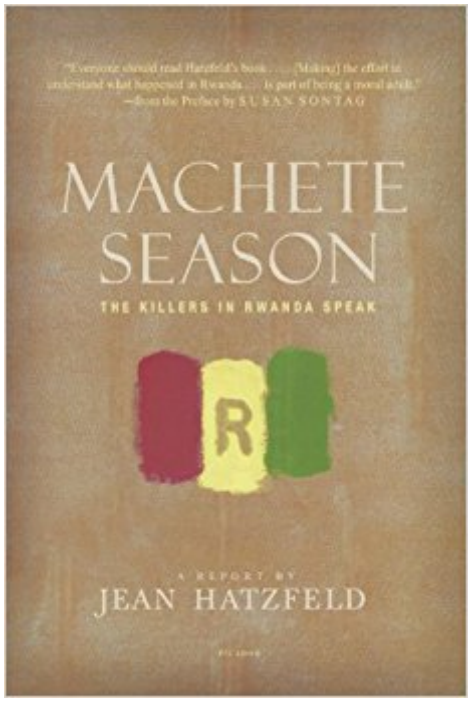
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Machete Season: The Killers In Rwanda Speak



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Synopsis

During the spring of 1994, in a tiny country called Rwanda, some 800,000 people were hacked to death, one by one, by their neighbors in a gruesome civil war. Several years later, journalist Jean Hatzfeld traveled to Rwanda to interview ten participants in the killings, eliciting extraordinary testimony from these men about the genocide they perpetrated. As Susan Sontag wrote in the preface, Machete Season is a document that "everyone should read . . . [because making] the effort to understand what happened in Rwanda . . . is part of being a moral adult."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book features the testimony of 10 friends from the same village who spent day after day together, fulfilling orders to kill any Tutsi within their territory during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. While their anecdotes are shocking at first, they detail how an ordinary person with an everyday life in a farming village can be transformed into a killer. As one man explains, "if you must obey the orders of authorities, if you have been properly prepared, if you see yourself pushed and pulled, if you see the killing will be total and without disastrous consequences for yourself, you feel soothed and reassured." A reporter for Paris's LibÃƒÂ©ration, Hatzfeld has a remarkable ability to pry into the killer's memory and conscience. One Hutu tells how "a pain pinched his heart" when confronted with an old Tutsi soccer teammate he was obligated to kill. Others describe the regrets or nightmares they have now that the genocide is over (and they are in prison). But for the most part, the interviews reveal the killers' naÃƒÂ ve expectations for forgiveness and reconciliation once they are released. Hatzfeld offers an analysis of the psychology of the perpetrators and how the Rwandan genocide differs from other genocides in history. Steering clear of politics, this important

book succeeds in offering the reader some grasp of how such unspeakable acts unfolded. Agent, Valerie Borchardt at Georges Borchardt Inc.(June) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

French journalist Hatzfeld, the author of several books on war atrocities, offers a close-up look at the thoughts, motivations, and regrets of 10 of the Hutu killers who participated in the slaughter of their Tutsi neighbors. An estimated 500,000 Tutsis were murdered in May and April of 1994 when ethnic tensions were whipped into a frenzy following the death of Rwandan president Juvenal Habayarima, a Hutu. Now imprisoned for their participation in the slaughter, the 10 men Hatzfeld interviewed offer incredible accounts of how they moved from ordinary lives, albeit ones filled with simmering tensions with their Tutsi neighbors, to the ragtag army employed to kill with machetes. Some recall the coercion needed to secure their participation, while others were eager for the task. Many recall the methodical nature of the slaughter and the bloodthirstiness of some of their compatriots as they made sure that no man, woman, or child was spared. A killer recalls looking into the eyes of his victims and the stares that will haunt him for the rest of his life. Chilling and thoroughly absorbing. Vanessa BushCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A powerful telling of the massacre in Rwanda from the perspective of the killers. Jean Hatzfeld follows up his interviews with survivors with this book of interviews with the killers.The psychologyMore frightening than any fiction. Makes one wonder about the future of humanity if humans can so easily kill, up close, bloodly and with no remorse.Well written, compelling to read.It will haunt me forever.

