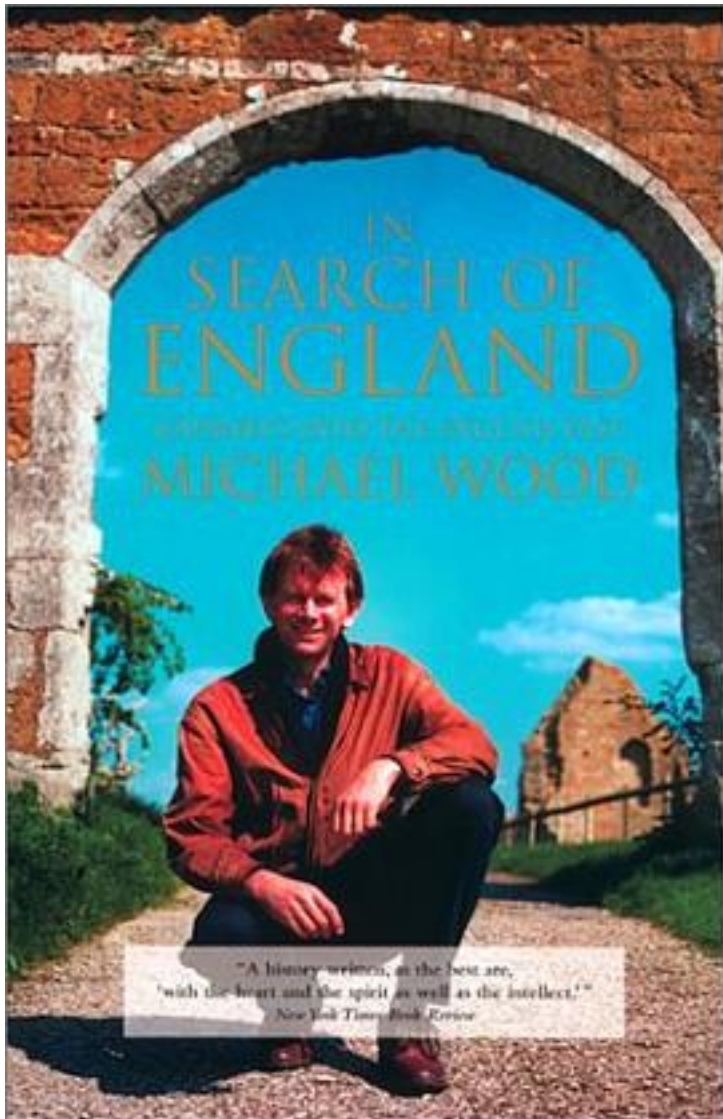


In Search of England



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England is the birthplace of many immortal legends told around the world: King Arthur and Camelot, the Holy Grail, Robin Hood, the mysterious Isle of Avalon. But are these famous stories based on historical events and actual people? And what do they tell us about the character and origins of the Anglo-Saxon world, a culture that helped shape American identity? In his absorbing new book, Michael Wood examines the roots of English history. Peeling back the layers of literary and oral material that have accumulated over the ages, he offers a fascinating series of rich stories--part history, part myth--that, directly or indirectly, touch on questions of English history and identity. He looks back at the legends surrounding Alfred the Great, King Athelstan, the lost library of Glastonbury, and more. Wood's emphasis is the Early Middle Ages, and the first two sections of the book offer deep excursions into particular moments in the history of that era. In addition to recounting some well-known legends, Wood considers the manuscripts and other primary sources of historical information on which they are based, assessing the validity of existing documentation, fleshing out historical contexts, and considering the treatment throughout history of these stories by famous writers, poets, and moviemakers. In the third part of *In Search of England*, Wood writes about places that illuminate interesting aspects of early England: Tinsley Wood, near Sheffield, which has been claimed as the site of Athelstan's great victory against the Celts in 937; a farmhouse in Devon which has been occupied since Domesday and possibly long before; and the village of Peatling Magna in Leicestershire, scene of an extraordinary confrontation with King Henry III in 1265. These are the places and events that offer a complementary version of the history that is discussed earlier in the book. *In Search of England* is published at a significant moment. With the European union, and with assertions of independence within the United Kingdom, questions about English national identity have become increasingly topical both there and abroad. Wood offers a potent and revealing account of the origins of a culture that has had a significant impact worldwide. His narrative is a rich unfolding of history and legend reaching to the present day, and a delightfully readable meditation on the roots of the Anglo-Saxon world.

作者介绍:

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