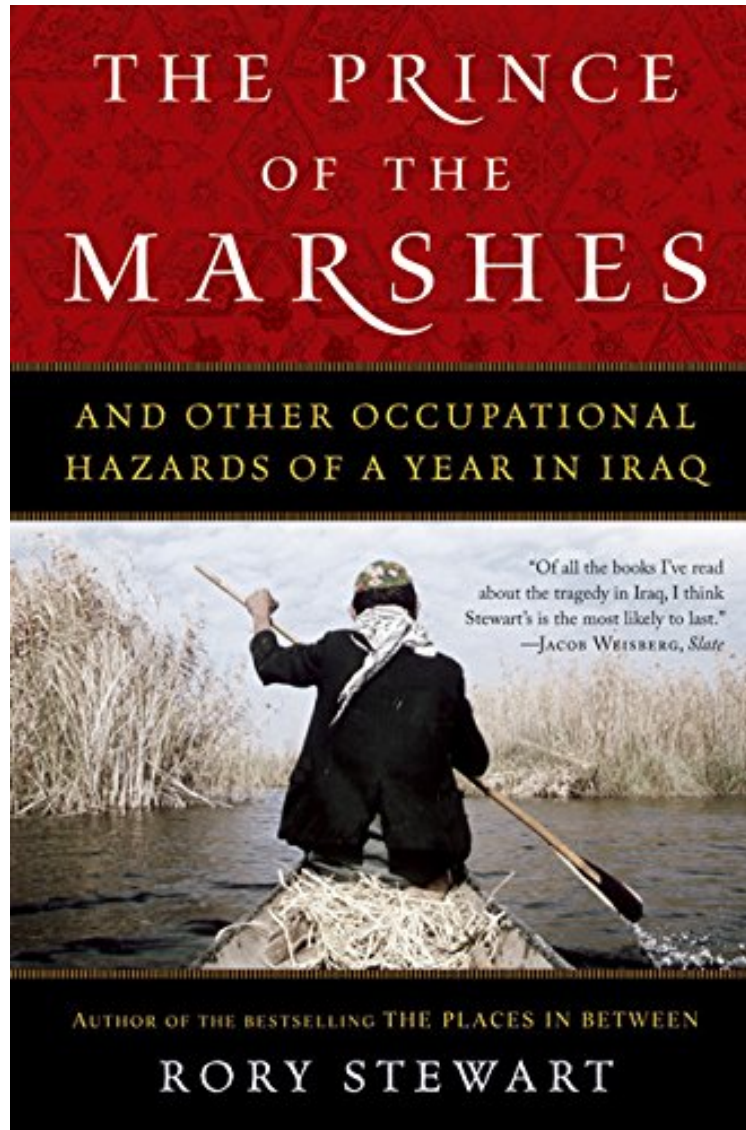


(Download pdf) The Prince of the Marshes: And Other Occupational Hazards of a Year in Iraq

The Prince of the Marshes: And Other Occupational Hazards of a Year in Iraq

Rory Stewart

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Rory Stewart : The Prince of the Marshes: And Other Occupational Hazards of a Year in Iraq before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Prince of the Marshes: And Other Occupational Hazards of a Year in Iraq:

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with a variable culture(s), more closely structured political (almost familial) loyalties. No knowledge of "democratic procedures" and no desire for same exist. The book is well-written, honest and makes one aware that no Anglo-American political system can be grafted on a functioning "clannish" culture. The story should be widely read. I concur with Kissinger's comment that: "Yes, that dictator is an s.o.b., but he is our s.o.b." 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. insightful, insider's account of the Iraq Reconstruction effort By West Coast reviewer The author has experience both in the CPA and in Afghanistan, previously. He first hand saw our well intentioned efforts at producing a stable, liberal Iraq go awry in the face of a sectarian, tribal culture that we understood too poorly to effectively help. His anecdotes demonstrate an international effort that was doomed from the start 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book really helped me learn about and understand more ... By Michael E. Durham This book really helped me learn about and understand more of what Iraq and the middle eastern nations are about in terms of groups and how they see the rest of the world; especially, in this case, the British.

