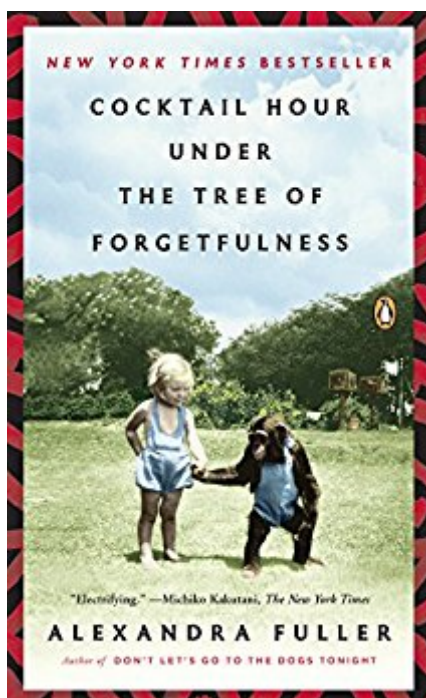


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# Cocktail Hour Under The Tree Of Forgetfulness



## Synopsis

A story of survival and war, love and madness, loyalty and forgiveness, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness* is an intimate exploration of Fuller's parents, whom readers first met in *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, and of the price of being possessed by Africa's uncompromising, fertile, death-dealing land. We follow Tim and Nicola Fuller hopscooting the continent, restlessly trying to establish a home. War, hardship, and tragedy follow the family even as Nicola fights to hold on to her children, her land, her sanity. But just when it seems that Nicola has been broken by the continent she loves, it is the African earth that revives and nurtures her. *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness* is Fuller at her very best. Alexandra Fuller is also the author of the forthcoming novel, *Quiet Until the Thaw*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read the first book of memoirs from the author, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, and highly enjoyed it. This one was also good, but told more about her parents growing up and her life as an adult. The book may be every bit as good as the first, but I tend to like the "childhood" parts of

memoirs the most. Anyhow, the author has had quite an interesting life, growing up in Africa. If you read the first book and want more background on her parents, then give this one a try.

I love Alexandra Fuller's other books. *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* is one of my favorite books about Africa. This one was not one of my favorites. I'm not totally sure why... I didn't find her mother all that likable, which may very likely be she's not likable? I'm not sure. As always, the situations are interesting and engaging--and a little bit crazy! This book focuses mostly on her mother and her trials trying to live and survive in Africa. It follows her mother's life from a young woman to now.

I read Alexandra Fuller's *'Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight'* and thoroughly enjoyed that; was disappointed with *'Scribbling the Cat'* (her follow-up to *'Don't Lets....'*), and I'm happy to say that *'Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness'* is another one of Fuller's literary triumphs. Her command of language; her inimitably dry wit, and her ability to move so eloquently from humorous moments to profoundly thought-provoking, heart-stoppingly intense summations of life in Central Africa - with its main characters, Nicola and Tim Fuller - makes this a thoroughly absorbing book. I particularly found Fuller's conclusions on the Rhodesian War of Liberation - both balanced and enlightening. She doesn't take sides and is able to look objectively at the profoundly disturbing atrocities that everyone - from every side - committed. In the end, she says, "No one starts a war warning that those involved will lose their innocence - that children will definitely die and be forever lost as a result of the conflict; that the war will not end for generations and generations, even after cease-fires have been declared and peace treaties have been signed. No one starts a war that way, but they should. Even a good war - if there is such a thing - will kill anyone old enough to die." It takes a great deal of skill to be able to encapsulate the spectrum of emotions and feelings that Africa evokes in someone like the author's mother, Nicola Fuller, who is magnetically drawn to the life that Africa offers. In this book, Alexandra Fuller writes a sensitive account of her mother's joys and sorrows...and of her eventual, brave triumph over past pain. I sincerely hope that Nicola Fuller of Central Africa finds her daughter's book most definitely NOT awful.

The life of Ms. Fuller and her family in Africa from the 50s to the present is a remarkable story in and of itself, but the fact that she lived this life and developed into a skilled author makes this a truly engrossing read as she describes the life they have lived. My work has me traveling throughout Africa and I was drawn to the book by the subject matter, but others unaccustomed to the continent can read this work and gain an insightful understanding of the evolution of colonial Africa to the

current state where many of the nations gained their independence in the not so distant past.

When my book club selected this book, I admit I was a little concerned that that book was going to be a little twee because of the title. It turns out I could not be more wrong. This memoir is written by Alexandra Fuller and it is about her upbringing in Africa. Her parents and siblings lived under incredibly difficult circumstances, having to deal with all the civil wars and rebellions of the late twentieth century. It was very interesting to get an insider's look at what happened during those times, and especially as seen through the eyes of a young girl. The author not only gives us a great visual picture of the land and environment (the descriptions are wonderful,) but also an idea of the type of people that were able to survive all the troubles coming their way. What I didn't know was that the story was really laugh out loud funny in bits, especially when the mother is talking. She really was quite a character; incredibly unique. At times the mother keeps referring to the "Awful Book" written by her daughter, and I am assuming that is the author's previous memoir, "Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood." I wish I had read that book first, and I think if I did I would've enjoyed this book even more. As it is, I wonder what is in that book because this memoir feels rather complete on its own. Recommended. Very entertaining and funny although heartbreaking as well. By the end of the book you understand the meaning and importance of the "tree of forgiveness".

I was quite smitten with Alexandra Fuller's first book "Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight" and this is really just an extension of that. Her mother was such a colorful character in the first book, both likable and hateable at times. I had quite a love/hate relationship with her and this book really tells her life story in more detail. Fuller is a beautiful writer and truly makes you feel like the heat of Africa is beating down on you, the smells and the grit attacking all of your senses. I also highly recommend "Casting with a Fragile Thread" by Wendy Karr. I found that I was somewhat ignorant to both colonial Africa, the wars that followed and post colonial Africa. Both authors show a very slow awakening to the fact that there were over 8 million native Africans in Rhodesia that had been simply pushed aside. It is not a do-gooder book about missionaries in Africa, but rather an honest and beautiful account of a lifestyle that was slowly being ebbed away by progress and politics in a hostile yet beautiful place.

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