To paraphrase Hatzfeld, there are no clear physical demarcations of a Tutsi person. How then, were the Hutus so effective in genocide? Because the Hutu neighbors, teammates, friends, and (sometimes) family members of the Tutsis were the ones who did the killing. That is, these men were playing soccer and sharing beers with their Tutsi neighbors one day and the next they were hacking them to death in the fields with machetes.And they enjoyed it.How is this possible?The profit motivation is one guess. The men worked hard for spoil - the more they killed the larger the share of their victims assets. They were making far more than they would tilling their fields. But this doesn’t explain the ruthlessness of the killings. The killers enjoyed their work. They mocked their

victims, often calling to them by name (again, because they knew them). Their motivation was deeper than murder for spoil.They did not view the Tutsis as people despite years of co-existence. If genuine human interaction cannot prevent genocide what can?

Machete Season by Jean Hatzfeld is not a book burdened by brilliant rhetorical flourishes or mind blowing metaphors that the literary crowd will blister about for hours on end, but it then again, it wasn't supposed to be. The book is written in fairly simple though articulate prose and that's were it derives it's beauty from. This simple prose adds to the frightening quality this book has to it. Hatzfeld travels to a Rwandan prison to interview several perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide about the reasons why they so willingly slaughtered 800,000-1 million people during the 1994 genocide. Their explanations delivered without complex rhetorical devises are enough to make the sane and logical person's skin crawl. These men are largely unrepentant for their actions and always have something else to blame from the leadership within the community, dynamics of groupthink, absence of a god, and most pronounced the ability to stop seeing your Tutsi neighbor as a human being, but rather a common cockroach or snake that needs to be stepped on... i.e. killed. For a frightening and often maddening look into the minds of genocidal killers, pick up Machete Season ASAP.

I love the way the book was presented (a stylistic choice suitable to the topic and not at all structurally flawed as another reviewer suggests).If you are expecting to come away with some definitive answers about the genocide... think again, as it is not the purpose of this book. The beauty of this book is that is illuminating, but somewhat open. Hatzfeld does not spoon feed the reader and he keeps the book's focus on the voices of the men he interviewed. There is a rawness about the process of human self-reflection and this book captures it, laying bare the truths and lies people tell themselves while recounting their role in the past. The human psyche is fascinating, and what people choose to share is as interesting as what we see them refuse to share. For example, some passages reveal a shocking frankness -sometimes as much a shock to the speaker as the reader. Yet, some passages reveal a distance, a cold detachedness... a refusal or incapability of the soul to either publicly or privately connect and unburden. All this said, Hatzfeld acknowledges that beyond inner turmoil, legal and other reprecussions influence what is shared and what is not.This is a MUST READ for those who study genocide and mass violence. It is recommended for all interested others who have the maturity, respect, and the stomach to handle it.For those not familiar with the Rwandan genocide: If you are looking for an excellent book that will help you understand a little

something about what happened and why see "We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda" by Philip Gourevitch. Read Gourevitch first and Hatzfeld's book afterward. You can't understand and fully appreciate this book properly -and its significant contribution -unless you have some background knowledge of the genocide.

I would recommend that anyone just starting to study the genocide in Rwanda start with Tomorrow We wish to inform you...If you want to continue to get insights into this horrible time, Jean Hatzfield's two books should be read. His reflections mirrored my own questions, and even the guarded stories of the killers show their hearts. One killer says, "Someone had failed to finish the job, so I followed the target and finished it." as a reference to killing a neighbor. The killers' complete belief that they only had to ask for forgiveness and it would be granted and they could live together as one happy neighborhood is a sign of their lack of understanding of the horror that was done.I was especially horrified that Hatfield could find few people who aided a former friend or neighbor, and that the killers had so little remorse that no one committed suicide. They expected no consequences, and in the end, they got a fairly short jail term. They were right, no one really cared.I was searching for signs that could bring early intervention, but there really didn't seem to be something that was big or significant. Only greed, obedience when it suits, mob thinking and abdication by good people.Although not as graphic as some books I have read on Rwanda, there are sentences that will haunt you forever, and images you wish were not in your mind. But they happened and we owe it to the survivors to listen.

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