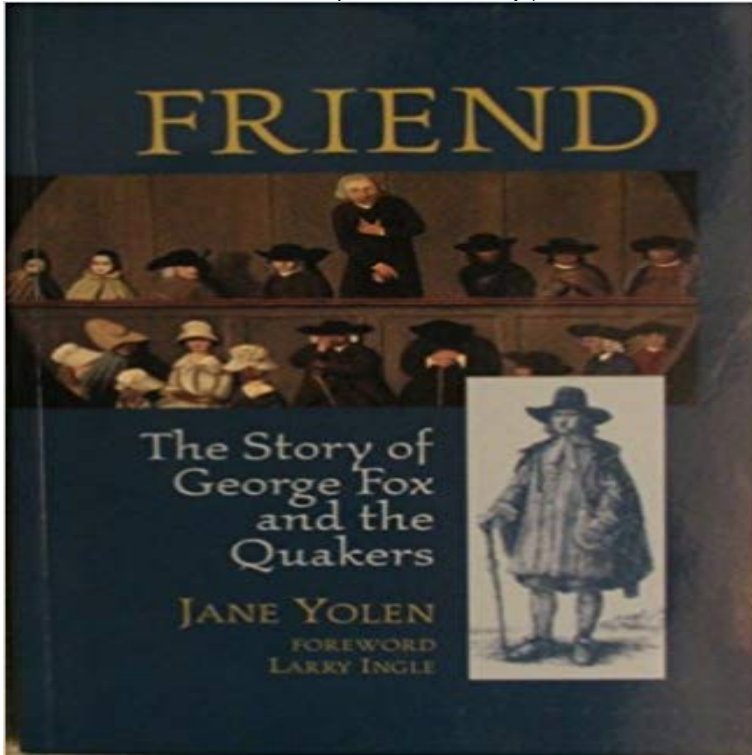


Friend: The Story of George Fox and the Quakers



George Fox is portrayed by author Jane Yolen as an intense young man in a time of religious & political upheaval. He was a militant pacifist (an oxymoron?) when state religions were see-sawing in prominence. Kings & prime ministers fought for power, and the uneasiness among all levels of society helps explain the proliferation of religious sects in the 1600s. Cynical, cruel laws were passed to excuse the jailing of believers outside the state-church-of-the-moment. Hundreds, including families with children, endured hideous prison conditions for their beliefs. Fox became a magnet for the many people known as *tender* seekers for spiritual Truth. He had a certain pride that Yolen claims was a fault shared with many Old Testament prophets! The ministry of George Fox was an odd sort at first, according to the author. It consisted of solitary walks, fasting, mournful midnight wanderings, and hours in hollow trees with his Bible. He had an uncompromising nature. His preaching was rustic, yet compelling; William Penn later said Fox used rough, uneducated words. George Fox had discovered silence while shepherding in the Leicestershire hills in his youth over 350 years ago. The very essence of Quakerism is his concept of the Inner Light: I live, yet not I, but Christ in me.

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