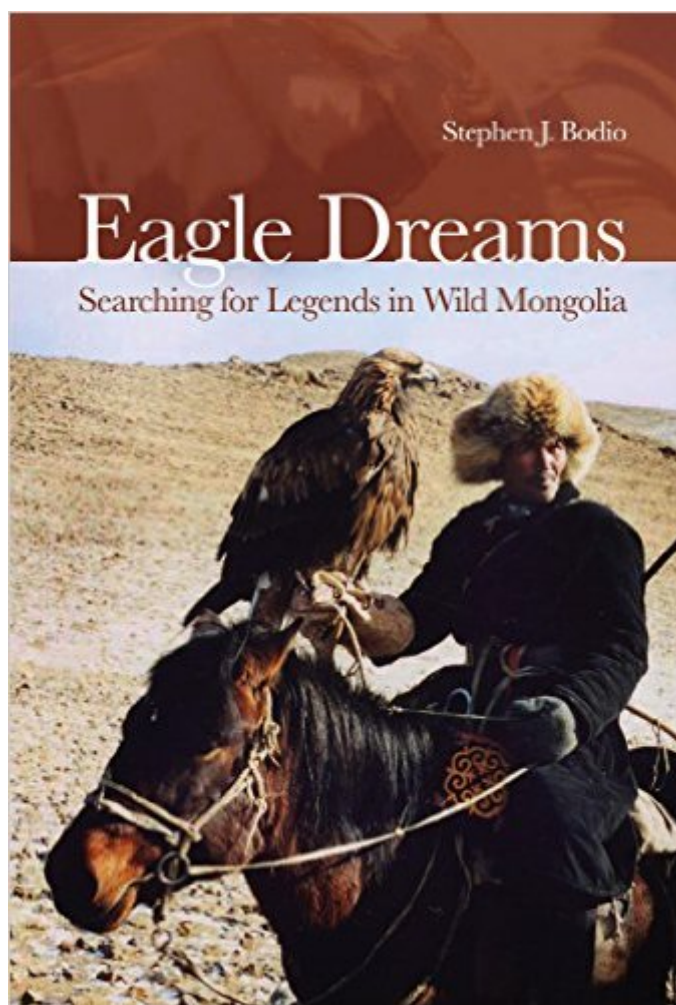


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Eagle Dreams: Searching For Legends In Wild Mongolia



Synopsis

In praise of books by the author: "Bodio writes like Pavarotti sings. He is a master." --Tony Hillerman (for Querencia)"Stephen Bodio has written an unpretentious yet thrilling book about falconry, one of man's oldest and most mysterious alliances in the natural world; and he takes us afield under the wild skies of birds of prey." --Thomas McGuane (for A Rage for Falcons)"Fascinating, funny, sad, beautiful . . . Aloft is full of wonderful images and energy." --Annie Proulx

When Stephen Bodio was a young boy in the early 50's he saw an image in National Geographic which became forever etched in his mind: it was a photograph of a Kazakh nomad, dressed in a long coat and wearing a fur hat, holding a huge tame eagle on his fist. And a life-long fascination with Central Asia was born. Mongolia, a vast country located between Siberia and China and little known to outsiders, was long under Soviet domination and inaccessible to westerners. When it became independent in 1990 Bodio began planning a pilgrimage to see if the eagle hunters of "The Picture" had survived. A life-long falconer himself, he longed to visit the birth place of falconry and observe the traditions that had survived intact through the ages. His fantasy was realized when he traveled independently twice to the westernmost region of Mongolia and spent months with the people and birds of his dreams. The ancient rituals of hunting with eagles are fascinating and the remarkable relationship these nomadic people have with their birds of prey is thrilling. With vivid prose and humor, Bodio gives life to his dreams and the people, landscapes, and animals of Mongolia that have become part of his soul.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was a junior in college when my dad sent me a copy of a new magazine he had started receiving at home called Gray's Sporting Journal. An English student and avid sportsman, I turned immediately to the book review section. Typically, I did not expect much from a sporting magazine's book review; seldom did these reviews actually convey much critical information. This was the first time I read Steve Bodio's by-line. I read his review column, then went back and read it again, and again. In three pages, I knew this was a writer that deserved my attention. In fact, I had never read anyone who so passionately loved books and the sporting life, and who also wrote about those passions so beautifully. As Bodio himself once wrote about another writer: "He's THAT good." Steve Bodio is a cult writer, a characterization I once heard Bodio himself acknowledge. Those of us who make up this cult cannot figure out why he isn't better known. Quite possibly it is because he is a naturalist who remains an unapologetic hunter, a hunter who would rather discuss natural history than the latest camouflage pattern, and a writer who ignores current fashions and writes about subjects like falconry, pigeons, catfish and wild freedom. This latest book, on Mongolia, is a wonderful travel book that one hopes will introduce Bodio to a new and expanded readership. "Eagle Dreams" traces Bodio's fascination with the eagle hunters of Mongolia to the realization of the dream during the course of two trips. Calling "Eagle Dreams" a travel book is perhaps unfair; it is not easily placed into a neat category. It is a travel book, a sporting book, a nature book, a "sense of place" book-but none of those categories convey its real spirit.

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