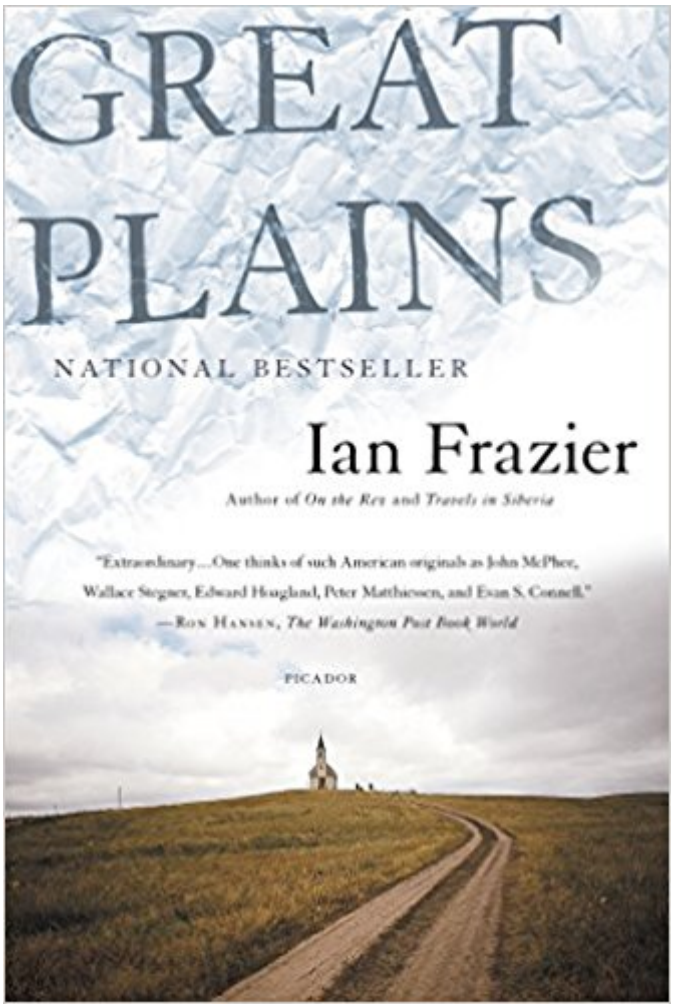
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Great Plains



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Synopsis

National BestsellerWith his unique blend of intrepidity, tongue-in-cheek humor, and wide-eyed wonder, Ian Frazier takes us on a journey of more than 25,000 miles up and down and across the vast and myth-inspiring Great Plains. A travelogue, a work of scholarship, and a western adventure, Great Plains takes us from the site of Sitting Bull's cabin, to an abandoned house once terrorized by Bonnie and Clyde, to the scene of the murders chronicled in Truman Capote's In Cold Blood. It is an expedition that reveals the heart of the American West.

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Customer Reviews

Frazier, staff writer for the New Yorker and author of Dating Your Mom , here explores the Great Plains at random, seeking the past and embracing the present. According to PW , "This is an engaging blend of travelogue, local color, geography and folklore." Photos. 100,000 first printing; author tour. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ã¢â ¬Å“Extraordinary...One thinks of such American originals as John McPhee, Wallace Stegner, Edward Hoagland, Peter Matthiessen, and Evan S. Connell.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢The Washington Post BookÃ¢â ¬Å“This is a brillant, funny, and altogether perfect book, soaked in research and then aired out on the open plains to evaporate the excess, leaving this modern masterpiece. It makes me want to get in a truck and drive straight out to North Dakota and look at the prairie.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Garrison KeillorÃ¢â ¬Å“History written with passion and delight... Frazier is a great

storyteller.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Newsweek

The Great Plains, by Ian Frazier is a top notch, travelogue and cultural study. Why exactly should a discriminating reader buy or read a book which describes a part of the country that so many Americans either fly over, or try and get through as fast as possible? In short, Frazier's description of this region of America is worth reading if only for his outstanding use of the English Language. Additionally, the Great Plains is as storied and as colorful a region of the United States as any other.The book was written in the late 1980s, when President Reagan was busy building up the military and aggressively confronting the Soviet Union. In that conflict, the Great Plains played a central part-namely it was, and remains, the area which the United States Air Force stores its Nuclear Missiles, and houses its fleets of bombers. It was the home turf of Strategic Air Command. Frazier looks at the situation full in the face, he genuinely is concerned about the fate of the world with so many warheads hidden under the sea of grass. Remarking on events current to the books publishing adds to the work, it gives an all important layer of time to the place described.This book is a delight to read, for those whose roots sink into the region as well as people on the coasts who become curious about what they are flying over. A vast, rich, and fertile story.

