

Truth Is a Flightless Bird

Akbar Hussain

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In Akbar Hussain's crime thriller *Truth Is a Flightless Bird*, a man races to rescue a pregnant woman from Nairobi's violent underworld.

Nice would do anything for her unborn child, including smuggling drugs into Nairobi. Nice's flight lands without an issue, but a corrupt immigration cop marks her as an easy target. Fearful for her life, she reaches out to an old friend, Duncan, to pick her up. Duncan, an American preacher, harbors an unquenched crush on Nice and is eager to help. Things go awry when their car crashes and they are torn apart. Duncan is taken hostage by the corrupt cop; Nice vanishes into the criminal underworld.

Duncan finds himself confronting his morality and his simmering, deep-seated rage. After the cop is taken out by his opportunistic partner Ciru, Duncan is thrust out of the frying pan and into the fire. Ciru's only drive in life is to earn the love of her distant son who has shunned his heritage and adopted an American lifestyle. Duncan hopes to rescue his lost love by working for Ciru, a task that forces him to let his anger burst forth in violent outbursts.

Duncan, Nice, and Ciru have different goals, but they all struggle with surviving in situations where they have no control over their fates. Duncan's faith is weakening, Nice fears being a bad mother, and Ciru worries over losing her heritage to the capitalistic greed spreading across the globe. Ciru's plight is shown in both her son's abandonment of his culture and the Americanization of Nairobi as evidenced by President Obama's arrival.

Truth Is a Flightless Bird is a compelling thriller that blends literary and noir elements into a harrowing character study of three flawed people in blind pursuit of an unobtainable future.

JOHN M. MURRAY (November / December 2022)

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