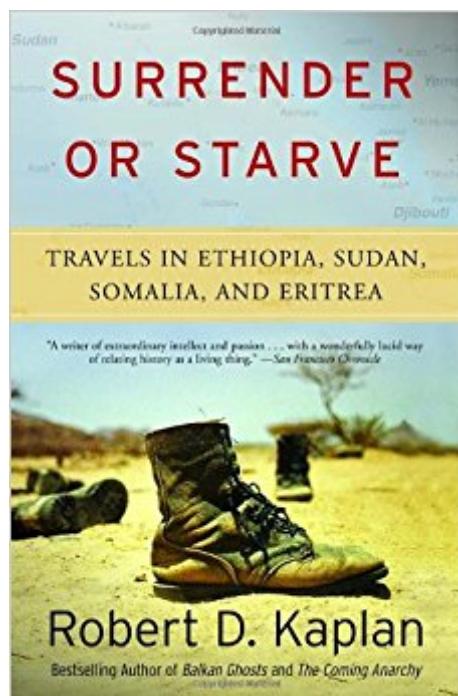


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Surrender Or Starve: Travels In Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, And Eritrea



Synopsis

Robert D. Kaplan is one of our leading international journalists, someone who can explain the most complicated and volatile regions and show why they're relevant to our world. In *Surrender or Starve*, Kaplan illuminates the fault lines in the Horn of Africa, which is emerging as a crucial region for America's ongoing war on terrorism. Reporting from Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea, Kaplan examines the factors behind the famine that ravaged the region in the 1980s, exploring the ethnic, religious, and class conflicts that are crucial for understanding the region today. He offers a new foreword and afterword that show how the nations have developed since the famine, and why this region will only grow more important to the United States. Wielding his trademark ability to blend on-the-ground reporting and cogent analysis, Robert D. Kaplan introduces us to a fascinating part of the world, one that it would behoove all of us to know more about.

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Customer Reviews

“A writer of extraordinary intellect and passion . . . with a wonderfully lucid way of relating history as a living thing.” San Francisco Chronicle “This vivid account . . . tells very convincingly a story which the author claims was almost entirely ignored by Western media, diplomats, and relief officials. Kaplan paints a horrific picture of often fatal cruelty.” Foreign Affairs “Robert Kaplan is a scholarly and adventurous journalist. . . . He draws attention to long-term trends that other writers have little noted.” The New York Times “Kaplan is a gritty travel reporter and commentator on foreign affairs known for providing no-nonsense political-historical overviews of the dicey places he visits.”

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I apologize for the obnoxious and arguably flippant alliteration in that title, but it manages to be remarkably accurate. I found this book to be an extremely well-written and enlightening, if at times somewhat chaotic, account of the complicated situation on the horn of Africa around the time of the mid-1980s. Its focus is on the underreported factors that contributed to the famine that ravaged the region, namely that regional wars and corrupt leaders were far more responsible for the mass starvation and suffering than simply the drought itself. A compelling if depressing read that sheds light on protracted, devastating events that are largely unknown to most of the world.

Kaplan has great books because he is on the ground, describing what he sees. This one would have been better if I would have read it years ago. Still, it is a good history of the region. You can tell it was one of the first books that he wrote. Sometimes you lose track of the people he is writing about. But overall, it is a good read, especially if you like his other books.

I always enjoy reading Robert Kaplan, so the book is a great tour of Africa. Even though the material is now somewhat dated, I am sure that the political and social contexts have not changed all that much in the intervening years. I recommend this like all Mr. Kaplan's other works highly.

excellent

I've been reading Kaplan for years. He has a unique way of exploring an issue or region of the world

and bringing it home for the reader in a way that balances history, politics, and culture with a touch of the exotic. Kaplan also has a keen grasp of the world and where it is going. Reading Kaplan is always interesting, provocative, and thought-provoking. I would recommend any book he's written as a good read. I must confess my ignorance about Ethiopia. I grew up with the commercials for starving children and famine relief and Live Aid, but I never actually knew much about it. I just figured it was another group of hungry people who were doomed by bad weather and bad geography. I never paid much attention to the issues of that part of the world, so I was shocked to learn just how much I had missed in my own lifetime in Ethiopia. Kaplan does a terrific job of explaining the background and bringing the issues to vivid life. This book is somewhat dated, but it still serves as a great description of what was happening in the region in the 1980s and 1990s and it helps shed light on the issues facing the region today.

very biased, although admittedly so. Better than anything else I could find on Ethiopia. Could be more well rounded in what it covers.

Another brilliant book by Robert Kaplan.

I was not particularly impressed with this book. Kaplan tends to repeat the same thoughts (and phrases) in each chapter. Obviously, he did not want to do much research into the area as the same handful of sources are referred to. It is a shame that such short shrift is given to this region as it is one continuously neglected by the popular media.

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