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Emma's War: A True Story



Synopsis

Emma McCune's passion for Africa, her unstinting commitment to the children of Sudan, and her youthful beauty and glamour set her apart from other relief workers from the moment she arrived in southern Sudan. But no one was prepared for her decision to marry a local warlord—a man who seemed to embody everything she was working against—and to throw herself into his violent quest to take over southern Sudan's rebel movement. With precision and insight, Deborah Scoggins—who met McCune in Sudan—charts the process by which McCune's romantic delusions led to her descent into the hell of Africa's longest-running civil war. Emma's War is at once a disturbing love story and an up-close look at Sudan: a world where international aid fuels armies as well as the starving population, and where the northern-based Islamic government—backed by Osama bin Laden—is locked in a war with the Christian and pagan south over religion, oil, and slaves. A timely, revelatory account of the nature of relief work, of the men and women who choose to carry it out, and of one woman's sacrifice to its ideals. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I used to believe that aid workers really helped people. I'm not so sure any more. I chose to read this fascinating book because I knew little, if anything, about the Sudan. I know a lot more now. And it's not very pleasant. The author, Deborah Scoggins certainly knows this. She's an American journalist who's won awards for her fine reporting. And she's experienced firsthand the famines and frustrated attempts by aid workers who are often pawns of Sudanese politics, exacerbating the

endemic horrors of the ongoing civil war. Into this mix comes the true story of Emma McCune, a romantic British aid worker with a feisty personality and an attraction to African men. It's the early 1990's and the idealist Emma tries to set up schools for the children of the warring tribes. When she finds the young boys being kidnapped to fight in guerilla armies, she does what she can to bring attention to the problem which is just one of many that plague the country. Eventually, she meets Reik Machar, a British-educated African leader of his people. She marries him and gets swept up in the complicated intrigues and politics. As she changes, she becomes a pragmatic apologist for the murders and tortures that her husband orchestrates. Her tragic story is the center of the book. This was a wise choice of the author, who even includes photos of Emma and her husband as well as some horrific images of the famine around her. The book, however, is more than just Emma's story. Scrupulously researched, it is the story of Africa itself, and the Sudan in particular. There's the Islamic north with ties to Osama bin Laden. There's the Animist and Christian south where oil has been discovered. There are dozens of tribes with hatreds between them that go back for centuries.

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