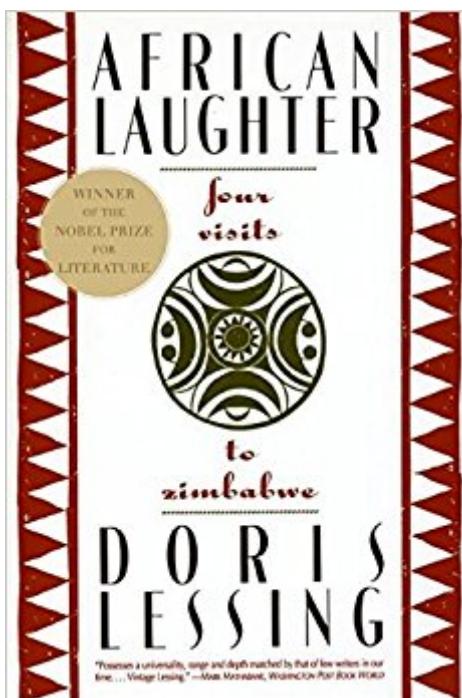


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# African Laughter: Four Visits To Zimbabwe



## **Synopsis**

A highly personal story of the eminent British writer returning to her African roots that is "brilliant . . . [and] captures the contradictions of a young country."--New York Times Book Review

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Powerfully written and passionately felt, this memoir details four trips that novelist Lessing made to her homeland of Zimbabwe in the years since its founding in the place of the former Rhodesia.

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Because Lessing grew up in Zimbabwe, she has drawn upon her African experiences in many of her writings, including *Going Home* (1957. o.p.), the story of her return to a land still ruled by a white minority. This time, she returns to an independent Zimbabwe in 1982 to be greeted by *The Monologue*: white complaints about black ineptitude. Subsequent trips in 1988 and 1989 focus on black frustration with the slowness of change ("Why can't Mugabe chief of state do anything about . . . ?") as well as with corruption. A 1992 update ends the book on a somber note: economic decline, drought, and AIDS. This is quite a fascinating look at life in Zimbabwe from someone who has an intimate knowledge of the country. *African Laughter* is highly recommended. Previewed in *Prepub Alert*, LJ 6/15/92.- Paul H. Thomas, Hoover Inst. Lib., Stanford, Cal. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Three stars is probably pushing it a bit. I gave it three because it had a lot of very interesting

information about Zimbabwe. However, I found the writing in quite a number of places to be sufficiently "disjointed" as to require that I go back and re-read the text to try to figure out what was meant--and many times it was never clear, even taking into account the English (vs. American) writer. (My husband is from England, so I'm pretty clued in to a lot of the differences in their ways of speaking, different words, etc.) In my opinion, writing should be smooth and easy enough to understand (at every level of writing). Sentences do not have to be "complete", but should be comprehensible. Paragraphs should have subjects which relate to one another. Retrospective thinking should be clearly retrospective and not "now". Quite a number of issues here. But I thank the author for the information imparted (keeping in mind that she makes it very clear that it is all her own perspective).

A well known writer returns to her home country, formerly Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. I enjoyed the book as she compares what was and what happened post independence. A great writer told some great stories from the white and black perspective. Sadly, the book is decades out of date. The awful things that could never happen...happened. As a moment in time it fascinates but it has little current relevance. A reader who has great interest in the transition from colonial to early independence might find it interesting. It has little to do with the modern day country.

Tremendous mastery of description! I would highly recommend this to anyone who enjoys being riveted and transported in time and place by the written word. Engages the imagination in ways that are impossible in cinema.

Really boring.

Enjoyed it learned a lot. Wish the writing style had been more smooth but definitely easy to understand and follow.

Doris Lessing paints an intriguing picture of life in South Rhodesia as she experienced it during her childhood and later discovered as she travels through her former homeland, now known as Zimbabwe. Lessing brings both an insider's and an outsider's perspective as she reflects on the changes experienced in South Africa as it moved from being a British colony to a new struggling socialist African nation.

A bitter-sweet (mostly bitter) memoir of Lessing's return to the country of her childhood. Formerly Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, the country is a disaster: the bush has been destroyed, the animals are gone, the government is corrupt and cruel. I'm not sure where the title comes from because no one is laughing in this book, especially the readers. I found it tedious and repetitious.

What little Westerners know of African history, and most of it slanted from pure ivory towers. This is a truly engrossing study by an insider of the struggles, the courage, the heartbreak, not just of Zimbabwe but of surrounding cities and people's--white and black. You have to laugh not to weep.

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