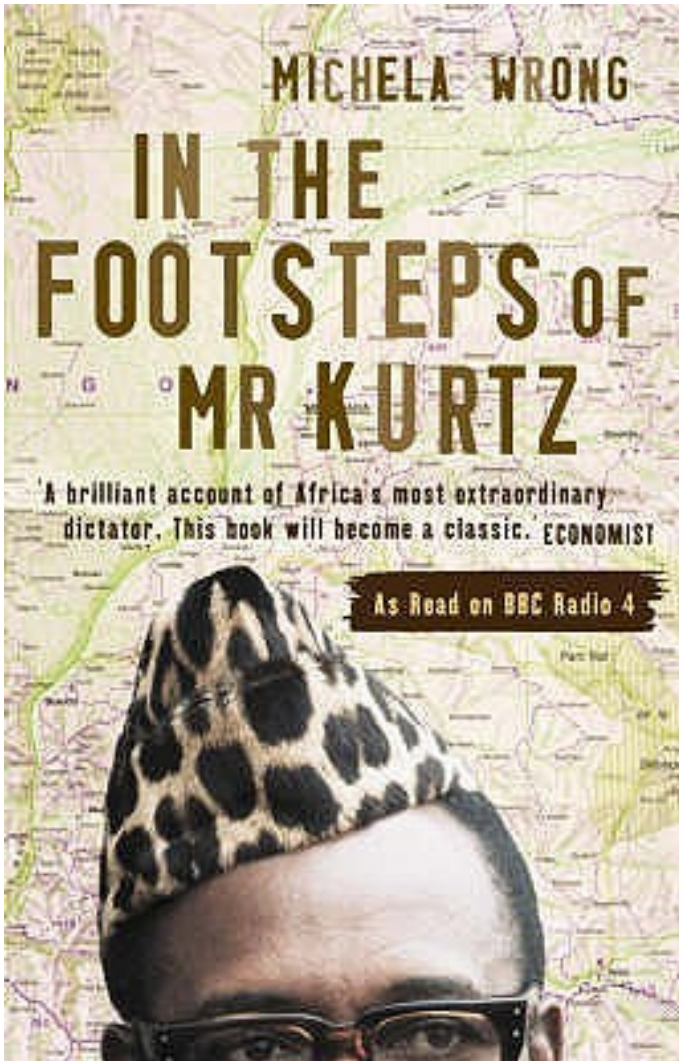

Michela Wrong

In the Footsteps of Mr Kurtz



Title: In the Footsteps of Mr Kurtz

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Description

Mr Kurtz, the colonial white master, brought evil to the remote upper reaches of the Congo River. A century after Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* was first published, Michela Wrong revisits the Congo during the turbulent era of Mobutu Sese Seko. From the heart of Africa comes grotesque confusion: pink-lipsticked rebel soldiers mingle with track-suited secret policemen in hotels where fin de siècle dinner parties are ploughing through vintage wines rather than leave them to the new regime. Congo, the African country richest in natural resources, has institutionalised kleptomania. Everyone is one the take. Someone has even swiped one of the uranium rods from the country's only nuclear reactor. Having presided over unprecedented looting of the country's wealth, Mobutu, like Kurtz, retreated deep within the jungle to his palace of marble floors and gold taps. A hundred years on and nothing has changed.

Insightful reviews

A: Coming with pretty limited knowledge of the DRC, I enjoyed this book and found it useful in learning about the history and region. I was a bit concerned that the book would prove a little dated, since it appeared to be a current events type book published a while ago, but that did not prove to be the case. It isn't as much a history of the DRC or (now) a current events book, as a well written journalist view of the history and politics of the Mobutu era. Even as this fades further into history, it remains interesting and many of the problems and issues of Mobutu remain relevant today. If the country/region interest you, I would definitely recommend this book.

