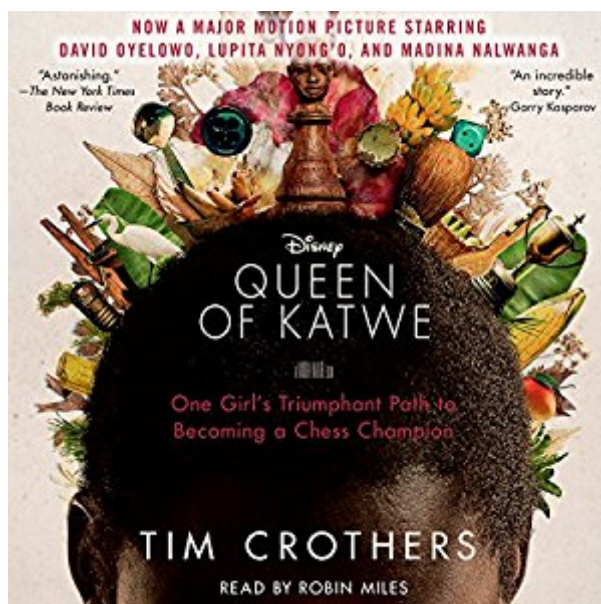


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The Queen Of Katwe: A Story Of Life, Chess, And One Extraordinary Girl



Synopsis

Based on a popular ESPN Magazine article - optioned by Disney films, a finalist for a National Magazine Award and chosen by Dave Eggers for inclusion in Best American Nonrequired Reading 2011 - the astonishing true story of Phiona Mutesi, a teenager from the slums of Kampala, Uganda, who - inspired by an unlikely mentor, a war refugee turned missionary - becomes an international chess champion. Phiona Mutesi sleeps in a decrepit shack with her mother and four siblings and struggles to find a single meal each day. Phiona has been in and out of school her whole life because her mother cannot afford it, so she is only now learning to read and write. Phiona Mutesi is also one of the best chess players in the world. One day in 2005, while searching for food, nine-year-old Phiona followed her brother to a dusty veranda where she met Robert Katende, another child of the Ugandan slums, who works for an American organization that offers relief and religion through sports. Robert introduced Phiona to the game of chess and soon recognized her immense talent. By the age of 11 Phiona was her country's junior chess champion and at 15, her country's national champion. In September of 2010 she traveled to Siberia, just her second time ever on an airplane, to compete in the Chess Olympiad, the world's most prestigious team chess event. Phiona's dream is to one day become a grandmaster, the most elite title in chess, and to blaze a trail out of Katwe that other children in Robert's chess community can follow. But to reach that goal, she must grapple with everyday life in one of the world's most unstable countries, a place where girls are taught to be mothers, not dreamers, and the threats of AIDS, kidnapping, and starvation loom over the people of Katwe. Acclaimed sports journalist Tim Crothers has written a riveting and inspiring account of one girl's improbable journey to becoming a chess champion. The Queen of Katwe will thrill every listener who loves a great underdog story.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Phiona Mutesi is one of the best chess players on earth. At 11 she was her country's junior champion, at 15 a national champion. Soon after she traveled to Russia to participate in the Chess Olympiad, the most prestigious event in the Chess world. Only in her teens, she sat across the board from experts several years older, yet she played with an intensity and instinct that had more experience players struggling to keep the upper hand - and not always succeeding. Her command of the game at such a young age certainly had people talking. Certainly she must have the best of coaches, the best education, and the best backing to be as good as she is. Certainly the best chess players have the best pedigree. Certainly....not. Phiona Mutesi is from Uganda, a country at the bottom of the pecking order of African nations. And she lives at the bottom of the pecking order of Uganda itself. She's a child of Katwe - one of the worst slums in the world. The Queen of Katwe, by former Sports Illustrated senior writer, Tim Crothers, is a gritty inspiration. Crothers introduces us to a culture where human life is cheap. Where life, moment to moment, is not guaranteed. Where a teen girl's goal is to give herself to a man, or more than one man, in order to secure food and shelter - and hopefully support for children when she gets pregnant. But in a country rampant with AIDs, it's not uncommon for that male support to succumb to the disease and leave his offspring homeless and scraping for food. This was the life that Phiona was born into. A world of mind-numbing destitution and hopelessness. But while Phiona and other children like her fought to survive in the squalor that is Katwe, there were people who were determined to bring hope.

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