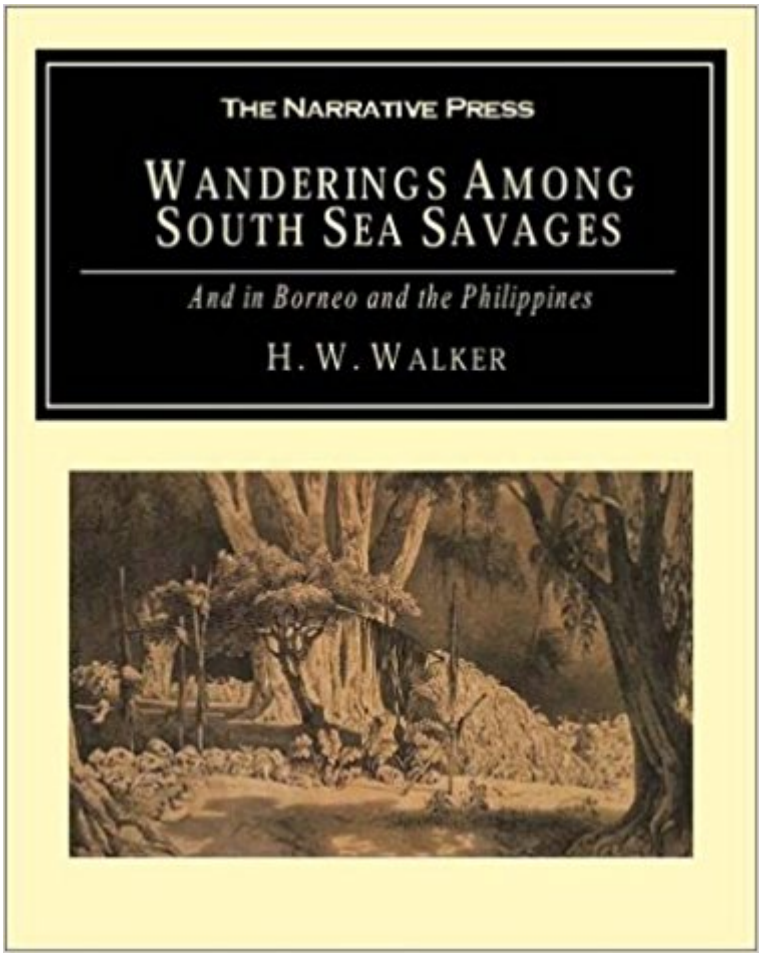
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Wanderings Among South Sea Savages: And In Borneo & The Phillippines



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Synopsis

Two decades wandering around the South Seas, island hopping, and exploring.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is high adventure at its best! Walker spent almost 20 years wandering around the South Sea islands, New Guinea, and the Philippines, and he created this book of his exploits "among the savages" from letters he had written to friends and family. His particular interests were ornithology and entomology, but he was fascinated by all that he saw, and made friends with many people. One of the most unusual characters in the narrative is the despotic Fijian prince Ratu Lala. Walker tells us how once, for a lark, Ratu Lala attached a fishhook to his court jester’s lip and made the poor man swim around at the end of his line till he was nearly dead. He describes the experience of sharing a meal with the illustrious prince, where dozens of damsels, glistening with coconut oil, waited on them hand and foot. Walker had some great times with Ratu Lala, who was eager to show off his island for the visitor: "Ratu Lala told the women here to give an exhibition of surf-board swimming for my benefit. As they rode into shore on the crest of a wave I many times expected to see them dashed against the rocks which fringed the coast. I had seen the natives in Hawaii perform seventeen years before, but it was tame in comparison to the wonderful performances of these Fijian women on this dangerous rock-girt coast." Walker spent a lot of time trekking to remote areas, trying to find hidden spots and legendary tribes (like the tribe of bearded women, or the web-footed people), and he often came into contact with groups of people who had seldom, if ever, seen a white man. This sometimes had frightening implications for Walker, as cannibalism was not

quite a thing of the past: "On my return to the village I had a most interesting interview with these ex-cannibals, one old and two middle-aged men, thanks to Masirewa, my interpreter. He first asked them how they liked human flesh, and they all shouted 'Venaka, venaka!' (good). Like the natives of New Guinea, they said it was far better than pig; they also declared that the legs, arms and palms of the hands were the greatest delicacies, and that women and children tasted best. The brains and eyes were especially good. They would never eat a man who had died a natural death. They had eaten white man; he was salty and fat, but he was good, though not so good as 'Fiji man.' One of them had tasted a certain Mr. - - , and the meat on his legs was very fat. They chopped his feet off above the boots, which they thought were part of him, and they boiled his feet and boots for days, but they did not like the taste of the boots...Lastly, I asked if they would still like to eat man if they got the chance, and they were not afraid of being punished, and there was no hesitation in their reply of 'Io' (yes), uttered with one voice like the yelp of a hungry wolf, and it seemed to me that their eyes sparkled. They were certainly a very obliging lot of cannibals." This book has everything you could ask for: the thrilling, the hilarious, the bizarre and the beautiful. Walker's appreciation for nature is vast, and the scenery he describes is stunning: forest floors carpeted with orchids, waterfalls cascading into vast fern-studded chasms, rainbow-colored doves wheeling over sparkling seas. His sense of humor is equally great, and he relishes the odd characters and strange situations encountered daily in his travels. This is some really fine reading.

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