



The Indians' Book: Songs and Legends of the American Indians

Natalie Curtis

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A book created wholly by the American Indian - songs, myths, drawings and decorations based on traditional designs - The Indians' Book is a treasury of lore for general readers, for teachers, for folk singers. Its musical and folk material derives directly from the Indian oral tradition and is presented exactly as Miss Curtis recorded it. The 149 songs - the traditional music of 18 tribes - are today irreplaceable; so much of this material has disappeared since Miss Curtis collected it. Songs of war and love, hunting songs, barter songs, songs to cure the sick, corn-grinding songs, "hand game" songs, cradle songs, holy or "medicine" songs and ceremonial songs were collected by Miss Curtis from Plains, Lake, Northwestern, Southwestern, and Pueblo Indians: Wabanaki, Dakota, Winnebago, Pawnee, Kwakiutl, Acoma, Navajo, Apache, Pima, Hopi, Yuma, Arapaho, Kiowa, Mojave-Apache, Zuñi, San Juan, Laguna, Cheyenne. The texts are written out in both the native language and English, and the melody for each song is provided. Indian myths have been faithfully taken down directly from Indian story tellers. There are creation myths; myths explaining the origin of corn, the sun and moon, the four winds, and other natural phenomena; folktales and animal stories of unusual charm. Full-age drawings, designs for title pages, and decorations all created by the Indians themselves, and 23 photographs (rituals in progress, families, individuals) taken by the editor illustrate the book.

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