Ryan: This book tells the story of what happened in the nation of Zaire (aka Congo) after the Belgian colonial presence ended in 1960. The author is a foreign correspondent who spent six years in Africa writing for the BBC, Financial Times, and Reuters. Here, she talks about her time in Congo/Zaire, and what life was like in this country trying to recover from the hangover of the three decade-long reign of "The Leopard," President Mobutu Sese Seko. Mobutu grabs hold of the government in 1960 and through corruption, cronyism, graft, violence, and theft, runs this once proud and rich colony into the ground. The most fascinating stories were when the author recounted her time living with common Zaireans, and documenting the ways they fought for survival and carved out niches for themselves in such an unforgiving society. In the end, the author says Mobutu was not the entirety of Zaire's problem, only its head; and that the entire system of society had been looted for a generation and thus expected nothing better from their leaders and outsiders (The CIA, World Bank, and IMF are also blamed for their short-sighted interferences with Zaire). This book is an easy read and very enlightening. The images of Mobutu's palace at Gbadolite, dubbed the "Versailles of the Jungle," overtaken by both native looters and the damp rainforest after his downfall was a vivid and lasting scene, the ransacked debris floating in the flooded hallways of his abandoned golden palace. A good and interesting read.

Carlos: This book left me confused, at first I thought that the book would narrate Mobutu's rise to power or at least talk a little about how the African president rose to the position he held for 32 years, but no, the book jumps from one point to another with no visible connection, the author had all the building blocks for a good book, but I think the execution was lacking a bit.

Nonetheless this book serves the purpose of amplifying our knowledge of post colonial Africa ... And in that subject .. It does success .

Anina: a truly interesting, wild wild west tale of contemporary Africa. However, her writing kind is especially disjointed, which would annoy a few readers. additionally the narration left me feeling like i could not be certain who used to be relaying the proof and in the event that they have been certainly facts.

David Bales: this can be a very good publication through a British reporter who coated Africa within the 1990s, rather in Zaire, formerly and referred to now because the Congo. This e-book covers the lengthy misrule of Mobutu Sese Seko, (once referred to as Joseph Mobutu, who "Africanized" Congolese own and position names in 1971). Mobutu used to be a soldier within the Belgian Congo's safeguard strength and rose to common within the early Nineteen Sixties in the course of the chaos of Belgium's abrupt departure from its merely colony. Eventually, Mobutu took over the rustic in a coup in 1965, and for the following 32 years systematically looted the rustic in a corrupt sequence of robberies that have been aided through the IMF, the realm Bank, France, Belgium, the CIA, mining businesses and the regime's massive protector, the United States. The Congo in 1960 had a wide infrastructure for mining and industry, (although all the best jobs have been held via Europeans) and the rustic has mineral assets in cobalt, uranium, gold and plenty of different beneficial metals that dwarf different nations, yet Mobutu's larceny rendered the Congo a roughly failed state. Arguments to again Mobutu all through that period have been continually all started with, 1) but when no longer Mobutu, then who? And, 2) Zaire wishes balance with a dictator or it is going to divided into 5 parts. the start of the tip of the regime got here in 1994 while the Rwandan genocide and civil struggle spilled into japanese Zaire. He died in exile.

Dillon: the tale of the autumn of either Joseph Mobutu and the Congo (formally referred to as Zaire). The publication describes how Mobutu used the gains from the copper and diamond mines and the aid of the detached West to pay his political cronies for political aid and to buy quite a few lavish items, together with mansions, champagne, boats and lots of flights at the Concorde large jet for his family. evidently this had a big impact at the Zairian economy. Mobutu's kind of raping the kingdom for his and his cronies profit created an everyman for himself mentality, the place infantrymen pillaged the citizens, diamond have been smuggled, mail stolen and bought at the black market, farms and companies nationalized and given to "Big Vegetables" to rape and ruin for his or her personal gain. Mobutu's "policies" additionally had lasting results at the population. for almost a century, the folk of the Congo needed to continue to exist lower than the brutal strength of King Leopold and the strength Publique. Then, a short while later, the rustic was once taken over by way of Mobutu and governed within the sort of Leopold's henchmen. This has left the inhabitants feeling helpless opposed to the nation and not achieving past survival. Wrong's type is clear, shiny and concise. She does a good activity giving the reader adequate info to appreciate the sorrowful destruction of 1 of the most important countries in Africa, whereas additionally giving the tale a really own voice.

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