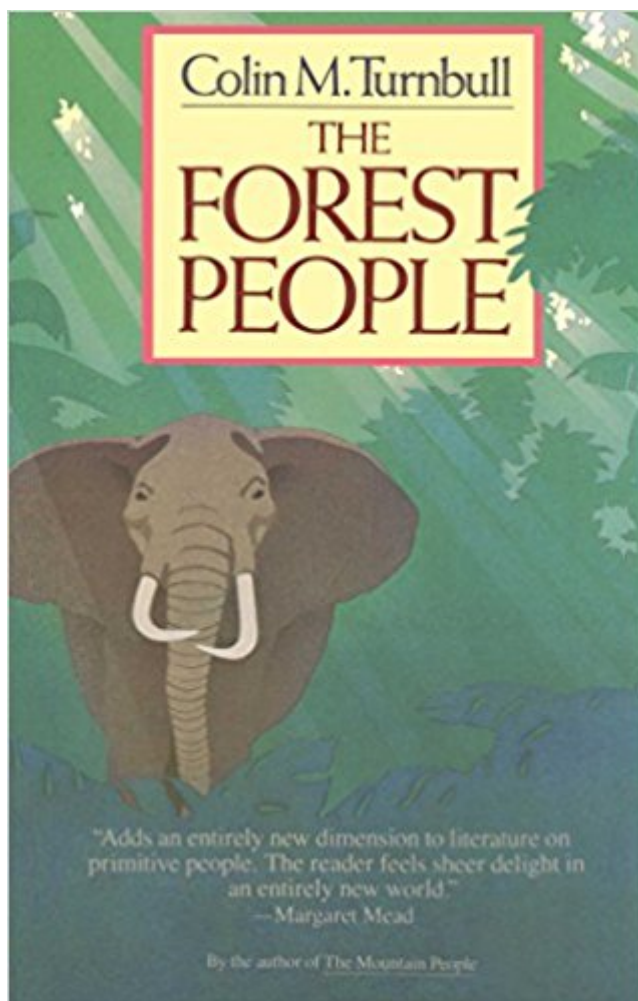


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# The Forest People



## Synopsis

The bestselling, classic text on one anthropologist's incredible experience living among the African Mbuti Pygmies, and what he learned from their culture, customs, and love of life. In this bestselling book, Colin Turnbull, a British cultural anthropologist, details the incredible Mbuti pygmy people and their love of the forest, and each other. Turnbull lived among the Mbuti people for three years as an observer, not a researcher, so he offers a charming and intimate firsthand account of the people and their culture, and especially the individuals and their personalities. *The Forest People* is a timeless work of academic and humanitarian significance, sure to delight readers as they take a trip into a foreign culture and learn to appreciate the joys of life through the eyes of the Mbuti people.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Margaret Mead Adds an entirely new dimension to literature on primitive people. The book is constructed with great dexterity, so that the reader is carried along by the charm and movement of the narrative, almost unaware of the underpinning of arduous scientific field work that lies like bedrock below....The reader feels sheer delight in an entirely new world. From the Foreword by Harry L. Shapiro Department of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History The book is exceptional....The reader can enter into...the exhilaration of participating in a culture other than his own....Reading *The Forest People* is an unusual and satisfying experience.

Colin M. Turnbull was born in London, and now lives in Connecticut. He was educated at Westminster School and Magdalen College, Oxford, where he studied philosophy and politics. After serving in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve during World War II, he held a research grant for two years in the Department of Indian Religion and Philosophy at Banaras Hindu University, in India, and then returned to Oxford, where he studied anthropology, specializing in the African field. He has made five extended field trips to Africa, the last of which was spent mainly in the Republic of Zaïre. From these trips he drew the material for his first book, *The Forest People*, an account of the three years he spent with the Pygmies of Zaïre. Mr. Turnbull was a Professor of Anthropology at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He is a Research Associate at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and a Corresponding Member of the Musée Royal d'Afrique Centrale.

I bought this book for an Intro to Anthropology class, and was skeptical. How interesting could a medium-length book about indigenous people of the forest be? Well, as it turns out, it can be pretty interesting. The first 1/3 of the book is almost painful to get through. You learn names and try to get a grasp of the culture. Once you get to a point where you can remember who is who and what their part in the story is, you'll find the book start to really open up. The characters start to develop personalities and you really get a good feel for what it would be like living as one with the mbuti tribe! This is really a true classic in the Anthropology / case study genre and one that I would recommend to anyone even remotely interested in Anthropology or worldly cultures. Also, as the Mbuti culture itself is close to "extinct" in a sense (read the book and you'll understand what I mean), this book gives a critical insight that we just couldn't get today! This book is a real "must read"!

This is a fantastic book, even if you aren't into anthropology. It is a mesmerizing story of one man's experience living among a very isolated, non-modernized tribe of Pygmies. Gives you an interesting perspective on more "naturally living" humans as well as our own culture/modern life at the same time. I read this many years ago, but it is one of the few books I remember clearly and which I refer to often in more existential type conversations. I recently purchased it for my 15 year old daughter to read for a school project and she loves it.

Good book - purchased it for a gift, as I had read this book before. This book is an intimate look into the lives of the pygmies of the Belgian Congo - now a republic in Africa. One cannot read this book

without living in the book with the pygmy people himself or herself. Their way of life was different from our American, modern lives, but it had its own beauty and lively personalities. I read this with an open mind and respect for the societies and life ways that differ from mine. These people generally "talked their differences to death," rather than fight with each other, although occasional fights did occur. Basically, their society was simple but not lacking of sensitivity and rules. The forest was actually their religion. They had great respect for the flora and fauna and never mistreated the environment as our society does today. As I became acquainted with the characters and their families and marriages, I came to love this book and its way of life. A way of life no longer the same in that area of Africa.

The Forest People (Touchstone Book) The Forest People by Colin M. Turnbull My rating: 5 of 5 stars I just finished a wonderful book, Colin Turnbull's The Forest People. Turnbull lived 'a while' (pygmies don't measure time with a watch or a calendar) with African pygmies to understand their life, culture, and beliefs. As he relays events of his visit, he doesn't lecture, or present the material as an ethnography. It's more like a biography of a tribe. As such, I get to wander through their lives, see what they do, how they do it, what's important to them, without any judgment or conclusions other than my own. One point that became clear early on is that pygmies have no leaders. How can that be, you might ask? Doesn't somehow just assume that mantle? Well, until I read this book, I would have agreed whole-heartedly, but that doesn't seem to happen. A tribe member might demand everyone go hunting with him (it takes a large group to capture/kill the forest animals) and people may go, or they may not. Whatever they feel like. When they move to a new camp, houses and furniture must be built. People may start full of energy and ambition, promising to help neighbors and build big houses with multiple rooms. And then the builders dwindle away as some other adventure grabs their attention. They might finish, maybe not. Often, they'll use some of their neighbor's roof leaves, or even his house until their own house is built. Most surprisingly, I have yet to discover if they have a belief in a god. They don't pray for help, for food or safety, for anything. If life doesn't seem quite right, the closest they get to wishing it was better is to return to the forest where life is always good, to a camp surrounded by the depths of the jungle, where outsiders are afraid to go. But the forest isn't their god, it's merely where life is always good. Hmmm. I have to ponder this...

A unique book. I got it because the book group at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center read it and they loved it!

Book delivered on time. I read this book on a trip and really enjoyed it, then shared with someone else!

Very informative; well written. I liked it.

A classic in anthropology, and a well-written, admiring glimpse into the innocence we could take back when we're ready for Gaia.

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