



The Man Who Killed the Deer

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The story of Martiniano, the man who killed the deer, is a timeless story of Pueblo Indian sin and redemption, and of the conflict between Indian and white laws; written with a poetically charged beauty of style, a purity of conception, and a thorough understanding of Indian values.

The Man Who Killed the Deer Details

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Author : Frank Waters

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From Reader Review The Man Who Killed the Deer for online ebook

Jenny says

I'm a little biased. This book is about my grandfather's tribe, Taos Pueblo, so I have a special fondness for this story. It's about a young Pueblo man who goes away to school and has conflicts returning to his people years later. As many young Indian people experience (past and present), this young man faces internal struggle between returning to his old ways while living in a modern world. I recommend reading this if you're especially interested in the history of forced assimilation (e.g. Boarding School Era).

Kristi says

It gets off to a very slow start and you have to get used to the rhythm and pacing but it's a great book full of symbolism.

Leigh Verrill-Rhys says

Brilliant in every way. Thoughtful. My copy of this book is over 40 years old. So, definitely a book to keep and re-read.

Compelling, enlightening. I read this years ago so this is a re-read with a wiser head. Beautifully crafted.

Since I have now finished re-reading, I can recommend this book to anyone interested in the creative mind, the individual in society, native culture and the nature of the artist – these are Frank Waters's principal themes.

Greg says

I first read The Man Who Killed the Deer in college, and it has always stuck with me as a book to read again. Now that I have read it a second time, I'm not sure why it moved me so much before. The story is difficult to follow. There are portions which are quite lucid, then all of a sudden, something else is happening. I am glad I re-read this book, if only to satisfy that part of me that needed to. But I really couldn't say I would recommend it.

Dale says

11.18.2016: recommendation of my bro. (who lives in Taos, believed to be the basis of this novel); only at

Berea College Library locally...01.05.2017: first written in 1942 this is a finely written complex story of sin and redemption in the Indian (Amer.) Nation as well as the conflict between Indians and whites. Believed to be based in Taos (though in this fiction book it is called Pueblo). I would be interested in this author's life story because his writing of Indian culture was so in-depth. 1942 paperback from a friend (CG) who had it in her library; 311 pgs.; 4 out of 5 stars; finished 04 Jan., 2017/#2

Sally says

Excellent book about the Taos Pueblo at the time when my grandfather knew the pueblo and some of the people who lived there. Frank Waters illustrated the cultural disruption the native americans lived through. There is much respect and understanding about the spiritual life of the tribe. I loved reading this because my grandfather knew an Indian who had cut his hair, and the elders kept him in the kiva until his hair grew out long. Just a great book.

Tom says

A terrific story, can I call it timeless! I had some reservations to start with due to the almost endless detail the author laid down in The Book of Hopi. This book, as I said, is a story not a description of a culture and it pulled me in from the beginning. It has tension and great characters. I gained an understanding about native American pueblo traditions, the why in addition to the what and how. The writing is simple and clear and natural. It was written almost 80 years ago but, as noted in the first sentence, it really is timeless. Five stars, no problem.

Frank says

A classic of the Southwest, but it gets off to a false start with a caricature of a thug forest ranger who practically lynches the Puebloan protagonist for poaching a deer in the 1930's. It's an implausible shortcut that exaggerates the real life arrest of Frank Samora that inspired Waters to write what is otherwise a deeply sophisticated novel rich in poetry, philosophy, and ethnography.

Waters ruminations on the power of silence - as practiced by the Puebloans - are especially enriching. Waters fills some periods of silence with italics that convey the characters' thoughts, suspicions, and analysis. The pace of the story, like the seasons it spans, is slow and rhythmic. Drums beat throughout and ceremonies are described in detail. When Waters breaks from the story to wax philosophical, it can get a little tedious, but rewards lurk therein and the beautifully developed story is never compromised for the sake of Waters' poetic ponderings.

This book is essential New Mexico reading for many reasons, not the least of which is the influence it had on policy to return Blue Lake to Taos Pueblo from the U. S. Forest Service.

Literature and anthropology both owe gratitude to Waters for writing this when he did (it was published in 1942). Like the old men in this timeless novel, Waters and Samora both became sages, with Waters living until age ninety-two and Samora surpassing one-hundred.

Giuliano Iori says

Powerful.

Charles says

Stick with this one...the pace is not unlike the pace out on the Pueblo where the story unfolds. It kinda has its own rhythm. Not a book to read on a Kindle while hurrying off to work or whatever. More of a long night on the couch when a storm has knocked out the power and you're reading by candlelight sort of book. A classic Taos tale but broad enough in theme to offer something for anyone able to slip into its gentle current and float quietly down its river.

Mush says

This book is what it says on the cover, "...a beautiful book." I am sure it will speak to many people in different ways. My favorite part was the long descriptive paragraphs, crystallizing Martiniano's thought processes into recognizable and new insights, some describing nature and cycles with perfection. It is not a pat ending, so if you don't like that you might not enjoy the ending of this book. What I took from it was the writing about relationships, marriage, children, and family. The character of the trader was very interesting as he is developed. Though mostly told from a male point of view, any woman could relate to the experiences of the women in this story.

Ann says

Martiniano kills a deer which has a ripple effect on him and his community. Taken away to Indian school as a child he is struggling to find his place in the world. Slow-paced, beautifully written, with profound insights into the Navajo culture. Highly recommended.

Georganna says

Hard to say what I thought of this book; it was a monthly choice for one of my book groups. A fascinating trip through life in a New Mexico pueblo and the spirit of a people in a rapidly changing world. It is considered a bit of a classic in the Southwest and certainly keeps you thinking as you read. I'm left with the realization of how difficult it is to understand a culture when you are looking from the outside in.

Jeff says

This is a serious look at the Native American culture as it tries to survive surrounded by ours. Martiniano is a Puebloan Indian who as a child was sent off to school as part of a government program to help the Indians better integrate. It has the effect of dislocation: he finds himself a stranger in both worlds, persecuted for his nonconformity.

The book is beautifully written, both story and symbolism. There are life lessons imparted as we follow the proud Martiniano. With time, he finds peace and location. It occurs to me that in an effort to preserve their culture, like Martiniano, the Indians are dislocated, trying to live in a past that can never return.

My favorite quotes:

p153 ...*like all men he could endure the blows of adversity but not the arrows which pricked his pride and vanity. And like most men he blamed the invisible marksman rather than his own vulnerability.*

p160 *It is a deep truth and difficult to learn that the greatest deeds must be done by him who is content to remain unknown...*

Jean says

I really enjoyed the pacing and feel of this book. It swept me up and set me down in the southwest. For me, one of the most striking elements of the book were the council meetings held by the Pueblo elders. The balance between silence and talk during the deliberations, and the authors descriptions of the importance of the silence made me wonder if there was a way to re-incorporate this process into modern meetings. Just imagine what a meeting where there was equal periods of silence after each person spoke. I think there would be an increased level of understanding between parties.
