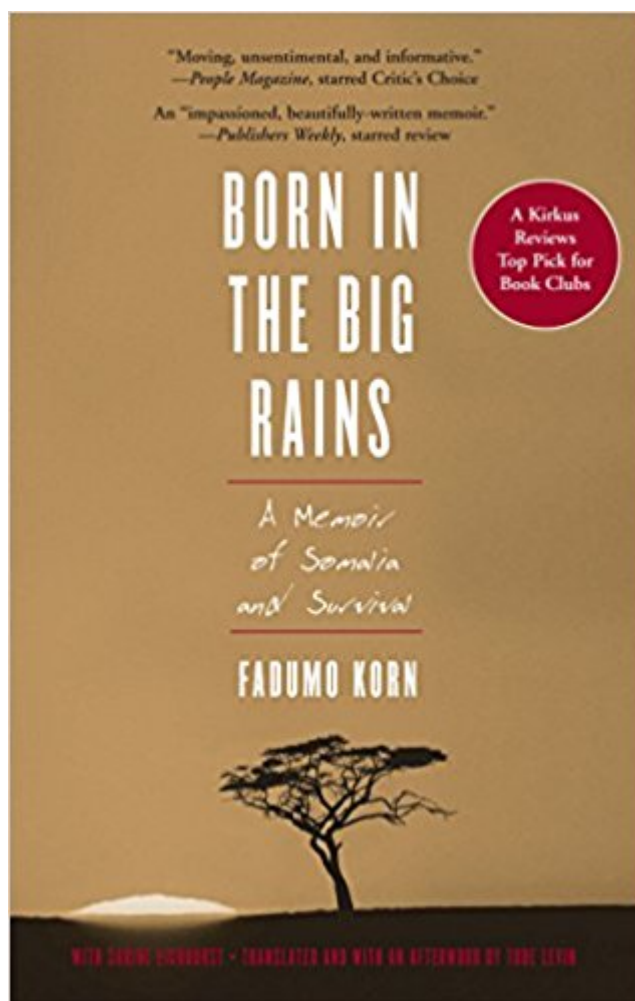


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Born In The Big Rains: A Memoir Of Somalia And Survival (Women Writing Africa)



Synopsis

A courageous . . . indispensable testament. —Elfriede Jelinek, 2004 Nobel Laureate in Literature
Selected as a Kirkus Reviews top pick for book clubs, Fadumo Korn's story describes her brutal circumcision at age seven and her agonizing path to physical and psychological recovery. As a feisty nomad, Fadumo freely roamed the wild steppes of her native Somalia until her mother delivered her into the hands of an excisor to undergo female genital cutting (FGC, also known as female genital mutilation or FGM), to be made a woman in the eyes of her tribe. The complications brought on by the circumcision provide the impetus to her search for health and her story. Fadumo first travels to the bustling city of Mogadishu and the household of a wealthy uncle, brother of the Somali president. She enters a world of luxury underpinned by political instability and cruelty in a country gearing for rebellion. As her symptoms worsen, she journeys to Germany, where she receives not only therapy but love and acceptance from the most unlikely of places. Fadumo Korn weaves together a sensitive understanding of traditional practices with revelations about their disturbing effects. This deftly crafted tale, full of sorrow and surprising humor, provides a candid history of a life sculpted by crippling rheumatism and an unexpected path to recovery.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Beginning with its evocative opening sentence "In the distance, a lion roared, deep and long, dismissing the night" this impassioned, beautifully written memoir is

