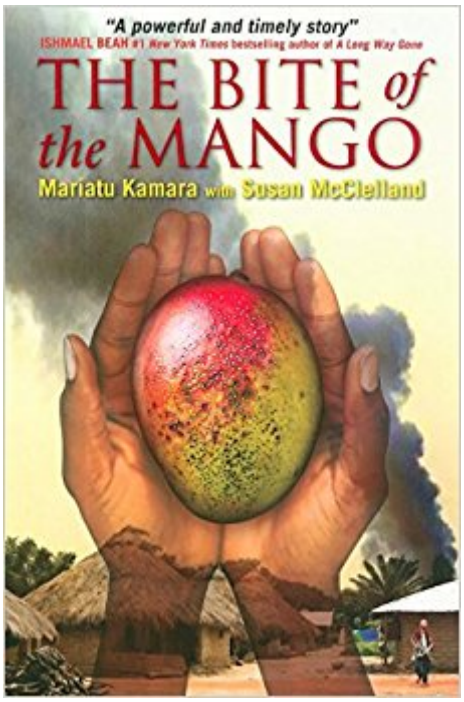
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The Bite Of Mango



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Synopsis

As a child in a small rural village in Sierra Leone, Mariatu Kamara lived peacefully surrounded by family and friends. Rumors of rebel attacks were no more than a distant worry. But when 12-year-old Mariatu set out for a neighboring village, she never arrived. Heavily armed rebel soldiers, many no older than children themselves, attacked and tortured Mariatu. During this brutal act of senseless violence they cut off both her hands. Stumbling through the countryside, Mariatu miraculously survived. The sweet taste of a mango, her first food after the attack, reaffirmed her desire to live, but the challenge of clutching the fruit in her bloodied arms reinforced the grim new reality that stood before her. With no parents or living adult to support her and living in a refugee camp, she turned to begging in the streets of Freetown. As told to her by Mariatu, journalist Susan McClelland has written the heartbreaking true story of the brutal attack, its aftermath and MariatuÃ¢â ¬â„¢s eventual arrival in Toronto where she began to pull together the pieces of her broken life with courage, astonishing resilience and hope.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 14 years

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Relaying her experiences as a child in Sierra Leone during the 1990s, Kamara chillingly evokes the devastating effects of war. Mariatu is 11 when her tiny village is decimated by rebel soldiers, many of them children like her. Forced to watch as peaceful villagers are tortured and

murdered, Mariatu is finally allowed to go freeÃ¢â ¬â •but only after boy soldiers cut off her hands: We want you to go to the president, they tell her, and show him what we did to you. You wont be able to vote for him now. Mariatus long walk to get medical aid marks the first stage of a harrowing journey to build a new life for herself and other wartime victims; she now lives in Canada and is a UNICEF representative. Written with journalist McClelland, her story is deeply personal yet devoid of self-pity. As it aims to correct misperceptions about Sierra Leone and to raise awareness of the needs of child victims of war, this book will unsettle readersÃ¢â ¬â •and then inspire them with the evidence of Mariatus courage. Ages 14Ã¢â ¬â œup. (Nov.) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Starred Review. Grade 9 UpÃ¢â ¬â •Kamara's account of the atrocities she suffered at the hands of rebel soldiers in Sierra Leone is both harrowing and hopeful. The young woman had a typical childhood in her small rural village until she came face to face with rebels bent on destroying everything in their path. After bearing witness to the torture and murder of several townspeople, one soldier chopped off both of her hands with a machete and left her for dead. Summoning all of her courage, she found her way to a nearby hospital where she was reunited with her surviving family members. There, the 12-year-old discovered she was pregnant and was reduced to begging in the streets to keep herself and her son alive. When journalists arrived to document the horrors of life in her country, Kamara was understandably wary. However, being featured in their stories led to benefactors wanting to find a way to take her to a country where she could heal mentally and physically. After landing in Canada, Kamara found a home and a surrogate family who encouraged her not only to obtain an education, but also to share her story with the world. Her narrative is honest, raw, and powerful. In the same vein as Ishmael Beah's A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier (Farrar, 2007), the book sheds light on a plight of which many people are still unaware.Ã¢â ¬â •Kelly McGorray, Glenbard South High School Library, Glen Ellyn, IL 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.

