Murambi, the Book of Bones

Boubacar Boris Diop

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English text available

“This novel is a miracle.” Toni Morrison.

In 1998, Cornélius comes back to Rwanda after an exile of several years. Four years after the genocide, the country is still in ruins: killers and victims pass each other by every day; but the reconstruction of the self is a difficult matter. Cornélius soon learns that his own father, Dr. Karekezi, had personally organized the horrific massacre in Murambi. He finds himself confronting a totally unexpected situation: he is not only a victim, but also the son of an executioner.

By telling Cornélius’ story, Boubacar Boris Diop introduces us to a handful of people in their situation before, during and after the genocide: Jessica, who survived it; Faustin Gasana, member of the Interahamwe; Dr. Joseph Karekezi and Colonel Étienne Perrin, an officer in the French army. Told with extraordinary lucidity, constructed like an investigation and an indictment, Boubacar Boris Diop’s novel permits us to understand the ultimate genocide of the 20th century much more deeply than all the essays and testimonies. The author presents the facts with the sobriety of perfect classicism. A true novelist, Boubacar Boris Diop doesn’t allow us to take any short-cuts that might turn African tragedies into folklore, so much easier to forget. He obliges us to face our reality, in the hope of preventing another human disaster of this kind.

The Author:

Novelist, essayist, playwright and scriptwriter, Boubacar Boris Diop was born in Dakar, Senegal. He published his first novel, Le Temps de Tamango (The Time of Tamango), in 1981. As a journalist, he also directed the Dakar Matin. In 1998, with ten other African writers, he participated in a writing project on the Rwanda genocide: 'Rwanda : écrire par devoir de mémoire.' Beyond his fiction writing, Boubacar Boris Diop is also a leading essayist and critic. Murambi, The Book of Bones was nominated by a jury to the Zimbabwe International Book Fair’s list of Africa’s 100 Best Books of the 20th century.

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Murambi, The Book of Bones was published in Germany (Hamouda), USA (English world rights) (Indiana University Press), Italy (E/O) and Ivory Coast (Nouvelles éditions ivoiriennes).

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