

LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Fiction | Contemporary
AuthorHouse - May 2017 - 280 pages
Suggested Retail Price:
\$20.99 - Paperback
\$ 34.99 - Hardcover
\$ 3.99 - Ebook

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Typical Ordering Time: 7-10 Business Days

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Most people have never heard of Biafra or the war that nullified its birth and impending existence as a country but those who lived the war still feel the sting and stigma of their wartime experiences.

Knowing a people's history helps gain an understanding of them, giving rise to compassion rather than condemnation and alienation. This is also true for a people's posterity, to gain awareness of their ancestry and ensure negative history never repeats itself. Though Biafra's rising sun is currently dimmed along its horizon, it will never be utterly extinguished because of the voices of those still crying out from the depths of the land.

Land of the Rising Sun chronicles the Biafran wartime indigene experience through the eyes of a young nurse in a historical fiction tribute.

EXCERPT FROM “LAND OF THE RISING SUN”

“Day break at Udi,” the commentator announced over the radio.

Ada adjusted the small shortwave A.M. radio that kept them connected to the outside world as the signal started to fade. She fidgeted with it until the signal came back clear. She glanced over at her niece and God sister who were off in a corner of the room they’d called home for the past six months playing. The girls could probably have cared less about the radio commentator’s words on a normal day but they were all waiting to hear if it was safe enough to venture out of their presently innocuous surroundings. The way of life in war had relegated them to this daily ritual if they were to survive and live another day.

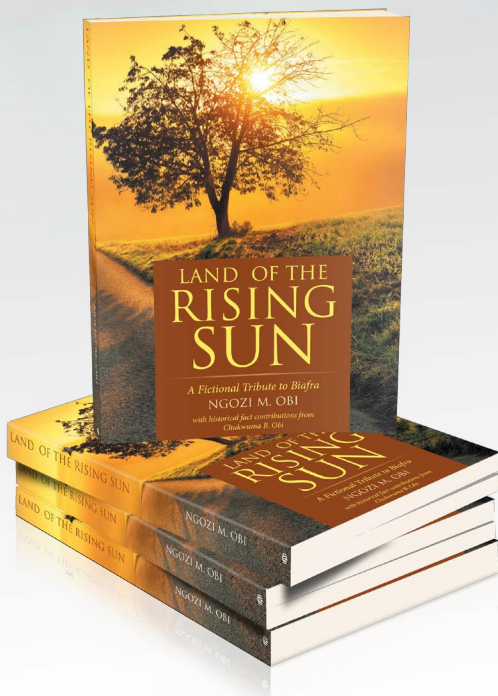
The commentator shared extensive news of the Nigerian army’s current whereabouts and if they’d advanced any further into Biafran territory. He told them the specific towns and villages where the Biafran army had been able to hold them back. Ada was glad they were nowhere near them today which meant they were safe and could continue normal daily activities for the moment. She said a quick prayer of thanks to God before finding her way to the makeshift kitchen they’d set up in their current place of abode to prepare breakfast.

Everything was temporary because of the war and had to be kept in a way that could easily be packed up in preparation for flight on foot at a moment’s notice. She rummaged through the neatly stacked pile of kitchen equipment before her and pulled out what she needed to cook the little food they’d managed to gather the day before. It didn’t take much effort but she managed to make the end product tasty. Being able to take whatever you had and create something palatable was definitely an art she learned from her mother. She’d even resorted to creating her own spice mixes on occasion to make it stretch and ensure that even though the food they had wasn’t much, it still tasted good.

Ada finished cooking and served up her creation to her niece and God sister. They ate ferociously like they hadn’t eaten in ages and would never see food again amidst telling her how good the food she prepared was. Ada acknowledged the touting of being an excellent chef from the girls but felt sorry for them. Adults could barely contain hunger let alone children. It just didn’t seem fair that innocent children should be made to suffer as well. She waited until they were

satisfied before she ate what little they left. At least the girls were full for the moment, only God knew if they’d have anything for them to eat later that evening or even the next day. Ada tried not to think about it. Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof.

Eating daily had become a luxury for most in Biafra as one of the Nigerian government’s tactic to defeat Biafra in the war was to prevent food delivery into its land locked territory. They did this by restricting entry through Nigerian borders in hopes that it would force the Biafran army to surrender or have its indigenes starve to death. It worked to a certain extent because while adults could cope with prolonged periods of starvation, the children couldn’t. They were certainly the most vulnerable in the situation and the food scarcity led to Biafran children dying of kwashiorkor due to malnutrition but Biafra refused to surrender. They’d rather the death of all its people than surrender to a tyrannical force like Nigeria. Biafra’s freedom was worth death to all who resided within its borders.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“LAND OF THE RISING SUN”

1. What inspired you to write this book?
2. What was the Nigerian-Biafran war about and why is it that most people haven't heard about it?
3. Are the characters in the book based on anybody you know?
4. How can we, as a society, be better versed on issues like this that happen around the world.
5. Will you write more books like this to highlight similar issues around the world?

