



A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah
Reviewed by Danah



Stand Alone, Memoir

Give a summary without spoilers!

A Long Way Gone by Ishmael Beah offers a powerful and personal account of the Sierra Leone Civil War that tells a firsthand account of his experiences as a child soldier. Following his harrowing journey from fleeing his attacked village to being transformed into a child soldier. His story follows his desire for revenge against the rebels who attacked and killed his family, friends, and village. Ishmael shares his story beginning when he was an adolescent, to adulthood, and eventually experiencing rehabilitation and a chance to restart his life.

What drew you to this book?

I was drawn by the way the author Ishmael Beah developed each character in the novel. The vivid detailed description of the setting in each scene further developed the suspense and storyline of the novel. The development of Ishmael when he was a child soldier to his rehabilitation journey exemplifies the journey in which humans go through during harsh and traumatic times up until their recovery and healing period.

Did it remind you of something that you've previously read?

This memoir starkly reminded me of *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park, which we read in my fifth grade class, which tells the story of a young Sudanese boy during the civil war in Sudan, encompassing his life from the beginning of the war when he was at school to the end where he is stripped from his family and has to go on living and surviving, moving from place to place alone with other displaced people from his country in order to survive. Very similar to *A Long Way Gone* where Ishmael is displaced from his village and joins the army as a means of survival. In both books, both boys endure different challenges but share very similar stories.

To whom would you recommend this book?

I would recommend *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah to anyone who is interested in realistic-fictional literature. This is a great book for those who love historical novels with a mix of suspense. This book will keep you on your toes the whole time and is a great novel for those who love thrillers.

Overall, did you like it and would you recommend it to others?

Overall, I would definitely recommend this novel to others because it broadens your perspective on conflicts and wars around the world that are not necessarily talked about or taught about in schools. The mixture of history, suspense, and thrill all in one novel makes this a great book for everyone. Even if you do not enjoy reading, which I was in the same position, this book will truly draw your attention and make you fall in love with reading.

Anything else that you would like to add to this review? What made you choose it? Did you like the cover? Was it recommended to you? Did you find it at the library?

I initially picked this book up at the library after seeing it on the summer reading list and was immediately interested in the book. Lastly, the cover of the book is very drawing, showcasing a picture of a young version the author Ishmael carrying whatever he could have grabbed with him when his village was first attacked