In August 2003, at the age of thirty, Rory Stewart took a taxi from Jordan to Baghdad. A Farsi-speaking British diplomat who had recently completed an epic walk from Turkey to Bangladesh, he was soon appointed deputy governor of Amarah and then Nasiriyah, provinces in the remote, impoverished marsh regions of southern Iraq. He spent the next eleven months negotiating hostage releases, holding elections, and splicing together some semblance of an infrastructure for a population of millions teetering on the brink of civil war. The Prince of the Marshes tells the story of Stewart's year. As a participant he takes us inside the occupation and beyond the Green Zone, introducing us to a colorful cast of Iraqis and revealing the complexity and fragility of a society we struggle to understand. By turns funny and harrowing, moving and incisive, it amounts to a unique portrait of heroism and the tragedy that intervention inevitably courts in the modern age.

From Publishers Weekly Soon after Stewart, a British diplomat and professional adventurer, traveled to Iraq late in 2003 to search for work, he was named a provincial governor. In characteristic understatement, he says of his new role: "I spoke little Arabic, and had never managed a shattered and undeveloped province of 850,000." His job was supposed to be easy: the province, Maysan, nestled along the Iranian border deep in Iraq's Shia south, was one of the country's most homogenous, and nearly all of its citizens had fought against Saddam. Stewart spent most of his time navigating through a byzantine and thoroughly unfamiliar political landscape of tribal leaders, Islamist militias, Communist dissidents and Iranian intelligence agents. When he asks an adviser in Baghdad what his goals should be, his friend responds that if, within a year, the province hasn't descended into anarchy and Stewart can serve him "some decent ice cream," he will be satisfied. Engrossing and often darkly humorous, his book should be required reading for every political commentator who knows exactly what to do in Iraq despite never having dealt with recalcitrant interpreters or an angry mob. In the end, Stewart prevails and is rewarded with an appointment to Dhi Qar, a much more dangerous province with less military support. 16 pages of photos. (Aug.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From School Library Journal Adult/High School At the age of 30, the author, a former soldier and diplomat, speaker of Farsi but not of Arabic, was appointed as one of the leading Coalition civilian officials in Maysan, acting as deputy commander first there and then in Nasiriyah during the final nine months of the Coalition's authority in Iraq. Stewart's tale, even more than his complex identity, gives insight into the new and unexpected situation into which the United States and its allies were thrust after toppling Saddam Hussein. His story is one of relations: with his civilian and military counterparts from different nations in the provinces; with the leaders of the Coalition in Baghdad; and with the Iraqis with whom he was trying to build a new order and to whom he was to leave the provinces' leadership in but a few months. He recounts all this in fascinating and stimulating detail. The knowledge and the ignorance, the past history and the present reality, and the effects that they have had and are having become better clarified for Americans at home from reading this book. Ted Westervelt, Library of Congress, Washington, DC Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From The New Yorker In 2003, Stewart, a former British diplomat, joined the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq and was posted to the southern province of Maysan, where he found himself the de-facto governor of a restive populace whose allegiances were split among fifty-four political parties, twenty major tribes, and numerous militias. Stewart's account of his attempts to placate the various local figures who continually threaten to kill each other, or him, is both shrewd and self-deprecating. Money arrives from Baghdad in vacuum-packed million-dollar bricks, but there is no budget for such culturally crucial purchases as an ox for the funeral of an assassinated police chief. Stewart's exasperation with the cultural ignorance of C.P.A. directives is as manifest as his affectionate regard for the rhythms and customs of Arab life, a quality that often recalls an earlier generation of British travel writer. Copyright 2006 The New Yorker - [click here to subscribe](#).