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The Painted Desert: Land of Wind and Stone (Desert Places)

Scott Thybony

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Most people who are familiar with the Painted Desert of northeastern Arizona know it only from having pulled off at the Petrified Forest exit on Interstate 40. If they happen to come by it at midday, as most do, they find a landscape drained of color and flattened under the direct sunlight.

But this remote pocket of the Arizona desert, sandwiched between the Little Colorado River on one side and bold escarpments on the other, is much more than most tourists ever experience. An ethereal landscape of sculpted rock, wind-fluted cliffs, and elegantly drifting sand, the Painted Desert is a rich storehouse of natural beauty, colorful history, and scientific wonders. Here the strongest winds in Arizona blow across extensive dunefields, where less than ten inches of rain falls each year and only a few desert-savvy Navajo are able to live.

Now, for the first time award-winning writer Scott Thybony and freelance photographer David Edwards offer an intimate look at a place that remains inhospitable and inaccessible to so many. They share insights about the geology, paleontology, anthropology, and human history of the region as well as personal stories that dispel the misconceptions and mysteries that surround this delicate and difficult landscape.

With fifteen stunning photographs gracing the text, this book offers a vibrant portrait of one of the Southwest’s most barren, and most colorful landscapes.

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