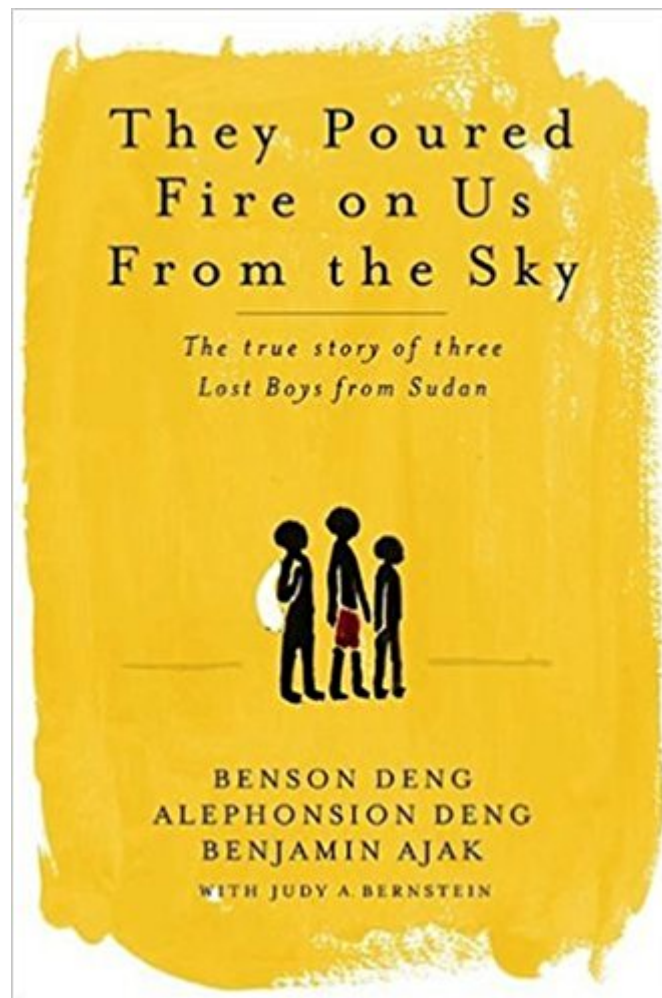




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They Poured Fire On Us From The Sky: The Story Of Three Lost Boys From Sudan



Synopsis

Benjamin, Alepho, and Benson were raised among the Dinka tribe of Sudan. Their world was an insulated, close-knit community of grass-roofed cottages, cattle herders, and tribal councils. The lions and pythons that prowled beyond the village fences were the greatest threat they knew. All that changed the night the government-armed Murahiliin began attacking their villages. Amid the chaos, screams, conflagration, and gunfire, five-year-old Benson and seven-year-old Benjamin fled into the dark night. Two years later, Alepho, age seven, was forced to do the same. Across the Southern Sudan, over the next five years, thousands of other boys did likewise, joining this stream of child refugees that became known as the Lost Boys. Their journey would take them over one thousand miles across a war-ravaged country, through landmine-sown paths, crocodile-infested waters, and grotesque extremes of hunger, thirst, and disease. The refugee camps they eventually filtered through offered little respite from the brutality they were fleeing. In *They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky*, Alepho, Benson, and Benjamin, by turn, recount their experiences along this unthinkable journey. They vividly recall the family, friends, and tribal world they left far behind them and their desperate efforts to keep track of one another. This is a captivating memoir of Sudan and a powerful portrait of war as seen through the eyes of children. And it is, in the end, an inspiring and unforgettable tribute to the tenacity of even the youngest human spirits.

Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: PublicAffairs (June 14, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1586482696

ISBN-13: 978-1586482695

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 5.8 x 1.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 178 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #320,987 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in [Books > History > Africa > Sudan](#) #93 in [Books > History > Africa > North Africa](#) #202 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Africa](#)

Customer Reviews

Raised by Sudan's Dinka tribe, the Deng brothers and their cousin Benjamin were all under the age of seven when they left their homes after terrifying attacks on their villages during the Sudanese civil

war. In 2001, the three were relocated to the U.S. from Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp as part of an international refugee relief program. Arriving in this country, they immediately began to fill composition books with the memoirs of chaos and culture shock collected here. Well written, often poetic essays by Benson, Alepho and Benjamin, who are now San Diego residents in their mid-20s, are arranged in alternating chapters and recall their childhood experiences, their treacherous trek and their education in the camp ("People were learning under trees"). Other pieces remember the rampant disease and famine among refugees, and the tremendous hardship of day-to-day living ("Refugee life was like being devoured by wild animals"). When the boys arrived in America, Benson, upon seeing a Wal-Mart for the first time, remarked, "This is like a king's palace." Although some readers may wish for more commentary on what life in America is like for these transplants, this collection is moving in its depictions of unbelievable courage. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Many of the reviews simply summarize the book and plight of the "Lost Boys of Sudan," as if the reviewers were too awestruck by the story to criticize its telling. Critics describe the narrative as "numbing," "surreal," "amazing," "harrowing," and "haunting." Details of scrambling for food, crossing crocodile-inhabited rivers, suffering injuries, and joining the rebel movement against their will abound. One would have enjoyed reading more about the boys' culture shock upon arriving in America; one would have liked a map of the boys' journey. Yet all agree that this group memoir is moving and ultimately inspirational. Copyright © 2004 Phillips & Nelson Media, Inc.

