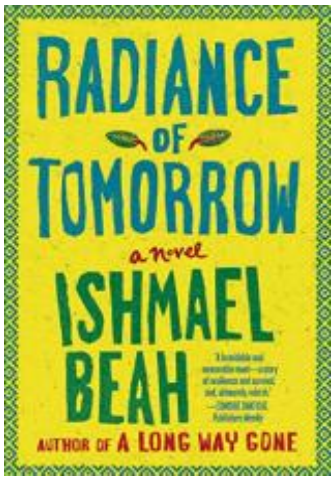
Radiance of Tomorrow

by Ishmael Beah



About the Book

When Ishmael Beah?s ALONG WAY GONE was published in 2007, it soared to the top of bestseller lists, becoming an instant classic: a harrowing account of Sierra Leone?s civil war and the fate of child soldiers that ?everyone in the world should read? (*The Washington Post*). Now Beah, whom Dave Eggers has called ?arguably the most read African writer in contemporary literature,? has returned with his first novel, an affecting, tender parable about postwar life in Sierra Leone.

At the center of RADIANCE OF TOMORROW are Benjamin and Bockarie, two longtime friends who return to their hometown, Imperi, after the civil war. The village is in ruins, the ground covered in bones. As more villagers begin to come back, Benjamin and Bockarie try to forge a new community by taking up their former posts as teachers, but they?re beset by obstacles: a scarcity of food; a rash of murders, thievery, rape and retaliation; and the depredations of a foreign mining company intent on sullying the town?s water supply and blocking its paths with electric wires. As Benjamin and Bockarie search for a way to restore order, they?re forced to reckon with the uncertainty of their past and future alike.

With the gentle lyricism of a dream and the moral clarity of a fable, RADIANCE OF TOMORROW is a powerful novel about preserving what means the most to us, even in uncertain times.

Discussion Guide

1. As you read the opening scenes, what did you discover about the reasons Mama Kadie and Pa Moiwa returned to their village, despite the tragedies that occurred there? Do you feel a similar connection to your homeland? How do you feel about your community or homeland?

2. How are the people of Imperi sustained by their relationship to the natural world? When their water supply becomes

contaminated, how does this reflect the other contaminations --- spiritual, emotional and physical --- of their community?

3. Discuss the role of education in rebuilding Imperi. What fosters the students? respect for their teachers? How do uniforms and other mandates keep the schools from being truly ?public?? Is the principal, Mr. Fofanah, a sinister man or simply a skilled survivor? What accounts for the corruption within the Educational Ministry of Lion Mountain (Sierra Leone)?

4. What choice did Benjamin and Bockarie have when they abandoned teaching in order to work in the mines? How is their friendship affected by their decision? What are the consequences for a society that has essentially no middle class?

5. How did you react to Colonel?s approach to security? For his fellow villagers who survived the atrocities of civil war, what determines the difference between being paranoid and being naïve?

6. How is family life in Imperi distorted by the raiders and the mining company? What do you predict for the ?tomorrow? generation of Miata and Abu?

7. What did the novel?s elders teach you about living and leading?

8. Discuss the author?s poetic use of language, which he discusses in the author?s note. What do his colorful images say about the way a community can experience the world?

9. Chapter 8 describes the vulnerability of women as the village itself becomes vulnerable to outsiders. As rape and prostitution rise, parents recall a time when they didn?t fear letting their daughters go out simply to fetch water. How is the power of Imperi?s women transformed throughout the novel?

10. What will be the legacy of villagers like those featured in the novel, even as the modern world threatens to erase their traditions? Is the Western materialism described in the book --- from cell phone addiction to flashy cars --- ever a positive force?

11. If we read RADIANCE OF TOMORROW as a parable, what is its lesson?

12. For decades, writers have exposed numerous incidents of devastation wrought by mining. In 2012, particularly shocking headlines appeared when South African police fatally shot more than thirty striking workers during a protest at the Lonmin platinum mine in Marikana. As consumers, what can we do to become agents for change?

13. Discuss Kula?s tale, which forms the novel?s closing scene. As a reader, how would you describe the necessity of storytelling? How did RADIANCE OF TOMORROW enrich your experience of Ishmael Beah?s memoir, A Long Way Gone?

Author Bio

Ishmael Beah is the Sierra Leonean and American author of the novels RADIANCE OF TOMORROW and LITTLE FAMILY, and the memoir A LONG WAY GONE, which was a #1 *New York Times* bestseller and has been published in

more than 40 languages. A UNICEF Ambassador and Advocate for Children Affected by War, and a member of the Human Rights Watch Children?s Advisory Committee, he lives in Los Angeles with his wife and their children.

Critical Praise

?I really admire the uncompromising bravery of this book. Ishmael Beah has written a novel that moves between forms?part fable, part family epic, part poem. He doesn?t shy away from the horror, nor does he forget that the true function of storytelling is its ability to break our hearts. Reminiscent of Ben Okri and Chinua Achebe, Beah manages to lift the curtain on a world we cannot afford to flinch from.?
?Colum McCann, National Book Award?winning author of TRANSATLANTICand LET THE GREAT WORLD SPIN

?UNICEF Ambassador Beah writes lyrically and passionately about ugly realities as well as about the beauty and dignity of traditional ways.?
?*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

?In 2007, Beah woke us from our slumbers with A LONG WAY GONE . . . Here, in his first novel . . . our heroes (like Beah himself) stay radiant to the end.?
?*Library Journal*

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Publication Date: January 6, 2015
Genres: Fiction
Paperback: 272 pages
Publisher: Sarah Crichton Books
ISBN-10: 0374535035
ISBN-13: 9780374535032