



A Thousand Sighs, A Thousand Revolts: Journeys in Kurdistan

Christiane Bird

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Inhabiting a mountainous area that stretches through Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and the former USSR, the Kurds, with a population numbering 25-30 million, are the largest ethnic group in the world without a state of their own. Though the term "Kurdistan" has been used as a geographical expression since the 13th century, the breakup of the Ottoman Empire resulted in the division of the land of the Kurds among surrounding nation-states. Having retained a separate cultural identity for over 3,000 years, most Kurds have never really accepted the borders imposed on them. They remain insolent, much-persecuted outsiders to the countries in which they live. Though the Kurds played a major military and tactical role in our recent war with Iraq, most of us know very little about this fiercely independent, long-marginalized people.

In *A Thousand Sighs, A Thousand Revolts*, intrepid journalist Christiane Bird travels through this volatile part of the world to tell the story of the Kurds, using moving first-hand observations and in-depth research to illuminate their little-known history and culture. What gives the Kurds such a strong sense of national identity, despite their many differences? Living in a world where war is more normal than peace, how do they rebuild time and again after suffering cultural and physical genocide? Why is their future so crucial to the interests of the US and the political stability of the entire region? In a colorful, fast-moving narrative, Bird explores these questions as she portrays a highly romantic people, once famed for their horsemanship and nomadic lifestyle and now known for their irrepressible spirit, humor, generosity, clannishness, and violence.

Eternal outsiders, constantly rebelling against authority, the Kurds fascinate with their capacity for great courage and great betrayal. Including up-to-the minute, first-hand pre- and post-war reportage, this important book offers timely insight into an unknown but increasingly influential part of the world.

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