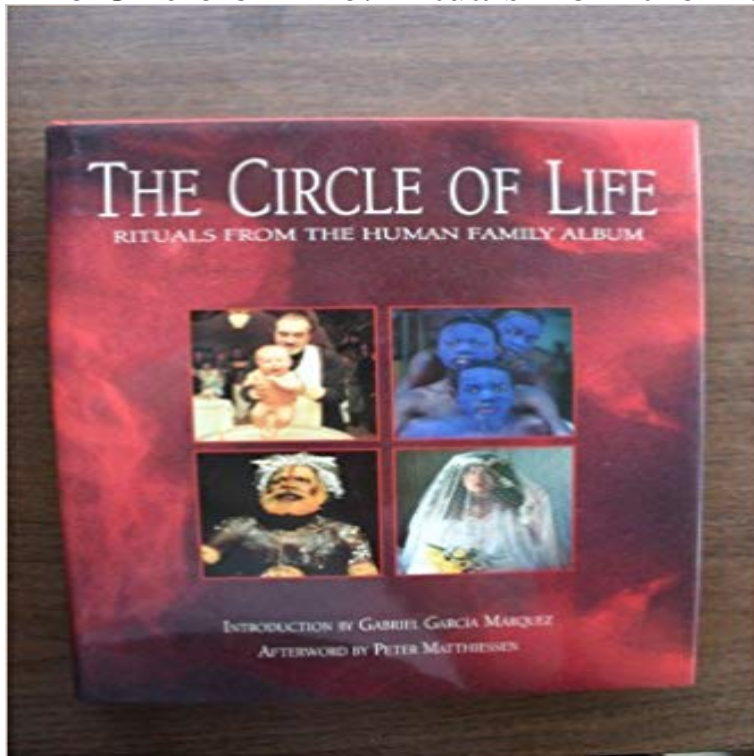


The Circle of Life: Rituals from the Human Family Album



From Book flap: Throughout the world, societies both modern and traditional celebrate our journey through life with astonishing rites of passage. Elaborately beautiful, deeply heartwarming, shocking, even life-threatening, these rituals distill the wisdom of the ages into comprehensible photogenic dramas - dramas which address nothing less than the meaning of birth, adolescence, marriage, aging and death. In the tradition of Edward Steichens the Family of Man, The Circle of Life shows us not only the extraordinary range of human ritual, but the common ties that bind us. Here, through the eyes of master photographers, we see that mothers in Yemen, Micronesia and Navajo societies respond to the birth of a baby with rituals that are strikingly similar. St. Louis debutantes and Mende girls in West Africa mark their entrance into society with the same symbols. Los Angeles street gangs and Sudanese warriors initiate new members with equivalent ceremonies. Even communities with little outside contact, like the Dani of Papua New Guinea and the country folk of Madagascar, honor their dead in unusual, yet similar ways. David Cohen, former director of the Day in the Life series, assembled a group of top photographers, researchers, anthropologists and professors of philosophy and religion to search widely diverse cultures for common patterns of belief and ritual. Focusing on what French anthropologists Arnold van Gennep first called rites of passage, the team compiled tens of thousands of images containing a rich panoply of rituals from seventy-three countries. The fruit of their efforts is The Circle of Life, a stunning collection of photographs by Eve Arnold, Bruno Barbey, Sebastio Salgado, Mary Ellen Mark, Raghu Rai, Susan Meiselas, Douglas Kirkland, Cristina Garcia Rodero, Daniel Laine, Barry Lewis and nearly a hundred other top photographers from around the

world.

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