



Tears of Mermaids: The Secret Story of Pearls

Stephen G. Bloom

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A round, luminescent pearl is the simplest and most perfect gem. Columbus sought—and found—this precious jewel coveted by his Spanish sovereigns, sparking popularity throughout Europe. Fashion icons Jacqueline Kennedy, Princess Grace, and Michelle Obama cherished them, making them iconic. And designer Coco Chanel raised them to new heights, bringing pearls—fake and real—to women everywhere. In *Tears of Mermaids*, Stephen G. Bloom travels 30,000 miles in an effort to trace a single pearl—from the moment a diver off the coast of Australia scoops an oyster containing a single luminescent pearl from the ocean floor to the instant a woman fastens the clasp of a strand containing the same orb. Bloom chronicles the never-before-told saga of the global pearl trade by gaining access to clandestine outposts in China, the Philippines, French Polynesia and Australia. He infiltrates high-tech pearl farms guarded by gun-toting sentries, farms for pearls in rural China, and even goes backstage at Christie's for a fast and furious auction of the most expensive pearl ever sold. Teeming with rogue humor and uncanny intelligence, *Tears of Mermaids* weaves a nonstop detective story whose main character is the world's most enduring jewel.

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