



Dersu the Trapper (Recovered Classics)

V. K. Arsen'ev, V. K. Arseniev

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Vladimir Klavdievich Arseniev (1872-1930) undertook twelve major scientific expeditions between 1902 and 1930 in the Siberian Far East, and authored some sixty works from the geographical, geological, botanical, and ethnographic data he amassed. Among these, Dersu the Trapper has earned a privileged place in Russian literature. In this Russian counterpart to The Journals of Lewis and Clark and the novels of James Fenimore Cooper, Arseniev combines the precise observations of a naturalist with an exciting narrative of real-life adventure.

Arseniev describes three explorations in the Ussurian taiga along the Sea of Japan above Vladivostok, beginning with his first encounter of the solitary aboriginal hunter named Dersu, a member of the Gold tribe, who thereafter becomes his guide. Each expedition is beset with hardship and danger: through blizzard and flood and assorted deprivations, these two men forge an exceptional friendship in their mutual respect for the immense grandeur of the wilderness. But the bridges across language, race and culture also have limitations, and the incursion of civilization exacts its toll. Dersu the Trapper is at once a witnessing of Russia's last frontier and a poignant memoir of rare cross-cultural understanding. Originally published in 1941, this English translation is reprinted in its entirety now for the first time.



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