This book contains an amazing story- one ALL older children should read and adults as well. Seeing what these LITTLE boys as well as all the other Sudanese people went through will shock you and hopefully change the way you think about things. We complain about so many little things like the crack in our iPhone screen, or gas prices, or the fact that they are out of our favorite ice cream. These boys were surrounded by death, fear, poverty, and terrible conditions during a time of unspeakable terror for many people. They endured hardships and came out the other end and are creating a better life for themselves. The way they wrote their stories makes the book an easy read although it may bring tears to your eyes!! I have rotated it between each of my teenage children- knowing they need to see what life can be like for some many others. READ this ... It will be a story that will stay with you forever...

Bought for a class

This book is about boys in Sudan who were made to run away from their village homes due to a terrible civil war in Sudan fought over religion. These boys are from the Dinka tribe and the Arabs want to convert them. This book is written by the boys themselves, so the accounts are very genuine and make it feel very real (because it really is real and is happening). The details are quite gruesome at times, but it shows how horrible their lives were. The book covers their story from the time they were in their villages, to their terrible journey across the desert, to various refugee camps where life was still horrible and finally a UNHCR program facilitates them coming to America to basically start a whole new life. The story, as mentioned before, is told through the accounts of three boys. These accounts were compiled by an American woman who was a mentor to them in San Diego. The descriptions are very detailed and really make you feel what is happening to the boys. At least, it did that to me. It is surprisingly very well written, and actually made me want to read it to the end, as opposed to making me want to stop reading it and complain that it was just a bunch of whining, like some other books about suffering are. This makes you very emotionally invested in the characters, and nothing is considered whining. Their feelings are justified, and I cannot recall one instance of them complaining in this account. That's what makes it so readable. The only problem (which isn't really a problem) I had with this book is how sad it made me. Which is supposed to happen. You read about a lot of suffering in many fiction books, but reading a nonfiction book about that suffering, coming straight from boys who experienced it for no fault of their own really drives it in. There is a lot of suffering in the world, and not much is being done to solve it. The book made me do more research on these boys and I found out what is done for them, and I realized that there isn't much done to help them. Anyway, back to the book. I think this is a very very good book to read for anyone. It doesn't matter that it is a little depressing, because that's how their lives are. And it actually keeps you interested in the story because you want to know what happens to the boys always. Even now, I'm curious to how these boys are doing in life after the part the book covers. The introduction is worth reading as well to get some background information on these boys, and it also reassures the wellbeing of these boys in the end. This is a book I would recommend to any friend to read.

They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky is the captivating story of three boys: Benson, Benjamin, and Alepho, who must flee their homes when they are very young children due to a civil war between the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army and the country's government. The book follows the lives of each of

the boys through alternating chapters, as the chaos of war separates and reunites them. They go days without food and water and walk thousands of miles, living on the edge of death as other boys die of thirst, malnutrition, war, and animal attacks. When they finally find relative safety and a home in the Kakuma refugee camp, they must contend with lack of food and water, corruption and oppression by the Kenyan camp workers. This is a book that will fill you with waves of emotion, from guilt to sadness to anger and amazement. Despite these varying emotions, I still could not put the book down. I found that it made my first world problems seem trivial in the face of what these children and this country has gone through. It was amazing that children as young as 8 or 9 had to act as adults and give up their own resources to help the younger children survive. Most surprisingly, I smiled at the optimism that the boys had despite their situation. They clung onto their childhood and were happy and played like children when they were able, even though they never stopped facing terrible adversity. The book is amazingly well written, with an authentic tone that reflects the authors' true connection to their childhood experiences. The only thing that subtracts from this novel's brilliance is that sometimes the changing narrators got a bit confusing, as the tone of the narratives sounded similar and there weren't very many striking differences between them. In the same vein, I feel that each of the characters were not as well developed as they could have been; although this may have just been a consequence of the situation as the characters were focused almost solely on survival. I believe that *They Poured Fire on Us from the Sky* is a must read. It is very important to know their story and learn about the genocide that is killing and displacing thousands of Sudanese people. I hope it will transform you the way it has transformed me.

I have no words to describe what these courageous young men endured, horrors that no human being should ever see or experience. Please read, open your eyes, and then be a part of the solution. All the best to these outstanding, intelligent young men!

You cannot ask for a more personal view into the effects of war on young boys. Or on how the mind of good people can change when starvation is a continuous threat. The courage to relive this to tell us their story is remarkable.

This is an amazing book about the human spirit and will to survive. I can hardly put it down. These boys—they went through so much. I would hope everyone reads this to honor all they went through. We are so blessed in this country to have medical care, food, housing, freedom. I have an 8 year old son and I can't even imagine him walking to the bus alone. This book breaks my heart.

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