



# Grass-Clearing Man: A Factional Ethnography of Life in the New Guinea Highlands

*Paul Sillitoe, Jackie Sillitoe*

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This accessible ethnography is a factional account that depicts life in a stateless society of the New Guinea Highlands during the twentieth century. It explores a series of related events from the viewpoint of a fictional character, “Ongol,” who lived his life in the Was valley. Although Ongol and the other characters whose lives enrich this compelling narrative are fictional, the ethnography is factual; the exchange transactions and rituals did happen, the spells are genuine and recorded as recited, the customs surrounding marriage and kinship are practiced, and the subsistence regime exists. This creative yet factual ethnographic life history inspires students to grasp and retain core anthropological concepts associated with the people, practices, and events among the Wola living in the New Guinea Highlands.

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