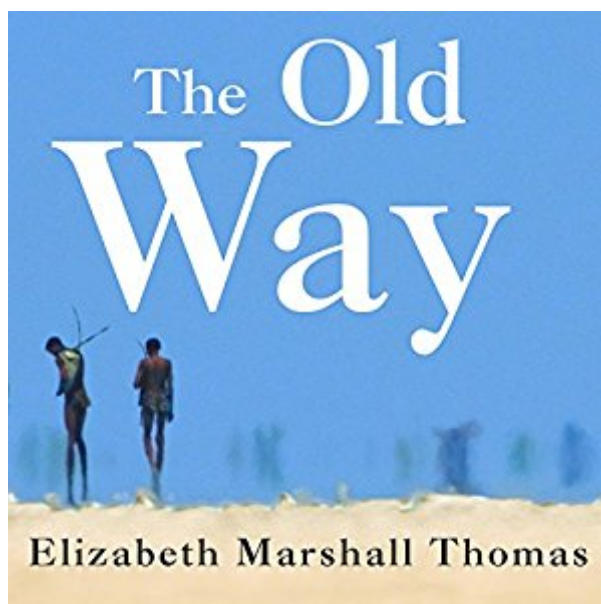


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# The Old Way: A Story Of The First People



## Synopsis

One of our most influential anthropologists reevaluates her long and illustrious career by returning to her roots-and the roots of life as we know it. When Elizabeth Marshall Thomas first arrived in Africa to live among the Kalahari San, or bushmen, it was 1950, she was nineteen years old, and these last surviving hunter-gatherers were living as humans had lived for 15,000 centuries. Thomas wound up writing about their world in a seminal work, *The Harmless People* (1959). It has never gone out of print. Back then, this was uncharted territory and little was known about our human origins. Today, our beginnings are better understood. And after a lifetime of interest in the bushmen, Thomas has come to see that their lifestyle reveals great, hidden truths about human evolution. As she displayed in her bestseller, *The Hidden Life of Dogs*, Thomas has a rare gift for giving voice to the voices we don't usually listen to, and helps us see the path that we have taken in our human journey. In *The Old Way*, she shows how the skills and customs of the hunter-gatherer share much in common with the survival tactics of our animal predecessors. And since it is "knowledge, not objects, that endure" over time, Thomas vividly brings us to see how linked we are to our origins in the animal kingdom. *The Old Way* is a rare and remarkable achievement, sure to stir up controversy, and worthy of celebration. --This text refers to the MP3 CD edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Thomas, anthropologist and author of such diverse bestsellers as *"The Hidden Life of Dogs,"* and two excellent pre-history novels, *"Reindeer Moon"* and *"The Animal Wife,"* began her writing career

with the study, "The Harmless People," based on her youthful sojourn among the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert. The Bushmen may be the only people who ever lived without war. But more on that later. With "The Old Way," she returns to the subject of that first book - a title that has been in print since 1959. Marshall first encountered the Ju/wasi, one of the five groups of Bushmen, in 1950 when she was 18, on the first of several Kalahari trips with her parents and brother. Her father, a founder of Raytheon, was a highly organized, take-charge sort of person, with versatile skills. Her mother, a former ballerina turned teacher, became a noted anthropologist over the course of these (and more) trips, and her brother devoted most of his life to the Bushmen. In the 1950s the Ju/wasi maintained their ancient nomadic culture in near isolation. Except for bits of metal they obtained in trade and used for arrowheads, the Ju/wasi made everything they needed from local material. They did not farm and had no domestic animals, but obtained all their food from hunting and gathering. They were the last people on earth, says Thomas, to follow the "Old Way," a way of life that depends on knowledge handed down one-to-one from generation to generation. The Old Way depends on intimacy between habitat and humanity. Thomas' book is not a scientific study or a memoir, but a bit of both, as well as a celebration and lament for a culture now gone.

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