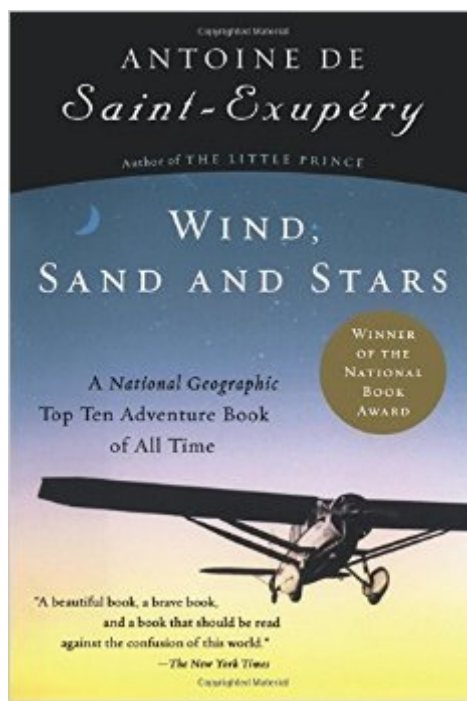


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Wind, Sand And Stars (Harvest Book)



Synopsis

Recipient of the Grand Prix of the Académie Française, *Wind, Sand and Stars* captures the grandeur, danger, and isolation of flight. Its exciting account of air adventure, combined with lyrical prose and the spirit of a philosopher, makes it one of the most popular works ever written about flying. Translated by Lewis Galantière.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Saint-Exupéry disappeared in North Africa in 1943 while flying reconnaissance flights for the American forces. After reading *Wind, Sand and Stars* one has a sense that this writer/philosopher, who is probably most well known for his fable *The Little Prince*, was well prepared for his life to end in this way. In the opening lines of the original French version Saint-Exupéry writes: "The earth teaches us more about ourselves than all the books. Because it resists us. Man discovers himself when he measures himself against the obstacle" *Wind, Sand and Stars* is intensely autobiographical as it tells us of this man's adventures from his beginnings as a pilot with the air mail service over France, Spain and North Africa before World War I, through to his musings as an observer of the Spanish Civil War. But far more than an adventurer, Saint-Exupéry writes like a poet and has the heart of a philosopher. This wonderful book (a credit to the translator from the original French) has incredibly rich descriptive passages in which he lays out for the reader the details observed in the natural world and the response that these evoke in his mind, heart and soul. In one section of the book (which a reader familiar with *The Little Prince* cannot help but conclude was inspirational for

that work) Saint-Exupery describes at length his near-death experience after crashing in the Libyan desert, and wandering for days without water or hope: "Apart from your suffering, I have no regrets. All in all, it has been a good life. If I got free of this I should start right in again. A man cannot live a decent life in cities, and I need to feel myself live. I am not thinking of aviation. The aeroplane is a means, not an end.

The essays and anecdotes in this volume are true gems to be enjoyed slowly, recalled fondly and shared often. Despite the relative infancy of the aviation industry at the time he composed them, Saint-Ex clearly understood that flying - especially the type of long and dangerous kind that he was engaged in - was both a metaphor and a brilliant illumination into the nature of the human condition. Like flying into uncharted territory, our journey through life is fraught with perils, faced mostly alone and with few witnesses to our acts of courage or cowardice. However, instead of facing up to this fact, Saint-Ex points out how "modern" culture consists of ever more elaborate denials of this basic fact: we have been indoctrinated with the goal of spending our lives working solely to achieve the most comfortable, painless, risk-free existence possible. And we continue to do so, much to our detriment. These essays are skillful and evocative arguments that! ! only when we face up to, and acknowledge our tenuous and perilous existence, can we truly appreciate what it means to be alive. Saint-Ex does a wonderful job in writing about what has become important to him: experiencing the majestic beauty and power of the earth and nature, what the existentialists would call "being authentic", and the friendship and camaraderie of the pilots and people he has met on his journeys. "Men travel side by side for years - each locked up in his own silence... till danger comes. Then they stand shoulder to shoulder. Then they discover they belong to the same family.... Happiness! It is useless to seek it elsewhere than in this warmth of human relations... Each man must look to himself to learn the meaning of life.

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