a testament to the possibility of wedding literary prose to sophisticated political arguments. Korn grew up as a spirited girl in an Islamic Somalian nomadic tribe in the late 1960s. At seven she was forced to undergo female circumcision, in which her clitoris and labia minora were removed with crude utensils and her vagina sewn up. After chronic pain, illness and rheumatism set in, Korn went to live with her rich uncle, a government official in Mogadishu, until her circumcision-related ailments became debilitating; she was taken to Germany for medical treatment, and years later her circumcision was undone. Married to a German, Korn became involved in the European campaign against female genital mutilation (FGM). While the bulk of the book is a devastating and swiftly moving account of Korn's tragedy-filled life, it also persuasively argues that health workers must understand the power of traditional customs even as they work to end FGM. Written with German writer Eichhorst, this is a brutally honest, politically sensitive and bold addition to literature on global women's health. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Korn's remarkable memoir traces her steps from her childhood as part of a nomadic tribe in Somalia, where she was born in 1964, to her position as a spokesperson against FGM--female genital mutilation. She herself was circumcised, and sewn back up, or infibulated, at age seven. Touted as an "ancient tradition," the brutal procedure can lead to infection, chronic ailments, and loss of fertility. In Korn's case, the resulting infection led to severe joint disintegration. Her parents sent her to relatives in Mogadishu while she received treatment; from there she went to a hospital in Rome, then a clinic in Germany, where she endured operations to straighten her fingers and toes. Only after her marriage, and corrective surgery to be "opened," did she experience urination or her periods without pain. Now a German citizen, Korn helps to reeducate young African women about their societal status without this horrific procedure. Deborah Donovan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book was quick and easy read but still captivating and intriguing. I found this very interesting to read after Infidel - written also by a Somali woman. The two books both speak strongly about FGM yet this book was very little about Islam. I think this book is imperative to read in conjunction with Infidel to equal the negatives and positives discussed about Islam. Another amazing book on this same topic is called Do they hear you when you cry? By Fauziya Kassindja - it truly amazing!!!

This book was such a great read. A very powerful and moving account about a woman's experience with Female Genital Mutilation. Her focus is broader however, creating the experience for any reader as if they are actually with her in Somalia and other journeys. A very easy read, this memoir is both uplifting and insightful. It captivates the essence of life as a nomad and transcends into political and cultural arenas that serve to enlighten the reader. This is definitely a must buy.

Fadumo Korn was born into a nomadic Somali tribe in 1964, and her childhood was unusually free for a Somalian girl. Though her parents doted on her, they did not spare her the culturally prescribed ordeal of female circumcision when she was seven years old. The circumcision, otherwise known as female genital mutilation (FGM) changed everything about Fadumo's world: first the ordeal itself, performed by a native practitioner with unclean implements, and then the infection that took hold and gradually ruined her health. Fadumo was sent to stay with wealthy and politically-connected relatives in Mogadishu for medical care. Eventually, in the midst of political upheaval in her country, she was sent to Europe and settled in Germany where she married and eventually found culturally sensitive medical care. After reconstructive surgery she was able to experience bodily functions without pain, and gave birth to a son. She now works with the Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development (FORWARD), an international NGO committed to "eliminating gender-based violence against African girls and women, particularly female genital mutilation and child and forced marriage" (quote from FORWARD's website). These practices are the cultural norm in certain areas of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and in some immigrant communities in Europe and North America. According to the World Health Organization, "An estimated 100 to 140 million girls and women worldwide are currently living with the consequences of FGM." *Born in the Big Rains: A Memoir of Somalia and Survival* (Women Writing Africa) sets itself and the reader a challenging task. On one hand it inspires anger with a horrifying description of FGM and of the terrible after-effects. Yet on the other hand it asks the reader to explore and try to understand the cultural significance of the practice as a step on the road to its eradication. Ms. Korn achieves both goals very well with this memoir. I respect her openness in telling her intensely personal story; she wears her empowerment well and we can only wish the same for all African women who live under the threat of this painful practice. Linda Bulger, 2010

Very interesting book. I recommend it to those who are interested in a woman's story, growing up in Somalia and all the associated horrors ie FGM. Highly recommend

Important subject. I did not want to go from storyline which is true and well written to a soap box.

I work with a large Somali population in my work and this book gave me a better understanding of some of their cultural beliefs and actions. Even though I don't agree with their actions, it gave me a better understanding.

This book was difficult for me to read because of the subject. I was not prepared for the female mutilation chapter. I kept reading because I wanted Mrs. Korn to overcome her obstacles both physical and emotional. It was hard to believe that there are places in the world that actually allow such a practice. It certainly makes it clear that men in Somalia are the ruling force and women are mere vessels for having children and being slaves to their husbands. There was a point where I even got tears in my eyes this story touched me so much. I must say towards the end I did get a bored with all the politics and preaching. I know these things are important and more people need to be aware of it but I was more interested in Mrs. Korn's personal journey. This is a must read especially for women.

Excellent - very enlightening to a women's crisis and so well written.

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