



Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey

By Fergal Keane

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Fergal Keane, an Irish journalist, formerly BBC correspondent in South Africa, was sent in 1994 to cover the war in Rwanda that had left one million Tutsis dead, most of them gruesomely hacked to death by their Hutu neighbors. The power of this account lies in Keane's profound emotional shock at barely imaginable cruelty, and in the personal testimony of the survivors he interviewed. Keane also searches for meaning. Like many familiar with Africa, he rejects the too easy explanation of "tribal hatred," with its assumption that the problem is intractable and internal. He emphasizes instead the economic and class disparities driving a political bloodlust, reminiscent perhaps of revolutionary France. Even though understanding such atrocity seems out of reach, Keane bears eloquent witness to evil.

From Publishers Weekly

Winner of Britain's Orwell Prize for best political book of 1995, this searing, impassioned eyewitness account of the genocide of Rwanda's Tutsi minority by Hutu extremists dispels a number of media-sustained myths surrounding the slaughter in 1994 of a million people. BBC reporter and documentary filmmaker Keane saw absolutely no evidence to support the widely held belief that the Tutsis—who once comprised Rwanda's ruling class, abetted by German and Belgian colonialists—are lighter-skinned than Hutus. Contrary to the view that mutual hatred between tribes spontaneously erupted into irrational violence, he demonstrates that the killings were planned well in advance by a clique close to Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana. Bitterly resentful of the prospect of sharing power with the Tutsis, this clique created its own civilian militia and mounted a virulent propaganda campaign scapegoating Tutsis. The principal architects of the genocide found a haven in Zaire and Tanzania. Blaming the U.S., the European Community and the U.N. for failing to halt mass murder, Keane calls on the international community to assist Rwanda's new government, formed after the death of Habyarimana in a plane crash in April 1994.

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From Library Journal

Keane is a journalist for BBC and winner of Britain's 1995 Orwell Prize for best political book and Amnesty International's Human Rights Reporter of the Year 1993. His first book, on South Africa (*The Bondage of Fear: A Journey Through the Last White Empire*), only partially prepared him for his Rwandan journey in the spring of 1994. Containing some of the most graphic depictions of death and violence in modern history, Keane's well-written account of the genocide in Rwanda recalls the stunned words of the Allies who liberated Nazi death camps in 1945. Keane's thesis is that the Rwandan massacres were due to more than tribal squabbling: murdered Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana and his supporters had long planned the genocide of over a million Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus. After an introductory chapter on the history of the Rwandan situation, Keane leads us through "an encounter with evil." Constantly present is the incomprehensible fact that most of the killings occurred within a two-month period. Other recent books on the subject include Gerald Prunier's *The Rwandan Crisis: History of a Genocide* (LJ 11/1/95) and Alain Destexhe's *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (LJ 10/1/95). Highly recommended because of the focus on understanding, and hopefully solving, the issue of ethnic genocide and hatred in today's world. Cynthia D. Bertelsen, Virginia Polytechnic Institute Lib., Blacksburg, Va.

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Users Review

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