tale about water in the twenty-first century—and offers unexpected solutions for our time. "We don't govern water. Water governs us," writes James G. Workman. In *Heart of Dryness*, he chronicles the memorable saga of the famed Bushmen of the Kalahari—remnants of one of the world's most successful civilizations, today at the exact epicenter of Africa's drought—in their widely publicized recent battle with the government of Botswana, in the process of exploring the larger story of what many feel has become the primary resource battleground of the twenty-first century: the supply of water. The Bushmen's story could well prefigure our own. In the United States, even the most upbeat optimists concede we now face an unprecedented water crisis. Reservoirs behind large dams on the Colorado River, which serve thirty million in many states, will be dry in thirteen years. Southeastern drought recently cut Tennessee Valley Authority hydropower in half, exposed Lake Okeechobee's floor, dried up thousands of acres of Georgia's crops, and left Atlanta with sixty days of water. Cities east and west are drying up. As reservoirs and aquifers fail, officials ration water, neighbors snitch on one another, corporations move in, and states fight states to control shared rivers. Each year, around the world, inadequate water kills more humans than AIDS, malaria, and all wars combined. Global leaders pray for rain. Bushmen tap more pragmatic solutions. James G. Workman illuminates the present and coming tensions we will all face over water and shows how, from the remoteness of the Kalahari, an ancient and resilient people is showing the world a viable path through the encroaching Dry Age.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a good book, worth reading if you have any interest in Africa, anthropology, or the "bushmen" (a.k.a. San). What I found interesting about this book is different from what everyone else thinks this book is about. The blurb, and every review posted here so far, will tell you that this book is about how the Bushmen of the Kalahari desert in Botswana have learned to cope with extreme water shortage, and what we need to learn from them to cope with the upcoming global water shortage that will be caused by overpopulation and climate change. While this is indeed a theme of the book, it is not what I found to be the most interesting part. The Bushmen of the Kalahari are one of the few remaining examples on the planet of people living a pre-civilized (i.e. hunter-gatherer) way of life. Sleeping under the stars, living in the desert, owning only what they can carry with them, and obtaining their food and water by hunting and gathering. For millions of years, that was how all humans lived. Then this thing called "civilization" came along about 6000 years ago. Civilization basically took over the planet, not because everyone suddenly realized "hey this is better, let's adopt it", but instead because (for reasons brilliantly explained by Jared Diamond in "Guns, Germs, and Steel"), every time civilization came into contact with pre-civilized people, civilization won. Simply put, "civilized" people killed most of the hunter-gatherers, and the few that remain are banished to the most forbidding corners of the planet, like the Kalahari desert. So, what I find most interesting about this book is the glimpse it offers into what life was like for humans during those millions of years they lived as hunter-gatherers.

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