



# The Gypsies

By Jan Yoors

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## The Gypsies By Jan Yoors

"This book is written as a protest against oblivion, as a cry of love for this race of strangers who have lived among us for centuries and remained apart. Thus it is of the nomads that I sing." (Jan Yoors, from the Introduction) At the age of twelve, Jan Yoors ran away from his privileged Belgian family and home to join a wandering band, a *kumpania*, of Gypsies. For ten years, he lived as one of them, traveled with them from country to country, shared both their pleasures and their hardships and came to know them as no one, no outsider, ever has. In this firsthand, highly personal account of an extraordinary people, Yoors tells the real story of the Gypsies' customs and their never-ending struggle to survive as free nomads.

In a rare publishing event, Jan Yoors' *The Gypsies* became an instant classic upon its original publication. Yoors vividly describes the texture of daily life: Gypsies as lovers, spouses, parents, healers, and mourners; loyalties and hostilities; moral and ethical beliefs and practices; language and culture; and history and traditions behind their fierce pride. The exultant celebrations, daring frontier crossings, yearly horse fairs, and convoluted business deals are brought to life in this memorable portrait of the most romanticized yet most maligned and least-known people on earth. As one reviewer wrote, "*The Gypsies* conveys an understanding of Other that transcends stereotypes and analytical flatness."

The Waveland Press reissue of this extraordinary work includes stunning photographs taken by the author during his travels with European Gypsies.

Titles of related interest from Waveland Press: Gmelch, *Nan: The Life of an Irish Travelling Woman* (ISBN 9780881336023) and Sutherland, *Gypsies: The Hidden Americans* (ISBN 9780881332353).

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## The Gypsies By Jan Yoors Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"In the early 1930s, when he was a 12-year-old boy in Belgium, Yoors ran away to join a traveling band of Roma Gypsies in horse-drawn wagons. He lived with them for eight years, all over Europe. Need I say more?" --Adam Hochschild, cited in *The Week*, Adam Hochschild's 6 favorite books

#### From the Publisher

In a rare publishing event, Jan Yoors' *The Gypsies* became an instant classic upon its original publication. Waveland Press is proud to make this extraordinary work available again. The reprint includes a stunning section of photographs taken by the author during his travels with European Gypsies. Titles of related interest from Waveland Press: Gmelch, Nan: *The Life of an Irish Travelling Woman* (ISBN 9780881336023) and Sutherland, Gypsies: *The Hidden Americans* (ISBN 9780881332353).

#### From the Back Cover

"Fascinating. A lyrical tribute, a unique inside view." -- *Newsweek*

"An exciting firsthand impression of life in a Gypsy camp forever on the move. A most valuable and original contribution." -- *New York Times Book Review*

"Beautifully evokes a way of life in which freedom and independence still survive." -- Sir Herbert Read

"Unquestionably the only book ever written from the inside of this most mysterious and elusive group of people. Beautifully written. A treasure. I think you will find it difficult to stop reading this unique and personal love song for a way of life." -- *Houston Post*

"Absolutely delightful." -- Margaret Mead

"Unique. No stay-at-home can read the book without a stab of yearning. . . . Reading it is like gulping in fresh air and experiencing a vicarious release from the complications of 'civilized' living." -- *Minneapolis Tribune*

"Enchanting. There are many surprising revelations . . . but most amazing is the spell that is cast on the reader." -- *Columbus Dispatch*

"Exciting, fascinating . . . we not only understand but also actually envy the Romani soul, and feel as though we would gladly shed a few of our encumbrances to join them." -- *Chicago's American*

"Of course any right thinking boy would dream about joining a Gypsy caravan, but Jan Yoors actually left his comfortable home and found a nomadic life as splendid as his dreams. And now he has enough of the poet in him to convey his timeless, routineless, endless fascination of wandering through a changing countryside, creeping through frontiers, part of a mysterious society." -- *Christian Science Monitor*

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**Jane Riley:**

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