This is a marvelous book, one of my favorites. If it has special meaning for me, it is because I grew up on those plains, where a man on a horse could ride through grasses so tall he could pass unseen. Some 50 years ago when I was a child, those prairies were neat lawns, shaven down to emerald squares topped by demure ranch houses on streets with names like Olathe Drive or Sioux Circle. Ian Frazier, in his epic work, "Great Plains," looks back to America's heart's past and sees again the vast herds of bison, the rutted trails West, the harsh light and harsher weather. His prose sings and dances with stories of people, red, white, black and yellow, who lived and bled on those plains under an endless blue sky, across an enormous landscape of golden plant life teeming with animals. That horizon ended only with the faintest smudge of gray, where the Rocky Mountains began. I knew only glimpses of my home place, living in Manhattan, where the flat, featureless streets bear no resemblance to the supposedly flat, featureless prairies. Then I read, for the first of many times, Frazier's paean to the Great Plains, and I knew I had found my way home.

I bought GREAT PLAINS by Ian Frazier after reading another of his books. My immediate comparison was CENTENNIAL by James Michener who covers much of the same territory but in the 18th and 19th centuries. Each book has its strengths and I suppose weaknesses, but together

they make a great portrait of a part of the country quite alien to most people on the east and west coast urban areas. Another book relevant to GREAT PLAINS is LONESOME DOVE by Larry McMurtry and I would say the three books go well together.I discovered Ian Frazier in the NEW YORKER which carried two articles called TRAVELS IN SIBERIA. I was impressed and bought the book of the same name. The book contains maybe three or four times the material in the two articles and I think goes far toward explaining Russia to Americans. It dispels some myths we have about Russians while seeming to verify others. I think at this time in history it would be good for Americans to know more truth instead of myth about Russia.

This book started well, and set out a fair amount of Native American history. In Great Plains, Ian Frazier talks in great detail about the Agency system and Crazy Horse. It awoke in me a curiosity about the battles fought between the U.S. Army and the many bands of Indians populating the West in the 19th century. I would have preferred more content on the current residents of the 'fly-over' land that Great Plains encapsulates. Set next to Larry McMurtry's Roads, I think I prefer the McMurtry pace and the lessons McMurtry learns not just about the places he visits, but the changes in himself.

Mr. Frazier retells the amazing story of the western plains. He brings the history alive by sharing lesser known facts and anecdotes of well known figures and great events. He brings us into the lives of modern people of the Plains by sharing what he learned meeting them, talking with them, and walking with them in their world. It is not always a pretty story, a sequence of happy endings. It is real, because the humans who lived it were real and we see them in action against a never to be repeated landscape of the opening of the west. It remains a magnificent story, and Ian Frazier tells it brilliantly.

This book was written in the midst of the Reagan administration, and in the waning years of the oil boom that brought my family to North Dakota around the same time. In some way, it is the story of the Plains from a distant time, in the waning of the early twentieth century and the memories of the nineteenth; in the shadow of nuclear war; at the end of the last big boom of the twentieth century. And yet, the writing remains as crisp as ever, and his vision of the great drying of the west, of feedlots, of abandonment and boom and bust, remains as relevant as ever.

Ian Frazier, a frequent contributor to the New Yorker magazine, is a lyrical writer who spent years

visiting the Plains and knows well whereof he speaks. I used this book as text fora class on the American Plains. After completing the class, I reread the book since it was such a delight to read. Frazier has a way of describing the most mundane as well as the most majestic aspects of this vast area. Using similes and metaphors and great humor he demonstrates his connections and love with both the land and the people who inhabit this vast area.Though I first bought this book for Kindle, I found the chapter notes at the end of the book added greatly to the story being told; I therefore purchased the paperback edition and used that.

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