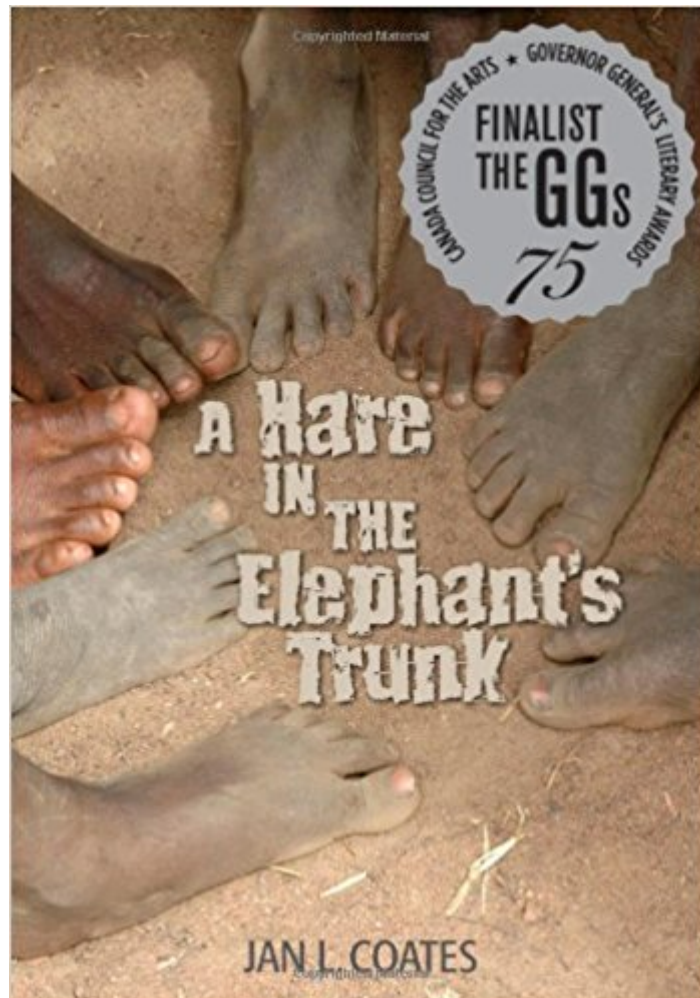




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A Hare In The Elephant's Trunk



Synopsis

In the little village of Duk Padiet in southern Sudan, a boy named Jacob Deng thrives on the love of his mother, the companionship of his sisters, the excitement of learning how to look after his uncle's herds of cattle. The year is 1987, and suddenly in the night soldiers from the north invade the village, looting, burning, and killing. The war has arrived, and the life of Jacob will never be the same. This novel is based on the real life experiences of a Sudanese boy who, with thousands of other boys from the region, fled for his life and spent seven years walking through deserts, grasslands and forests, crossing crocodile-infested rivers, surviving life in massive refugee camps. The so-called Lost Boys of Sudan as they were called by an American aid organization numbered as many as 27,000, and while many died from starvation, attacks by wild animals, drowning, or through the brutality of the military many survived. Jacob never returned to his village, but though he was only seven years old when he had to flee, he somehow managed to live through an almost unimaginable ordeal. Throughout the seven years covered in this story, Jacob resists the temptation to join the liberation army. Steadily Jacob finds himself more and more adhering to his mother's advice that getting an education is crucial to escaping the cycle of violence that afflicts his country. Jacob's struggle, then, is to persist in seeking out teachers and eventually a school where his ambition to learn about the world can be met. Through it all he learns about loyalty and love for close friends who have been thrust together with him on this extraordinary journey, and also about the guiding light provided by the memory of his mother.

