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Leaving Before The Rains Come



Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER Looking to rebuild after a painful divorce, Alexandra Fuller turns to her African past for clues to living a life fully and without fear. A child of the Rhodesian wars and of two deeply complicated parents, Alexandra Fuller is no stranger to pain. But the disintegration of Fuller's own marriage leaves her shattered. Looking to pick up the pieces of her life, she confronts tough questions about her past, about the American man she married, and about the family she left behind in Africa. Fuller soon realizes that what is missing from her life is something that was always there: the brash and uncompromising ways of her father. "Tim Fuller of No Fixed Abode" is familiar to readers from Alexandra Fuller's New York Times "bestselling memoir Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight" was a man who regretted nothing and wanted less, even after fighting harder and losing more than most men could bear. Leaving Before the Rains Come showcases Fuller at the peak of her abilities, threading panoramic vistas with her deepest revelations as a fully grown woman and mother. Fuller reveals how "after spending a lifetime fearfully waiting for someone to show up and save her" she discovered that, in the end, we all simply have to save ourselves. An unforgettable book, Leaving Before the Rains Come is a story of sorrow grounded in the tragic grandeur and rueful joy only to be found in Fuller's Africa. "One of the gutsiest memoirs I've ever read. And the writing" oh my god the writing. "Entertainment Weekly

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A couple of years back I had the chance to visit Zambia for two weeks. When I came home, I found

it difficult to describe the people, the land, and the culture. In her new book, *Leaving Before the Rains Come*, Alexandra Fuller describes the country--with its beauty and tragedy--perfectly. Fuller writes about growing up in Zimbabwe and Zambia with her sister, her eccentric mother, and her "colorful" father: "Malaria,' Dad said when his bank manager asked him what contingencies he had made for his senior years. 'A bloody good, permanently fatal dose of malaria.'" Fuller's childhood in an unstable country with unconventional parents was far from what Westerners consider normal. She often uses the words "chaos" or "disorder" to describe it: "So we came to dinner at eight, dressed as if for the captain's table, although I knew, without knowing why I knew I knew it, that ours was really a lifeboat flung out onto the high sea of disorder....[Dad] put his revolver next to his side-plate. Mum put her Uzi on an empty chair beside her. 'Safety on?' Dad always asked." A desire for order, stability, and safety attracted the author to the man she ended up marrying, having children with, and later divorcing. The divorce itself, along with the events and emotions surrounding it, is the main story in *Leaving Before the Rains Come*. But the divorce isn't the whole story any more than one event in a life defines the whole life. The author dwells on details that seem insignificant--her father's family members whom she had never met, for instance, or the history of a woman she and her husband leased a cabin from near Victoria Falls. But she writes in such a way that we don't mind the detour, if we are on one at all.

While some readers might judge a book solely on the writing, which in this book is fine, I just can't get past the fact that this is a memoir of divorce. It's impossible for me to finish a divorce story with any feelings of satisfaction or enjoyment. As always, I feel sorry for the non-writing spouse of a divorcing couple. Because that voice cannot be heard, I cannot take the author's story at face value. In fact, I feel sorry for Alexandra Fuller's ex-husband; she seems like a Peter Pan figure, unwilling to grow up and take charge of her life. Finances caused a major part of the couple's difficulties; she's willfully ignorant of their finances and makes no pretense of being interested. (She takes a financial course after she divorces, though.) And she expresses disdain for those who would lead "boring" lives, even though it might pay the mortgage and put food on the table. Because of her upbringing in Africa by woefully negligent parents, she is addicted to drama and trauma. She just can't handle a quiet life in which no one is screaming, falling down drunk or on the verge of tragedy. She finds her married life in Montana to be too tame. She finds the United States too tame. "It was like being in the constant company of a kindly, sandwich-toting, risk-averse aunt," she says. She seems disappointed that her husband's family hailing from "Mainline Philadelphia" doesn't make them heroin addicts. I began to weary of the author's wistfulness about her upbringing (especially given

that she writes about the sexual abuse she and her sister suffered and which her parents waved away) and her narcissistic focus. At one point, her husband calls from a safari he's leading in Zambia and says, "I was almost eaten by a lion last night." Her response?

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