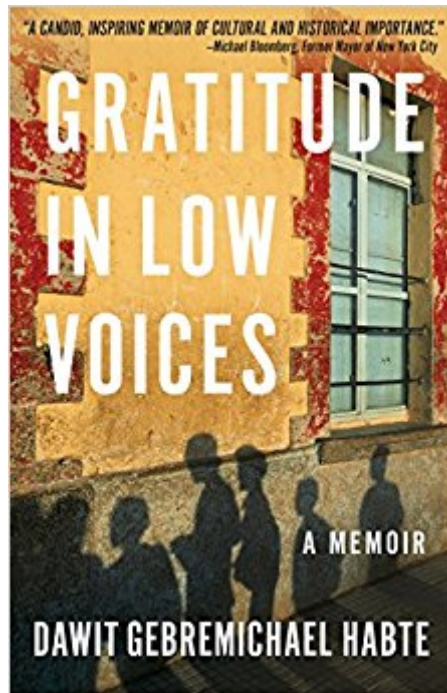




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Gratitude In Low Voices: A Memoir



Synopsis

Our bodies started shaking from the cold and shock, yet we were so terrified of being caught that we had to keep our teeth clenched together to keep them from chattering; we could not allow ourselves to make any sound. Whenever we heard a sound or detected motion, we would stare in that direction, even though we could see nothing but dark. Dawit Gebremichael Habte fled his homeland of Eritrea as a teenager. In the midst of the ongoing Eritrean-Ethiopian war, Dawit and his sisters crossed illegally into Kenya. Without their parents or documents to help their passage, they experienced the abuse and neglect known by so many refugees around the world. But Dawit refused to give up. He stayed resilient and positive. Journeying to the United States under asylum and still a boy, Dawit found a new purpose in an unfamiliar land. Against impossible odds, he studied hard and was accepted to Johns Hopkins University, eventually landing a job as a software engineer at Bloomberg. After a few years, with the support of Michael Bloomberg himself, Dawit returned to his homeland to offer business opportunities for other Eritreans. Dawit found a way to help his ancestral land emerge from thirty years of debilitating war. Gratitude in Low Voices is about how one man was marginalized, but how compassion and love never abandoned him. It's about learning how to care for family, and how to honor those who help the helpless. The life of a refugee is hard, and the lives of those in war-torn lands are harder still. This account reminds us that hope is not lost. This humble story of Dawit's life stands out in a time when we look at immigrants as never before a book that illuminates our decisions to help or to turn away those who land on our doorstep, and the gratitude that surely follows any act of compassion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A candid, inspiring memoir of cultural and historical importance."--Michael R. Bloomberg, Former Mayor of New York City

“A candid, inspiring memoir of cultural and historical importance.”
 Michael Bloomberg, former mayor of New York City (Michael Bloomberg)
 “Gratitude in Low Voices is an uplifting and encouraging read.”
 Randy Porter, Bloomberg BNA (Randy Porter)
 “In Gratitude in Low Voices, we experience the real human cost of war and its lasting impact on those involved.”
 Logan Davis, Bloomberg BNA (Logan Davis)
 “Gratitude in Low Voices is an inspiring memoir by Dawit Gebremichael Habte, who poignantly portrays his childhood in Africa and his struggles as a refugee to the United States.”
 This book is a reaffirmation of the good that people can do and how one young man succeeded despite the odds against him.

FOREWORD REVIEWS (Robin Farrell Edmunds Foreword Reviews)

A powerful memoir and testament to individual strength and how it truly does take a village - and our village today is a global village. Although parts of Dawit's and his families journey point to the cruelty and the very worst of humanity, in the end it is a tale of the power of good over evil. And more than that, how important each and every person is to each other. Hope and a vision, being good and kind, hard work, being prepared, all good lessons, all empowering points well illustrated by facts and the journey Dawit takes the reader along with him. I especially liked how much care he took to honor each of the key individuals in his journey - from his childhood mentor to his high school counselor, the reader gets a full picture of who that person was, not just the part he/she played in this story. If luck is the residue of design, Dawit's hard work and personal courage (with a little help from Mike Bloomberg) show us all how a life dedicated to paying it forward can have such a positive impact on the world. I highly recommend this book - easy read on a flight or over a weekend.

Dawit takes us through a journey of a young man and his home country. Although Dawit now resides in the US, it is obvious that he is still very much involved with and influenced by events taking place in Eritrea, his place of origin. Those of us less familiar with the historical and political climate in the Horn of Africa gain perspective in the intimate account through Dawit's experiences. Through his personal story, we are able to share his pain,

misfortunes and the ability to overcome adversity via the belief in himself, the goodness in others, and sheer determination to make the most out of any difficult situation. Along the way, we learn of many individuals who took an interest in Dawit's wellbeing. Dawit never forgets the contributions those "Good Samaritans" made to his life and this account offers his sincerest appreciation. Often, his situation seems to have no possible positive resolution, but somehow he finds his way onward with the support and guidance of the "Angels without wings" he meets along his journey. In *Gratitude in Low Voices*, not only does the reader follow Dawit's personal story, we experience the real human cost of war and its lasting impact on those involved. His captivating account gives the reader a first person perspective and draws us in through the final pages. While we follow Dawit throughout his youth, he relentlessly adapts to new cultures and societies while continually following the teaching of his mother to appreciate those who helped him along the way.

An excellent read that covers both the universal human story and the devastating cost of war. The book provides an excellent awareness to the plights of immigrants around the world where thousands of refugees leave their homeland and loved ones with nothing but hope. The author, Dawit Gebremichael Habte dedicated adequate space to Eritrea's history and culture which presents readers with an insight into the horrors of war and its effect on people living it. Something that really struck me was the casual reply of Dawit's sister, a victim of bomb shelling fired from the Ethiopian army which left her handicapped. For someone who has never been through a war, this struck me hard. How can people normalize something as gruesome and as horrifying as losing a part of themselves, literally? I guess you have to live it or experience it through memoirs like *Gratitude in Low Voices* to appreciate the depth and resilience of the human character. Starting from a very young age, Dawit crossed paths with many angels-without-wings who guided him throughout his journey. *Gratitude in Low Voices* is not about pain and suffering. It is also about a series of inspirational events that depicts how even after losing so much, one must keep going, achieve their goal and then someday bring light to and help those who are in a place they have been in the past. With the help and guidance of the angels-without-wings who crossed his path, no matter what the circumstances, Dawit was determined to acquire knowledge and share it with his compatriots. As the great leader Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". *Gratitude in Low Voices* is an affirmation to Mandela's words.

I have known Dawit for over 10 years. I am always impressed by his humility, down-to-earth approach and his very positive attitude of life. His love for his people, his generosity and willingness to help others is unparalleled. I was one of the first few trained (free of cost) in his company NATNA back in Asmara in 2000. Not only did his training gave me a solid foundation where I could build my career on but also I was one the first three employees (from the trainees) to be hired by the company and later worked in various projects of the company won. This book is a very interesting read, with lots of details not just on his life but also on the history of Eritrea. The author's journey is very fascinating and his tenacity and work ethic is remarkable. One thing you could clearly see from reading this book is how humble the author is. He doesn't credit himself to most of the successes he enjoyed in life, he is quick to point out the people who helped him get there whom he calls angels without wings. I truly enjoyed reading the book but I would have liked to see more details which I think are lacking in the book. For example I would have loved to read about his experiences on being a father for the first time, the decision to adopt his kids, what happened (and why) after the company was closed down and decided to move back to the US. Having said that, this is still a very fascinating book that gives a glimpse of the kind of man Dawit truly is.

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