Book Information

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Discussions > Violence

Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 6 - 8

Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up—Seven-year-old Jacob escapes Sudan's civil war, joining a band of boys who walk for months to refugee camps in Ethiopia and then Kenya before the talented and determined boy is accepted at school in Nairobi, at 14. Dinka folktales are woven into this heartwarming survival tale, based on a true story. (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Drawing on the true story of one child who fled southern Sudan's brutal civil war, this novel is told from the viewpoint of a "Lost Boy," Jacob, who is just seven years old when he is forced to leave his home and family in 1987. After a perilous trek, he eventually finds refuge in United Nations camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, and, at age 12, he achieves his dream of going to school. As in *Lost Boy, Lost Girl: Escaping Civil War in Sudan*, by John Bul Dau and Martha Arual Akech (2010), and many other similar, personal accounts of Sudan's conflict, this novel describes the brutal journey and the bliss, for some, of finding food, fresh water, and shelter, as well as the pressure the boys feel to join the army. Along the way, Jacob nurtures a younger kid, and his explanations to the child about the struggle "to find peace again" also put the events in context for readers. Teens will be moved by the unsparing survival story and the climax, when Jacob learns to read. Grades 9-12. --Hazel Rochman

Good condition

i didnt finish readin it

good

In 1983, southern Sudan was thrust into civil war and thousands of boys were displaced. Families and whole villages were destroyed, torn apart, lost forever. This story is based on the true story of Jacob Deng who was a child of the Sudan. The author, Jan Coates, has masterfully woven fiction around the deeply moving, horrific story of a young child running for his life. Jacob was only seven

years old when his village was raided and he barely escaped certain death. Having to leave his mother behind, along with everything he knew, he began walking for what turned into many months, and along the way he joined up with hundreds of others - all boys - on the same journey. After crossing a crocodile-infested river the survivors became refugees in another country, but even there they were not safe. This is such a gripping, well-written story that at times I gasped, aloud said, "oh no!", and winced at the suffering and struggles those young children endured. Hungry, afraid, and without their parents, they did what they knew to do - stay together, keep walking, keep ahead of the enemy, and somehow survive another day of exposure to the elements and wild animals. This is one of those books that was truly hard to put down - when eating and sleeping seemed a nuisance while reading a story in which both food and sleep were hard to come by for those children. *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk* is not overly graphic to read, but at the same time it is real. Jan wrote a powerfully descriptive story that pulls the reader into the life and climate of Africa where daily existence is fraught with the challenge simply to survive. And this story is a story of survival and the strength of the human will along with an underlying faith to rise above one's circumstances. The amazing gem is that Jan Coates met Jacob Deng here in Nova Scotia, and after talking with him she felt compelled to write his story. The result, *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk*, has gained well deserved attention, now listed as a 2011 finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award - winner to be announced in November. In the back of the book there is a glossary to which the reader can refer to understand the meaning of some African words, such as *abaar*, which means orphan, and *wadeng* - a Dinka word which means look always to tomorrow; it will be better. This book is an excellent way to learn about the story of the Lost Boys of Sudan. Proceeds from the sale of *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk* are shared with Jacob's charity *Wadeng Wings of Hope*, which is another good reason to add this novel to your personal library.

Titled from an African folk tale, this book is based on the life of a real person. Only 7 when civil war destroys his village, the fictional Jacob Deng is separated from all but one of his relatives, a 14-year-old boy. The two join a growing crowd of other boys walking toward Ethiopia, where they hope to find not only safety but their lost families. It takes more than two months of hard, hungry, thirsty walking to find a refuge. Then war reaches Ethiopia, and again they must flee, this time to Kenya. At nearly 300 pages, the book mirrors the long marches, sharing the boys' perilous treks in a matter-of-fact voice. Memories of his mother sustain Jacob. As a small child he wanted to become a soldier, but she wanted him to go to school. Growing from a child to a young man in a violent world, Jacob comes to see education as the road to peace. After 7 long, difficult years as a Lost Boy,

Jacob finally enters school. Today, the real-life Jacob Deng operates the charity "Wadeng--Wings of Hope," which he founded to make a differences in the lives of people in southern Sudan.

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