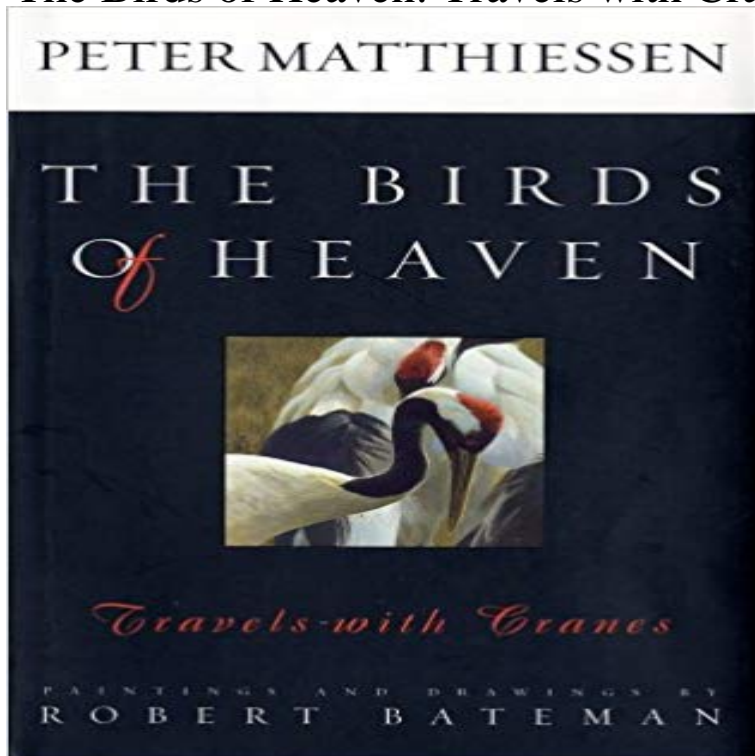


## The Birds of Heaven: Travels with Cranes



A leading naturalist and writer travels the globe in search of a prized-and vanishing-bird. Cranes are ubiquitous in the earliest legends of the world's peoples, where they often figure as harbingers of heaven and omens of longevity and good fortune. They are still held sacred in many places, and for good reason. Their large size and need for wilderness habitat makes them an umbrella species whose wellbeing assures that of other creatures and of the ecosystem at large. Moreover, the enormous spans of their migrations are a symbol of, and stimulus to, international efforts at conservation. In *The Birds of Heaven*, Peter Matthiessen has woven together journeys in search of the fifteen species of cranes in Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, and Australia. As he tracks them (and their declining numbers) in the company of scientists, conservationists, and regional people encountered along the way, he captures the dilemmas of a planet in ecological crisis, and the deeper loss to humankind if these beautiful and imposing creatures are allowed to disappear. The book includes color plates by renowned wildlife artist Robert Bateman.

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