I was introduced to this book through the book "the End of Life Book Club." Having read "Long Way Gone" by Ishmeal Beah a few years ago, it was interesting to know that the author of this book and he had once met. This book is from the opposite experience tho both were children - he a child forced to be a rebel soldier in Sierra Leone during the 1990's and Mariatu Kamara a female child amputee survivor of these soldiers. Theirs is a country so different from mine that it is hard to

imagine a life of such poverty and harsh treatment much less the constant fear of being attacked by merciless soldiers. You will find this an inspirational and eye-opening book. It made me extremely grateful for the comfortable middle-class life I have led in the United States. It is good that one of the many angels Mariatu found along her journey led her to write this account of her young life so that those of us much more fortunate can appreciate and learn from the struggles of poverty and the cruelties that the many less fortunate have faced.

This book is both heartbreaking and inspiring. This young girl's story brings home the horrors of war on children and the unbreakable human spirit that survives. It also shows the importance of international and personal involvement needed to help those who suffer. Highly recommended!

I have found several autobiographies by individuals who have survived some of the worst atrocities in the world to be somewhat egotistical in that their stories border on fiction [can you remember whole conversations when you were 3 and 4 years old?]. However, Ms. Kamara's story was very realistic, without a grandiose sense of self. Her story rings of true honesty, portraying her in a most realistic way: she tells us her faults as well as her ability to survive and be insightful. It was a quick read [one night!], mostly because I found myself unable to put it down. I would have liked to understand a bit more about the Canadian family and their motives for basically abandoning her [even though it appears to have been for the best] - yet it appears that even Ms. Kamara herself is not completely sure why. What her story has done for me is to read more about Sierra Leone and its history and wars - which is what I feel any good autobiography should do - inspire the reader to find out more.

Bite of the Mango is a good book. I appreciated what appeared to be a very honest story of what happened to this victim of the civil war in Sierra Leone. I felt that she gave a three dimensional picture of herself. She was a girl who was, at times, incredibly courageous and at other times very fearful. As a reader, I felt that I was made to understand both sides of her personality. I don't think that the book's purpose was to present explanations for the cause of the civil war and the incredible amount of savagery. But, the lack of background information was, for me, a shortcoming. I read this book in combination with Ishmael Beah's memoir, A Long Way Gone, and I would recommend reading the two books together.

I read about this book in "The End Of Life Book Club". This is the story of Mariatu who had lived a

life of poverty in Sierra leone. She tells us the story of her village where she tells us she had been happy. However at the age of twelve, she is raped by an older man. In this same time frame, news of rebels sweep her area, and the people would hide in the bush for days, weeks, and months. Finally, she and her family are caught, and Mariatu ends with her hands cut off by rebels after watching her village burned and people killed.In her book, written with a co- author, Mariatsu asks that we bear witness to the war, to the poverty, and to the need in Sierra Leone. She doesn't crow about her own courage, although she is extraordinarily brave. She doesn't stoop to the maudlin. She shares her own times of darkness and depression when she judges herself coming short by her own measure; although not by mine.Finally she offers us the chance to bear witness.

My eyes continue to be widely opened as I read this book and ones similar that tell about cultures and lives that are so incredibly different from mine. These people are real survivors - at least the ones who can live that long. And what is even more amazing to me is that Sierra Leone is really a rich country - at least in natural resources - and the greed and arrogance of others have stolen this country's birthright. They should be taken to Sierra Leone and made to live out in the wilderness in the conditions that they have subjected the natives to. It reminded me of an old quote, "The World's gone mad."

I found the book hard to follow as if someone had transcribed it incorrectly in English. The book did not flow well to me and left a lot of important parts out not giving a full understanding of her experience. I loved the book A Long Way Gone and decided to read this as a follow up to hear one of the victim's stories but I had a hard time finishing this book. It just wasn't a good read.

Great story about the children of war from female perspective. I admire the author for sharing her personal experience, and for being brave enough to survive and help others.

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