

In the Shadow of 10,000 Hills

Jennifer Haupt

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In the wake of the Rwandan genocide of the 1990s, those who fought on both sides of the war—and foreigners who came to help but who were inspired to stay—seek some form of redemption, each in their own way. Four broken individuals converge at an orphanage in the rural countryside to recover from their respective tragedies. The brutality of these events ties these people together and ultimately brings them forgiveness and hope, or *kwizera*.

Set in the year 2000, *In the Shadow of 10,000 Hills* follows Rachel, an American who recently lost her mother and unborn baby; Lillian, an expat who, inspired by Martin Luther King Jr., started an orphanage in Rwanda; Tucker, a doctor who originally came to the country with the Red Cross; and Nadine, a young Tutsi woman whom Lillian adopted as her own after her family was killed. Rachel flies to Rwanda in search of her photojournalist father, Henry, who, according to these three people she befriends, has not been seen in the country for two years.

Flashbacks to the 1970s and 1990s are scattered skillfully throughout the novel. They provide a peek into Henry and Lillian's life as their secrets unfold in 2000. Each heartrending detail is revealed with perfect timing, the expert pacing of the story escalating at every turn. It is both a suspenseful and an emotionally graceful novel, even as Lillian, Tucker, and Nadine relay their brutal experiences.

While *In the Shadow of 10,000 Hills* remains true to setting, both in place and in time, it is also timely, and reveals how forgiveness is possible even during the trials following the unspeakable acts of a horrific war. Author Jennifer Haupt's experience as a journalist in Rwanda plants the seeds of truth that bloom on every page.

AIMEE JODOIN (March/April 2018)

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