



Rules of the Wild: A Novel of Africa

By Francesca Marciano

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Rules of the Wild: A Novel of Africa By Francesca Marciano

A mesmerizing novel of love and nostalgia set in the vast spaces of contemporary East Africa.

Romantic, often resonantly ironic, moving and wise, **Rules of the Wild** transports us to a landscape of unsurpassed beauty even as it gives us a sharp-eyed portrait of a closely knit tribe of cultural outsiders: the expatriates living in Kenya today. Challenged by race, by class, and by a longing for home, here are "safari boys" and samaritans, reporters bent on their own fame, travelers who care deeply about elephants but not at all about the people of Africa. They all know each other. They meet at dinner parties, they sleep with each other, they argue about politics and the best way to negotiate their existence in a place where they don't really belong.

At the center is Esmé, a beautiful young woman of dazzling ironies and introspections, who tells us her story in a voice both passionate and self-deprecating. Against a paradoxical backdrop of limitless physical freedom and escalating civil unrest, Esmé struggles to make sense of her own place in Africa and of her feelings for the two men there whom she loves--Adam, a second-generation Kenyan who is the first to show her the wonders of her adopted land, and Hunter, a British journalist sickened by its horrors.

Rules of the Wild evokes the worlds of Isak Dinesen, Beryl Markham, and Ernest Hemingway. It explores unforgettably our infinite desire for a perfect elsewhere, for love and a place to call home. It is an astonishing literary debut.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Things have certainly changed in Kenya since the 1930s, when Baroness Karen Blixen (a.k.a. Isak Dinesen, author of *Out of Africa*) had a farm at the foot of the Ngong Hills. In Francesca Marciano's *Rules of the Wild*, the Blixen spread has become an affluent white suburb of Nairobi, home to the tony "Karen" Shopping Mall and populated by a new breed of narcissistic young expatriates and second-generation white Africans. Esme, the beautiful twenty-something Italian narrator, lands in Kenya by happenstance, seeking to escape a painful past and the recent death of her beloved father. Captivated by the sheer physical beauty of the landscape and the raw honesty of her new "tribe," Esme is further ensnared by her love for two dynamic men--one a gentle 1990s version of the Great White Hunter, the other an angry journalist obsessed by the carnage of Somalia and Rwanda. In her eminently readable novel, Marciano creates a hip, knowing set of characters who are ironically aware that their easy lifestyle, supported by trust funds and cheap labor, contrasts darkly with the poverty and decay of east Africa. Esme, an intense and thoughtful observer of the scene, struggles not only with the desire to test herself, "to love without illusion, to love without feeling safe", but with what it means to be white in Africa, living in bizarre isolation from the native culture, drawing spiritual sustenance from the land but protected from the continent's turmoil. Finally, the passion she develops for Kenya roots her and gives her purpose, a home. As one of her friends observes, "I'll tell you what it is about this place.... It sentences you to freedom ... you are constantly reminded of what it means to be free and to be alive. And then it becomes difficult to settle for anything less than this." --Marianne Painter

From Publishers Weekly

The voice of Italian-born narrator Esme, which seduces the reader into the world of this intelligent first novel, is sad, tense, darkly foreboding, secretly desperate. From the beginning, we know that this will be a story of missed opportunities, failed love affairs, unfulfilled longings. Juxtaposed with the tale of a woman trying to find herself is a trenchant and striking picture of contemporary Africa. Esme flees Italy for Kenya after the death of her charismatic father, a poet, and is grateful to find security in an affair with idealistic safari operator Adam. Africa initially seems a paradise to Esme. She is welcomed into the inbred white community of Nairobi, where alcohol and drugs are routine pleasures, everyone has slept with everyone else and the colonial attitude toward blacks has not changed. When she meets a burning social conscience, restless Esme recognizes a kindred spirit, and their passionate affair threatens to destroy the only haven she has known. Hunter has covered the carnage in Somalia and Rwanda, and his insistence that Esme acknowledge the "real" Africa--the poverty in which most Africans live, the despoliation of the environment--unsettles her already fragile emotional balance. In the end, she will be caught between two worlds, two lovers and two visions of the future. Marciano's passion for the spectacular landscape of Africa is almost palpable. Her character analysis is often profound as she delicately conveys the moral complexities of social and personal issues. Her Africa is a paradox in every sense: beautiful and tragic, luxuriant and rotting, paradise and hell, Esme's nemesis and her salvation. This resonantly ironic, beautifully observed novel announces an impressive new talent. 50,000 first printing; major ad/promo; author tour; rights sold in Germany, Sweden, Italy, Denmark, France, Holland and Brazil; simultaneous Random House audio.

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From Library Journal

From an Italian documentary filmmaker who lives part-time in Kenya comes the story of a young woman and her lovers in that country's expatriate white community. This work generated a lot of talk--and sales--at the 1997 Frankfurt Book Fair.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Warren Damron:

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Tim Travers:

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Colton Fierros:

This Rules of the Wild: A Novel of Africa is brand-new way for you who has intense curiosity to look for some information because it relief your hunger associated with. Getting deeper you upon it getting knowledge more you know or perhaps you who still having tiny amount of digest in reading this Rules of the Wild: A Novel of Africa can be the light food to suit your needs because the information inside this particular book is easy to get simply by anyone. These books build itself in the form which can be reachable by anyone, yeah I mean in the e-book form. People who think that in e-book form make them feel sleepy even dizzy this guide is the answer. So there isn't any in reading a reserve especially this one. You can find actually looking for. It should be here for a person. So , don't miss that! Just read this e-book variety for your better life and also knowledge.

Katrice Fredericksen:

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