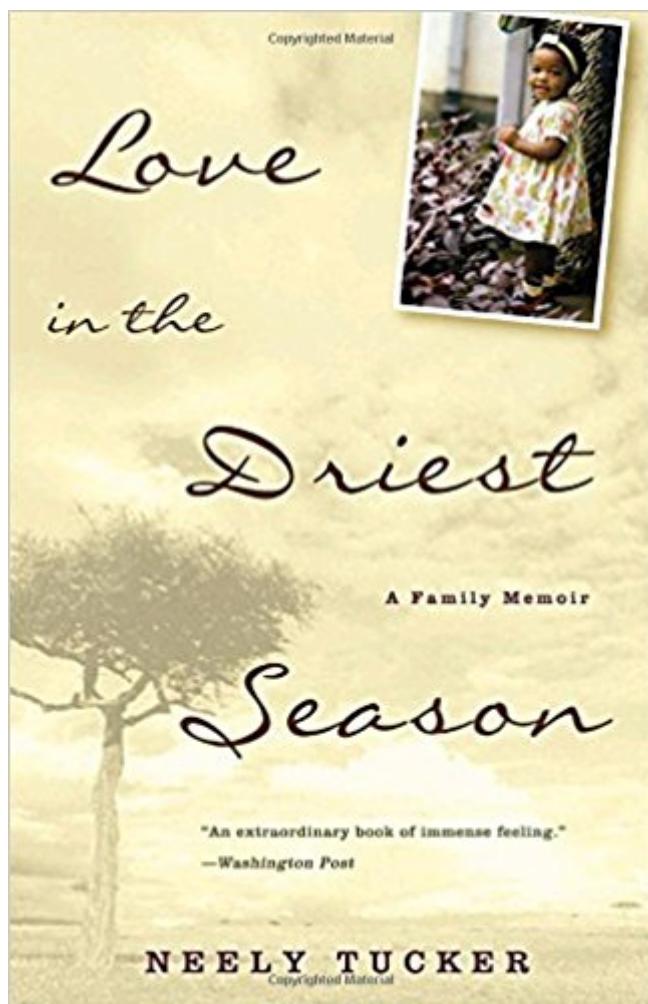


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Love In The Driest Season: A Family Memoir



Synopsis

In 1997 foreign correspondent Neely Tucker and his wife, Vita, arrived in Zimbabwe. After witnessing the devastating consequences of AIDS and economic disaster on the country's children, the couple started volunteering at an orphanage where a critically ill infant, abandoned in a field on the day she was born, was trusted to their care. Within weeks, Chipo, the baby girl whose name means "gift," would come to mean everything to them. Their decision to adopt her, however, would challenge an unspoken social norm: that foreigners should never adopt Zimbabwean children. Against a background of war, terrorism, disease, and unbearable uncertainty about the future, Chipo's true story emerges as an inspiring testament to the miracles that love and dogged determination can sometimes achieve.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a foreign correspondent, Tucker had worked in conflict zones on two continents and seen death in all its gruesome forms. "The steady stream of violence had worn away my natural sense of compassion to the point where I could cover almost any horror but felt very little about anything at all." Then, in 1997, Neely, a white Mississippian, and his African-American wife, Vita, were posted to Zimbabwe, where the AIDS crisis was feeding an unprecedented wave of sick and abandoned children. "The scale of death, and the depths of misery it entailed, defied the imagination even for someone like me...." Neely and Vita volunteered at an overwhelmed orphanage in the Zimbabwean capital, where diarrhea and pneumonia were killing babies at an alarming rate. Nobody dared whisper the word AIDS, though its specter hung over every crib. Here, Neely and Vita met Chipo, a

