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Tunnel People



Synopsis

Following the homeless Manhattanites who, in the mid-1990s, chose to start a new life in the tunnel systems of the city, this record tells the stories of a variety of tunnel dwellers from the perspective of an award-winning, European photojournalist who lived and worked with them for 5 months.

Photographs and personal accounts detail the struggles and pleasures—including the government's eviction of the tunnel people and Amtrak's offering them alternative housing—of Vietnam veterans, macrobiotic hippies, crack addicts, Cuban refugees, convicted killers, computer programmers, philosophical recluses, and criminal runaways. Humorous and compassionate, it also describes what has happened to these individuals 13 years since they've left.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First published in the Netherlands in 1996, this book chronicles Voeten's five-month exploration of the society that exists underneath the streets of Manhattan. Voeten, an accomplished war photographer and reporter, didn't write about the people who lived in the tunnels under New York from the point of view of an observer. He lived in the tunnels, grew to know the people who lived there, and came to understand not just how they got there but also the society they have created. Like Jennifer Toth's *Mole People* (1993) and Matthew O'Brien's *Beneath the Neon* (2007), Voeten's book captivates readers with its compassionate portraits of the people and their surroundings, while exploring the surprisingly varied reasons why these men and women

wound up living just beneath the surface of the reader's world. --David Pitt

"Finally, after countless portrayals of one of the most highly publicized existences, Voeten is to be commended for his honest and explicit view of New York's underworld. I salute his efforts and sacrifices to the highest." -- Bernard Monte Isaac aka Lord of the Tunnel, former tunnel resident

Teun Voeten is not the first to document the lives of the people living in the tunnel systems of New York City. His newly updated account, *Tunnel People*, is unique, however, because of Voeten's commitment not only to his craft, but also to the people. [...] As someone who regularly encounters homeless people on the streets of Los Angeles [...] I found Voeten's book deeply insightful and helpfully frustrating. *Tunnel People* offers a penetrating vision of a slice of life that is uniquely American, recounted by a uniquely qualified Dutch writer. - Ryan Bell, Mollosus Blog

"Voeten has found yet another frontier in the great American experiment; the one underground, in the tunnels of Manhattan; and deliver[s] it to us in an utterly charming and fascinating account," says Sebastian Junger. "Publishers Weekly" Voeten's book captivates readers with its compassionate portraits of the people and their surroundings, while exploring the surprisingly varied reasons why these men and women wound up living just beneath the surface of the reader's world. "Booklist" Tunnel People is a social documentary project, in the tradition of Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Live* and Dorothea Lange's *American Exodus*. It exposes us to people in straitened circumstances and advocates for their relief. "Wall Street Journal" Voeten is no doubt one of the most adventurous reporters in the Netherlands. "Vrij Nederland Magazine" Teun Voeten has found a way to show us the tunnel people not by their statistical trademarks; drug addiction, alcoholism, crime, and AIDS; but rather through their humanity, their talents, their extraordinary attitudes of good humor and hope. "[tk] reviews" Voeten resists the temptation to sensationalize and romanticize the underground tunnel people. Nor is his book sentimental . . . [it is a] sober and well-written report about the mean misery underground: That makes this book so powerful. "Volkskrant" Tunnel People is a supreme example of participatory observation. The insider's point of view comes here to full light in a brilliant way. It is not an objective case-study, but a subjective, journalistic reportage, right to the point of an incredible, dynamic, human underworld that is nowhere being sensationalized nor romanticized by Voeten. "Passage" Dutch photographer and journalist Voeten documents two years of work with the men and women who lived underground in a New York City train tunnel. . . . A vivid and accessible account."

CHOICE

Far better than Jenether Toth's Mole people, Teun Voeten actually lived with the underground population dwelling in abandoned subway tunnels in New York. This was an extended adventure as he came back years later to follow up on their lives to see how many had transitioned to apartments with the help of programs. A brilliant study from a thoughtful caring author.

Wonderful book. Super sad but a great read.

Fascinating account of what goes (went) on under the sidewalks of New York City.

Amazing book. The author is a great anthropologist. Gives a lot of insight into why some people are the way they are and allows us to empathize with them.

Very interesting.

I really enjoyed this book. I have been reading a lot about life under New York. It is very interesting. The hoes, where's and why's, of how this all started.

Very interesting

I enjoyed learning about the way of survival of the tunnel people.

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