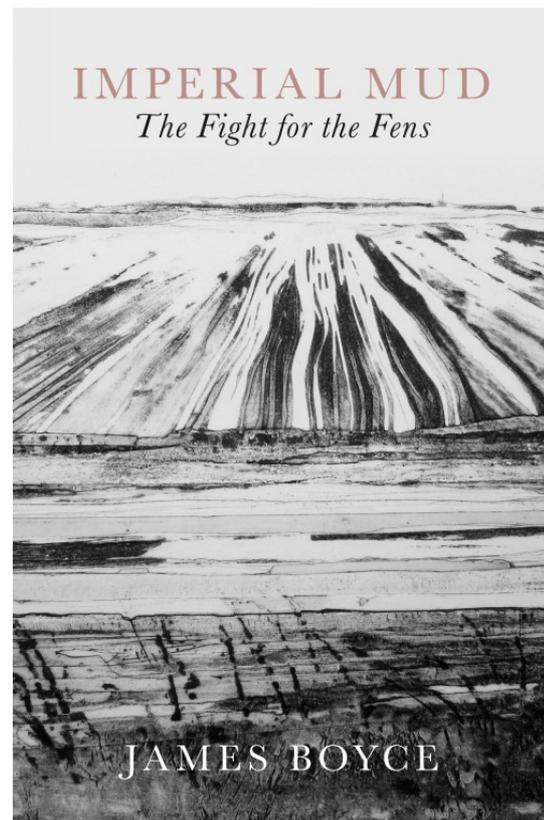


IMPERIAL MUD / THE FIGHT FOR THE FENS / James Boyce

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For fans of *The Fens* by Francis Pryor

Tells the story of the Fens from the point of view of the native inhabitants for the first time

Author acclaimed in Australia for his comparable history of Van Diemens' Land - described by Tim Flannery as 'the first ecologically based social history of colonial Australia ... a must read for anyone interested in how land shapes people'. *The Washington Post* called his *Born Bad* a 'brilliant and exhilarating work of popular scholarship'.

A post-colonial history of the destruction of the Fens of eastern England.

A population of proud indigenous people fight for generations to preserve their homelands against an expanding empire – an invasion justified as being necessary for 'progress'.

After centuries of resistance, their culture and community are destroyed. All of this takes place in East Anglia, roughly between the English Civil Wars and the mid-Victorian period.

An innovative new take on the drainage of the Fens, framed in the language of colonialism, *Imperial Mud* upends the narrative of this being a triumph of technology over nature. The final destruction of England's last lowland wilderness and the dispossession of its custodians was not an inevitable consequence of 'progress', but of the growing power of a centralised and militarised state.

Imperial Mud reimagines not just the history of the Fens, but the history and identity of the English people.

James Boyce is a multi-award-winning Australian historian and a research associate at the University of Tasmania. His first book, *Van Diemen's Land*, was described by Richard Flanagan as 'the most significant colonial history since *The Fatal Shore*'. 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne and the Conquest of Australia* was *The Age's* Book of the Year, while *Born Bad: Original Sin and the Making of the Western World* was described by *The Washington Post* as 'an exhilarating work of popular scholarship'.

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