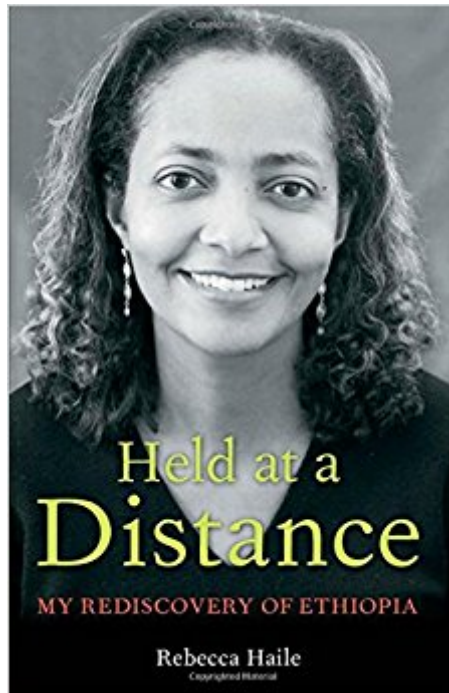


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Held At A Distance: A Rediscovery Of Ethiopia



Synopsis

This powerful book gives readers a chance to experience Ethiopia through the personal experience of a writer who is both Ethiopian and American. It takes readers beyond headlines and stereotypes to a deeper understanding of the country. This is an absorbing account of the author's return trip to Ethiopia as an adult, having left the country in exile with her family at age 11. She profiles relatives and friends who have remained in Ethiopia, and she writes movingly about Ethiopia's recent past and its ancient history. She offers a clear-eyed analysis of the state of the country today, and her keen observations and personal experience will resonate with readers. This is a unique glimpse into a fascinating African country by a talented writer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Haile's parents fled Ethiopia in 1976, two years after a brutal coup and the beatings that resulted in her father's paralysis. Her family relocated to central Minnesota, her father regained professional status as a scholar, and she eventually went to law school. The coup ended a centuries-old monarchy, replacing it with a dictatorship that was ousted by rebels in 1991. Twenty-five years after departing Ethiopia, Haile returns with her husband to explore the effect of the revolution and the upheaval that took away a sense of community. Although her family was reconstituted in the U.S., it was never the same. She gauges the change and measures the extent of her loss, even as she learns of her uncle's valiant efforts to maintain his engineering business and create jobs in a nation suffering from a faltering economy. Haile also sees firsthand remnants of timeless tradition and culture as well as a multicultural nation torn by ethnic divisions that threaten its sense of nationhood.

This is a riveting and personal look at a nation still in turmoil. Vanessa BushCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

"This is a riveting and personal look at a nation still in turmoil." • Booklist
"This engaging read provides a compelling face to the story of Ethiopia today." • Library Journal

I'm moving to Ethiopia in a couple of weeks, and I bought this book - and others - to learn more about this country, its history, people, language and culture. "Held at a Distance" is easy to read, with a likeable Ethiopian-American author who chronicles her journey back to Ethiopia - both to Addis Ababa and other regions of the country - with her American husband twenty or so years after she and her family fled. The book gives the reader a good overview of Ethiopia's recent history through the eyes of a lady who in some ways feels like a local, but in others, witnesses the country as if she's a foreigner visiting for the first time. Most interesting for me, as one who is very interested in foreign languages, and especially the political and cultural implications of speaking one language over another, was reading her experiences speaking Amharic to in Tigrinya speaking regions and the varied reactions which she elicited from a number of the people there. Recommended as an easy to read book to introduce you to contemporary Ethiopia.

This book is very informative about a rather amazing country that little is written about. I had the good fortune of having a mother and two beautiful daughters from Ethiopia live with me here in Gainesville, Georgia, for three years. The mother has her own home now not far away, but I still miss having them here in the house with me. I was able to visit one daughter after she returned to Addis Ababa to be married and also visited Lalibela where I was enchanted by the ancient underground churches. I have wanted to go back and do additional exploring, and this book made me feel like I was visiting again. I just wish it had been longer and more detailed.

I read this book in conjunction with a trip to Ethiopia. I found that the book put a personal spin on many of the places that I visited and things that I observed and experienced on my trip.

Ms. Haile's book was more than just an enjoyable and interesting read; it was an all-too-rare voyage into an unfamiliar culture from the viewpoint of someone who is rooted in both that culture and our own. Seeing this "mysterious" world through the eyes of a well-educated American who grew up in Ethiopia we can understand the differences in a way that someone who isn't a part of both worlds

cannot. Reading the book was a fun experience and I found myself happy to devour it.

Thank you for such a great book!

superficial -- i wanted to know more about ethiopia

Did not like it. I was expecting a little bit more history about her country.

Before a trip to Ethiopia, I read this book. It gave a good overview of Ethiopian history, some geography, sights, personalities, culture, modern concerns.

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