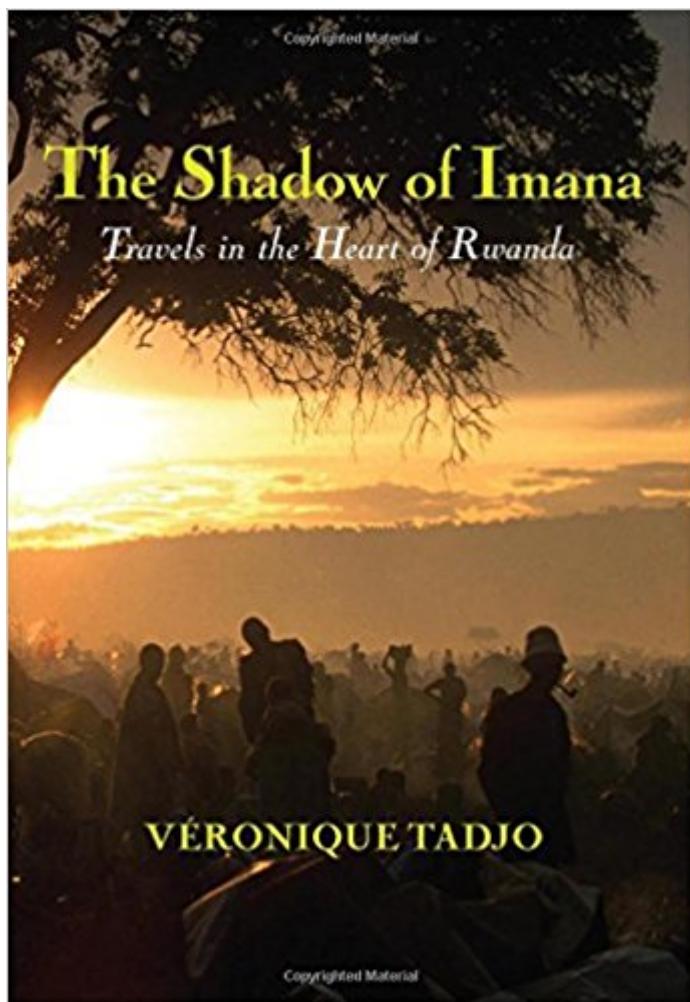


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The Shadow Of Imana: Travels In The Heart Of Rwanda



Synopsis

"I have not recovered from Rwanda. Rwanda cannot be exorcised. Danger is ever-present, lurking in the memory, crouching in the bush in neighbouring countries. Violence is still there, on every side." Véronique Tadjo As evidence emerged of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the outside world reeled in shock. What could have motivated these individual and collective acts of evil? In 1998, Véronique Tadjo traveled to Rwanda to try to find out. She started with the premise that what happened in Rwanda concerns us all: "We need to understand. Our humanity is in peril." The Shadow of Imana is a reminder that humankind the world over is capable of genocide. Records of what the author saw—sites of massacres, corpses, weapons dumps—are combined with personal stories of traumatized returnees, bereaved survivors, rape victims, orphans, lawyers faced with the impossible task of doing justice, prisoners. But Tadjo's story goes beyond mere reportage of death and cruelty. Her poetically wrought account incorporates traditional tales, explores the spiritual legacy of the genocide, and uncovers a healing vitality as well as a commitment to forgiveness. Véronique Tadjo was born in Paris and grew up in Côte d'Ivoire. The Shadow of Imana has been translated from the French by Véronique Wakerley.

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Customer Reviews

Veronique Tadjo is a writer, illustrator and painter from Côte d'Ivoire. She completed her BA at Abidjan University and her doctorate at the Sorbonne. Her work includes poetry and children's

books. She has won the Literary Prize of L'Agence de Cooperation Culturelle et Technique in 1983 and the UNICEF Prize in 1993. Until recently she lived in London with her husband and children but is now based in South Africa. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is not for light pleasure reading, it is beautiful and terrible. I wish it didn't have to exist.

Véronique Tadjo writes about post-genocide Rwanda with a poet's senses and a journalist's grasp of detail. She witnesses gangs of orphans rummaging through the Kigali town dump, searching for anything hopeful. She discovers a new plague of AIDS, exacerbated by the epidemic of rapes during the troubles. She even visits Rilissa Prison, a place filled with accused génocidaires. Within the prison are seven thousand prisoners, isolated in sections, including Section 15, which houses two hundred and fifty-three women accused of crimes. A male prisoner in the Section For Those Condemned to Death or Life Imprisonment pleads, "Write it down. Tell everybody. And if you can, send us some notebooks and pens to write with" (100). While Tadjo offers a thin shred of hope that truth, that words, that justice might heal the situation that she saw in Rwanda, she also admits, "I have not recovered from Rwanda...We need to understand, to analyse the mechanisms of hatred, the words that create division, the deeds that put the seal on treason, the actions that unleash terror. We need to understand. Our humanity is in peril" (118). This volume is a significant witness, part of the Fest-Afrique project to examine and broadcast the aftermath of genocide in this small central African nation.

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