



The God Who Begat a Jackal: A Novel

Nega Mezlekia

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A Library Journal Best Book

Nega Mezlekia's memoir *Notes from the Hyena's Belly* was described in the *New York Times Book Review* as "the most riveting book about Ethiopia since Ryszard Kapuscinski's literary allegory *The Emperor* and the most distinguished African literary memoir since Soyinka's *Aké* appeared 20 years ago." Mezlekia now offers a first novel steeped in African folklore and teeming with the class, ethnic and religious struggles of pre-colonial Africa. In *The God Who Begat a Jackal*, the 17th-century feudal system, vassal uprisings, religious mythology, and the Crusades are intertwined with the love between Aster, the daughter of a feudal lord, and Gudu, the court jester and family slave. Aster and Gudu's relationship is the ultimate taboo, but supernatural elements presage a destiny more powerful than the rule of man. With Mezlekia's enchanting storytelling and ironic humor, readers glimpse African deities that have long since weathered away and the social cleavages that have endured through time.

The God Who Begat a Jackal: A Novel Details

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Author : Nega Mezlekia

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From Reader Review The God Who Begat a Jackal: A Novel for online ebook

sisrael says

From the very beginning this book was so captivating. Especially for someone who grew up in Ethiopia hearing of all the different spiritual beliefs and occurrences some "experienced" in the rural parts of the country it makes it more believable and allows you to relate. Nega Mezlekia has truly restored my faith in supporting Ethiopian authors based on the merit of his work. His more political book "Notes from the Hyenas Belly" is also recommended!

The Book says

Whirling dust devils carrying war-making Abettors, warfare and sieges, love and sacrifice, magic and gods all dance across the landscape of medieval Ethiopia. At the heart of the story are two lovers who cannot be together because marriage between a slave and the daughter of the local warlord Duke is not permitted. I love magical realism in novels (and a good story about loyal lovers struggling to be together never goes amiss, either) and this one was packed full of magic, gods, superstition, mystical figures wielding great powers all contrasting with the people who try to do the best they can in life, but ultimately lose out. Harsh, brutal, compelling.

Rebecca says

"The God Who Begat a Jackal" is an epic fable set in feudal Ethiopia, or at least a place very much like feudal Ethiopia but with a magical twist. I am greatly torn between appreciating what a unique and nuanced story the author has told and wishing I had enjoyed it more. Timeless themes include the evils of social structures that deny people freedom and dignity and the inescapable spiral of war-mindedness. The writing is wry, wise, and sensitive to human complexity, but the characters barely come to life.

Chris says

An unusual fable.

C Wegman says

An engaging read that adeptly translates an oral tradition of storytelling into written prose.

Humor, melodrama, eye-rolling moments, and well developed characters poetically come together to expose universal lessons of greed, power, faith, romance, adolescence, lust, prejudice and the underlying struggle for personal security.

Any fan of fables and myths should thoroughly enjoy this novel.

Ilyhana Kennedy says

This book is for people who love telling and listening to stories, not necessarily truthful, maybe even whoppers. It's a story about a culture steeped in storytelling, stories of fantasy that may have once held a grain of truth.

And so it gradually draws the reader in until you realise you are being had, but then it's too late so you may as well read on.

It's very entertaining.

There is a serious undertone here though, that asks the reader to acknowledge that cultures actually exist where fantasy rules the collective psyche.

Jamie Berry says

So much of this book was soooo good. It was engaging, fun, mystical and suspenseful. However parts seemed to be written almost as an afterthought. I would have loved to see Mezlekia expand this book into a trilogy, as it seemed there was so much more he wanted to write. Instead, so much of the book was rushed. I kept checking to see if I was reading an abridged copy. Alas I was not.

All this being said, I cannot wait to start Notes From the Hyena's Belly, and the many other books NM is sure to write.

Corinne Wasilewski says

Although there's nothing wrong with Mezlekia's handling of language, his storytelling in this novel could use some improvement. I found this book very hard to get through. Here's why:

1. Poor choice of narrator. Terefi is a minor character (so minor I had to go back to check on his name!) who is experiencing little of the story first hand. That means the majority of the book is telling, not showing and extremely tedious reading.
2. Way too many pages were spent on details of warfare which did little to advance the story and made for extremely tedious reading.
3. The characters are simplistic and fail to change as the story progresses. Change comes only at the end when they have lost everything and are on the verge of losing even their lives. I don't call this change, though. I call it 'do or die'. Tedious, so very tedious.
4. A cliched plot about forbidden love with a little twist at the end. No new insights here. Same old, same old. Tedium, thy name is "The God Who Begat a Jackal".

Don't waste your time on this one.