desperately sick baby girl who had been abandoned under a tree. With temporary permission to take her home, Neely and Vita threw all available resources toward saving her life: round-the-clock feedings, good doctors, medicine and a clean, warm environment. She thrived. Neely and Vita decided to adopt Chipo, only to discover a slew of cultural taboos against adoption by foreigners-a white foreigner in particular. While Chipo grew healthy and fat under their care, the Tuckers negotiated a nightmarish bureaucracy that threatened to tear Chipo away from them; meanwhile, Zimbabwe was entering a period of civil unrest that targeted Americans and journalists. This is a gorgeous mix of family memoir and reportage that traverses the big issues of politics, racism and war. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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Adult/High School
This is the riveting account of how two Mississippians, newspaper reporter Tucker, who is white, and his African-American wife, Vita, adopted a baby. Shortly after their marriage, he was posted to Harare, Zimbabwe, where thousands of children have been orphaned by AIDS and extended families are overburdened with their care. One day, a newborn was rescued from abandonment in the bush and brought into the orphanage where the Tuckers were volunteering. Chipo was tiny and close to death, but she latched onto Neely's finger, and he fell in love with her. The couple were told that it's practically impossible for foreigners to adopt a Zimbabwean baby, but they decided to try. Neely traveled around Africa, reporting on uprisings, massacres, and genocides. Intermittently, he returned to Harare to deal with the rigid, arrogant social-welfare bureaucracy and the horrible sadness of the children dying in the understaffed orphanage. Through patience, political savvy, and the help of sympathetic social workers, he was able to get the necessary papers to adopt the child. The story offers insights into interracial marriage, African politics, and daily life in a Third World country. Teens are sure to be fascinated by the Tuckers' experience.

Penny Stevens, Andover College, Portland, ME
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a great book which details the effects of AIDS & HIV on sub-shahara africa esp zimbabwe which had the added burden of their incompetent dictator, mugabe seen through the eyes of an international reporter for a detroit newspaper who is white & marries a black women; they try to adopt an abandon baby in mugabe's country who almost dies but is saved by them; a very touching story but can be depressing due to the reality of what was happening in africa in the last two or so

decades; i recommend this book highly

Neely Tucker had the kind of journalism career that most journalists -- if they don't quite want, think they should have wanted. I know that because I'm a journalist who just never wanted to be shot at, but deeply admires the folks who put themselves in harms way to cover the most dangerous places where human suffering needs to be highlighted if it is ever going to end. Neely killed his own career by falling in love -- with Chipo, a little baby who was sick and abandoned and who nobody else except his very amazing wife Vita, wanted to love or to save. He learned through tragedy that the story can't always come first, that he is so much more than the much revered title of foreign correspondent. He risked it all, indeed gave it all up, for the child who was to become his daughter. In politically ravaged Zimbabwe he saved Chipo and himself. The story of how this happens is gripping and terrifying and ultimately one of the most beautifully written accounts I've read in a long time. I received a free version of this from the Vine program and still I bought this book in Kindle version. I wanted my family, who shares my Kindle account to read this book. And I wanted to buy this book. I wanted one more person to step up and say this is a book that had to be written and has to be read. Great Job Neely and Vita! Kiss that little girl for all of us.

I love learning about new cultures, but Zimbabwe's is really sad. Neely Tucker kept me hooked wanting to know how things were going to turn out for Chipo. I read this book on a beach vacation and was in tears many times. A good read and I would recommend it.

Neely Tucker is an amazing writer. I was absolutely blown away by the power in his words. I have read many articles he has written, but was not prepared for the talent and amazing writing style of this memoir. This book has so many levels of excellence- emotion, very great reporting and historical information, very intimate details of his life, and just plain riveting. I read this book in one day. I literally couldn't tear myself away from it, even though I already knew the outcome of the story. I wish this book was more well known, especially in light of all the events happening to children all over Africa today. A must read. HIGHLY recommended!

Read this entire book in a long afternoon and a couple of hours the following morning. Couldn't put it down. In a world where we deal with decaying morals, corrupt politicians, self-serving population to read something like this really restores faith in people. I loved the faith and determination the author and his wife went through to save the lives of so many. Highly recommend.

This story resonated with me because I have two adopted grandchildren from Uganda. The challenges that they faced in "Love in the Driest Season" in trying to adopt were very similar to the experiences that my son and daughter -in-law had. Fortunately for the children involved in both stories, there was a happy ending. It is incredibly brave to adopt children of a different culture and ethnicity and I applaud both families for taking this very humane and heartwarming journey. It is (was) so worth it.

This was a bitter-sweet true story about political unrest and the AIDS problem in Zimbabwe, (and Africa in general) and the many children who are orphans as a result of these problems. It was really heartwarming to see how the author and his wife did their part to make a difference.

This was fantastic! I was rooting for them the entire book. Moving & emotional - I felt like I was experiencing their pain and frustration and then joy - what an experience!

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