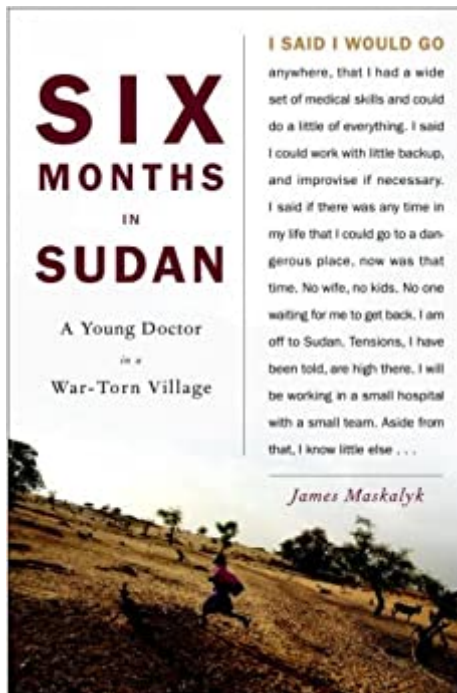




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Six Months In Sudan: A Young Doctor In A War-Torn Village



Synopsis

An inspiring story of one doctor's struggle in a war-torn village in the heart of Sudan. In 2007, James Maskalyk, newly recruited by Doctors Without Borders, set out for the contested border town of Abyei, Sudan. An emergency physician drawn to the ravaged parts of the world, Maskalyk spent six months treating malnourished children, coping with a measles epidemic, watching for war, and struggling to meet overwhelming needs with few resources. *Six Months in Sudan* began as a blog that Maskalyk wrote from his hut in Sudan in an attempt to bring his family and friends closer to his experiences on the medical front line of one of the poorest and most fragile places on earth. It is the story of the doctors, nurses, and countless volunteers who leave their homes behind to ease the suffering of others, and it is the story of the people of Abyei, who endure its hardship because it is the only home they have. A memoir of volunteerism that recalls *Three Cups of Tea*, *Six Months in Sudan* is written with humanity, conviction, great hope, and piercing insight. It introduces us to a world beyond our own imagining and demonstrates how we all can make a difference.

Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: Spiegel & Grau (May 26, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385526512

ISBN-13: 978-0385526517

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 1 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 18 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,357,995 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in [Books > Travel > Africa > Sudan](#) #423 in [Books > Travel > Middle East > General](#) #2645 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Medical](#)

Customer Reviews

When he signed up to do a stint with Médecins Sans Frontières in 2006, Maskalyk, currently assistant professor of emergency medicine at the University of Toronto, volunteered to go anywhere the organization wanted to send him, writing, No wife, no kids, no house, no debt, no one waiting for me to get back. He was posted in Abyei, an oil-rich region set squarely on the demarcation between north and south Sudan, where one of the bloodiest civil wars in Africa had

recently ended. In a makeshift hospital, he saw dozens of sick people, most suffering from even dying from treatable illnesses. In his six months of service, Maskalyk oversaw a measles outbreak and treated tuberculosis patients, mothers fatally injured during childbirth and countless malnourished children. Even if Maskalyk frustrates in his apolitical stance, refusing to ask why so many are suffering and merely lamenting the fact, he provides a raw and deeply felt account of his time in Sudan. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

“This is an extraordinary book, a piercingly authentic account of the fear, confusion, and hope of a young doctor newly deployed to a humanitarian crisis wrapped around by a war. James Maskalyk’s commitment to survival – his own as well as his patients’ – illuminates this account of doctoring in the sort of desperate place where it couldn’t matter more.”

•Jonathan Kaplan, author of *The Dressing Station* “Maskalyk’s soft prose is beautiful and invites with the right intimate details. He offers a rare window on the inner life of an aid worker, on what it means to be a humanitarian around the hard edges of war, and on the certain drive to go on. Why? Because in his words, ‘hope not only meets despair in equal measure, it drowns it.’”

•James Orbinski, author of *An Imperfect Offering: Humanitarian Action in the Twenty-First Century* “This journey is beautifully told in sharp beats, and lyrical notes. It is the voyage of a young doctor out into a hard world, and deep within his own heart.”

•Vincent Lam, author of *Bloodletting and Miraculous Cures* “Six Months in Sudan is a wrenchingly heartbreaking account of distant agonies almost too pointed to grasp. Learning about Maskalyk’s work there is stirring, but the real miracle is this book paints a picture so precisely and vividly that it becomes impossible to look away. This is Maskalyk’s accomplishment, and his gift to the Sudanese and to us. The shame of our indifference retreats before his exhortation: ‘learn, and understand, and perhaps a more bearable future becomes possible for all of us.’”

•Kevin Patterson, author of *Consumption*

Over winter break, I read a book entitled *Six Months in Sudan*, by Dr. James Maskalyk. I am a Field Partner of Doctors without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres), and was introduced to this book via Dr. Maskalyk’s blog on their site. I am grateful that I learned of it, and that I had the opportunity to read through the memoirs of this caring physician. *Six Months in Sudan* isn’t a book written in a formal style with proper grammar and formatting throughout. Instead, it contains the honest memoirs of a Canadian emergency medicine physician who recorded his thoughts and experiences of

serving in Sudan while they were still fresh and raw in his mind. It is a collection of memories, experiences, and emotions. He wrote while angry, depressed, anxious, and grieving. He discusses intimate moments and shocking injuries. He holds nothing back as he bares even his most private thoughts prior to his departure and during his term. He also discusses the isolation that he felt upon his return. This is, perhaps, the most honest book I've ever read. It isn't a difficult read, and it is the kind of book that you don't want to put down once you've begun reading. If you're interested in medicine, public health, international affairs, or policy, you'll definitely appreciate this book. Even if you're not, you probably will. Beware, however, as this book is not edited for content that may make you realize that you take the comforts of your life for granted. It made me realize that I do so, and that the hardships I experience really are petty as compared to those of others throughout the world. When you purchase *Six Months in Sudan*, Dr. Maskalyk donates a portion of the proceeds to Doctors without Borders and to a fund that will help students from Abyei, Sudan to access education, if the schools there are ever rebuilt.

I read *Six Months in Sudan* before South Sudan became a separate nation and the ensuing devastation that has engulfed it since. Reading this book opened my eyes into the cultural problems that faces the medical professionals who work with Doctors Without Borders. Even in the calmer setting of this book, working in an alien culture, particularly that of the third world, presents its own problems when trying to interface with the people and belief system of that culture. Maskalyk has great empathy for his Sudanese patients and goes out of his way to try to understand them. It's a good read and gives insight into the problems facing anyone working in South Sudan.

Good insight.. Is what it is, nothing special about the writing..

Slow, boring, one day same as the last.

Book in pristine condition. Written by Canadian volunteer with of his experiences as a doctor with Médecins sans Frontières in Darfur. He gave a very engaging interview on CBC radio so purchased book for niece who has volunteered with NGO in Sudan.

If you love reading about real experiences in Africa, then you will enjoy this book. The author uses modern syntax, and it is written like a blog. As a medical person, myself, I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The imagery is unbelievably real. Well done....

What admiration I have for these doc. If we only had more people like this, all over the world. One person can make a tremendous difference. And what a little amount of money it would cost to wipe out some of these diseases.

This book took me on a daily basis to somewhere I could never visit, facing hardships and losses that would overwhelm me. But, he did so in an honest way that forced me ,in my comfortable existence, to face and embrace the daily struggles of those in Sudan.Dr. James and his team, and some Sudanese patients felt like friends by the end of the book.

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