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Autore	Mol Lisa
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Sommario/riassunto	Deserts - vast, empty places where time appears to stand still. The very word conjures images of endless seas of sand, blistering heat and a virtual absence of life. However, deserts encompass a large variety of landscapes and life beyond our stereotypes. As well as magnificent Saharan dunes under blazing sun, the desert concept encompasses the intensely cold winters of the Gobi, the snow-covered expanse of Antarctica and the rock-strewn drylands of Pakistan. Deserts are environments in perpetual flux and home to peoples as diverse as their surroundings, peoples who grapple with a broad spectrum of cultural, political and environmental issues as they wrest livelihoods from marginal lands.