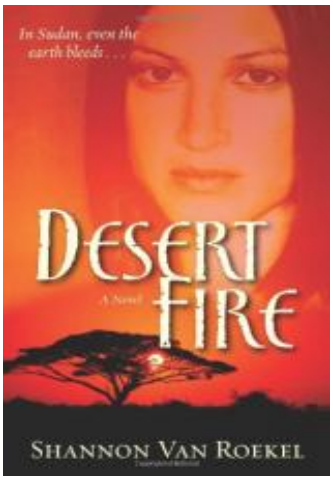
ReadingGroupGuides
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Desert Fire

by Shannon Van Roekel



About the Book

Personal turmoil amid horrific conflict --- these are the elements of a career-making headline... and a journey toward healing

On assignment in Darfur, journalist Julia Keegan is determined to open the eyes of average Americans to the atrocities taking place there --- and to distance herself from the dark shadow cast by her father, a man she?s never really known. So when Joel Maartens, her father?s young lawyer, shows up in Sudan, Julia is completely unprepared to respond. She has steeled herself against the horrors of genocide, but she isn?t prepared to face her own past.

As Joel?s and Julia?s lives are redefined by the injustice and violence around them, both are forced to face truths they would rather leave concealed. Fighting for justice is no easy task, but learning to forgive in the face of hatred may be the resolution that Joel and Julia both desperately need.

Discussion Guide

1. What is your first impression of Julia Keegan? Did your impression of her change at all as the plot unfolded?

2. Were you surprised by Joel?s purpose for being in Sudan? Why or why not?

3. Though it?s fiction, **Desert Fire** speaks of themes and issues very real in our world. Do you think it?s helpful for fiction to explore controversial issues such as these? Has reading about Darfur in a novel helped you understand the conflict? How?

4. Forgiveness is a theme running through the story. How was it played out in different characters?

5. How did you see God working in people?s hearts through external events? How has He done this in your life?

6. Think of some of the tragedies mentioned in this book (i.e. genocide, Keegan's crime, hungry children...). How did God turn those situations to good for His purpose?

7. There are many contributing factors at work in this book: action, characters, setting, history, religion, politics. What did you find most compelling and why? What clues did the author give to keep you reading? Did you anticipate any of the events in the story?

8. Discuss the novel's ending. What is the final message of this book?

Author Bio

Shannon Van Roekel has volunteered on the mission field in both Africa and Mexico. She is the author of MATTHEW'S VOYAGE and has published works in *Guideposts 4 Teens* and *The Upper Room*. Shannon lives with her husband and five children in British Columbia.

Critical Praise

"In this extraordinary novel, Shannon Van Roekel brings vividly and accurately to life the horror of Darfur --- and the shining torch of God?s hope and love being raised high in that darkness. While global leaders sit inert on the sidelines of Sudan?s genocide, Van Roekel has issued a clarion challenge for Christians to step forward as Christ?s hands and feet and heart to the world?s most oppressed. Let?s heed it!"

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