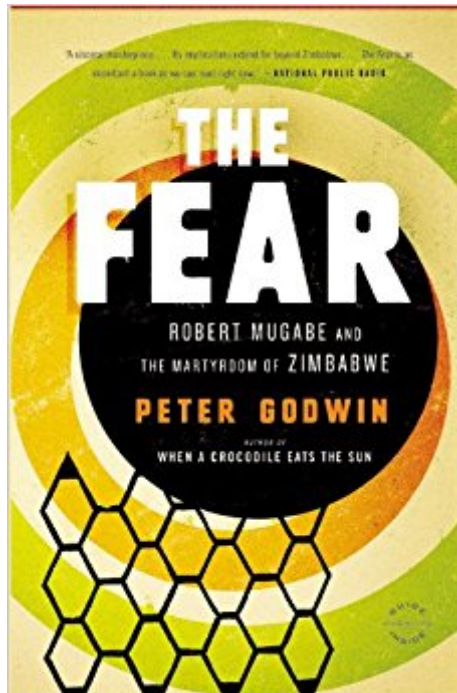


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The Fear: Robert Mugabe And The Martyrdom Of Zimbabwe



Synopsis

In 2008, memoirist and journalist Peter Godwin secretly returned to his native Zimbabwe after its notoriously tyrannical leader, Robert Mugabe, lost an election. The decision was severely risky--foreign journalists had been banned to prevent the world from seeing a corrupt leader's refusal to cede power. Zimbabweans have named this period, simply, The Fear. Godwin bears witness to the torture bases, the burning villages, the opposition leaders in hiding, the last white farmers, and the churchmen and diplomats putting their own lives on the line to stop the carnage. Told with a brilliant eye for detail, THE FEAR is a stunning personal account of a people laid waste by a despot and, armed with nothing but a desire to be free, their astonishing courage and resilience.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. In this remarkable look inside Mugabe's isolated yet restive Zimbabwe, journalist Godwin (*When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*) and his sister, Georgina, return to their childhood home "to dance on Robert Mugabe's political grave

Returning to his native Zimbabwe in 2008, Godwin had hoped to "dance on Robert Mugabe's political grave." But though Mugabe had been voted out as president, he did not concede power, instead sponsoring a brutal campaign of violence to crush his political opponents and suppress dissent in a land already devastated by hyperinflation and Mugabe's compulsory land-redistribution program. Chronicling the violence, the suffering,

and the chaos; recounting the stories of torture survivors and victims of politically motivated vigilantism; and examining Mugabe's biography and politics (and placing himself in significant danger in the process), Godwin only occasionally recognizes the Zimbabwe of his childhood. But, finding heroism and resistance in the face of horrific carnage, he discovers a side of the nation that he had not known before. Much more than just the author's third memoir of Zimbabwe (after *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa*, 1996, and *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 2007), this selection is an important work of witness. --Brendan Driscoll --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

As a fellow Zimbabwean living on foreign shores, having read Peter Godwin's *The Fear* I am at a loss for words. Partly because the subject matter is so bitterly painful, there is no coherent way to respond to the way the grip of power has squeezed out such a horrendous toll of human suffering, but also, no doubt, by the manner in which, despite harrowing detail, all of which he chronicles with a poignant deftness, the author still manages to transport me, with yearning, to this beautiful land. Despite the political savagery that has taken a similar toll on the wildlife, trees, rivers and mountains, Zimbabwe's haggard remnants are still proudly bursting forth. So much so that my childhood memories are keenly awakened and I feel a solid lump of sorrow for Zim's fateful journey. And I, who live in relative luxury many miles away, aware of the hard times being faced by family and friends, have imagined a subtler version of Godwin's account, probably to quieten my own fear of what has become of my home. They call people like me, one of multitudes of Zimbabweans who live abroad, the diaspora. I knew we were of some assistance to those at home in a way by sending foreign currency and goods from time to time, but reading this book, I fear we have grossly underestimated the conditions faced by our compatriots and our absence and failure to participate is perhaps an indictment against us? I ask myself why haven't we, as a people, well educated, talented, inherently dignified, though of humble bearing, and here I speak not for myself, but the many Zimbabweans I have encountered in my life, why have we not prevented the outrage that is modern day Zim? This has troubled me over the years as I have gone about raising my children and the daily grind of my comfortable western life. But the answer is really not that complicated, it is black and white as documented in this book. The insane trajectory that took my home from its sunny post-independence to these dark and treacherous days, is one founded on a bedrock of fear. A groove as deep and ugly as those left by the marauding clear cutters and miners who rob Zimbabwe of its abundant fauna and tear the pristine countryside apart at its seams. I don't despair for Zimbabwe yet. I still have hope. But *The Fear* has reminded me to re-examine my good fortune

and consider what it is I can do to make this world a better place. This is, I think, what any good book should do. For some lighter reading on Zimbabwe, go to: *The Summoner: (The Dominic Grey Novels) (Volume 1)*

This ought to be required reading for every citizen on the planet because until the world understands the depth of the torture that Mr. Goodwin so very bravely sought out to write about, Mr. Mugabe and his co-monsters will continue on to not just kill but mutilate and torture an entire nation while destroying the farms and businesses that were in place when he took the "throne." Yes, Ian Smith had to go as did his racist world view but the very last thing Rhodesia needed was a truly insane tyrant. They in effect traded a migraine for a brain tumor. Though Canadian born, I live in the US and tend to be a pacifist but after hearing - not seeing - the performance of the Navy Seals when they captured bin Laden, one has to wonder why that US is wasting zillions of dollars bombing the middle east when the final result will show all we gained was more ill will than we had going in. A prudent use of the Seals to take out Mr. Mugabe and his closest murdering friends, would make so much more sense than Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya put together. No, there is no oil in Zimbabwe but there are human beings who literally are being gored to death every day and if we collectively continue to ignore it, this will be on our plate as a reminder of just what we didn't do when we could have with relative ease. Mr. Goodwin is beyond brave for taking very serious risks day after day as he moved around Zimbabwe to talk with and meet the opposition leaders as well as so many of the maimed. Often they were one and the same person. But Mr. Goodwin shows that rare sort of courage that makes us all feel so inadequate but he is kind enough to suggest ways we can help from afar. Read this book because you will never forget it. It isn't the first example obviously of man's inhumanity toward man but it's a current story that can be addressed right now if we have the will to see King Mugabe tumble forever from this earth to what after reading this book, I hope will be a berth in hell next to Hitler's and Pol Pot's and Stalin and Mao and all the others.

This book cannot be read in one sitting if you have any empathy with the characters in it. There are members of our church who escaped this tyranny a decade ago. I asked one of them to read it and tell me how accurate it was, based on her experience there. It was too painful for her to finish reading - too many sad memories. Mugabe's reign started like many reformers and turned out like many of them - noble and uplifting at the beginning, corrupt and murderous at the end. Mugabe is depicted as evil incarnate and from the testimony of our church members who lived there, the depiction is no exaggeration.

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