



Escape from Slavery: The True Story of My Ten Years in Captivity and My Journey to Freedom in America

By Francis Bok

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Winner of the Books for a Better Life/Suze Orman First Book Award

May 1986: Seven-year-old Francis Bok was selling his mother's eggs and peanuts near his village in southern Sudan when Arab raiders on horseback burst into the quiet marketplace, murdering men and gathering the women and young children into a group. Strapped to horses and donkeys, Francis and others were taken north into lives of slavery under wealthy Muslim farmers.

For ten years, Francis lived in a shed near the goats and cattle that were his responsibility. After two failed attempts to flee--each bringing severe beatings and death threats--Francis finally escaped at age seventeen. He persevered through prison and refugee camps for three more years, winning the attention of United Nations officials who granted passage to America.

Now a student and an antislavery activist, Francis Bok has made it his life mission to combat world slavery. His is the first voice to speak to an estimated 27 million people held against their will in nearly every nation, including our own. *Escape from Slavery* is at once a riveting adventure, a story of desperation and triumph, and a window revealing a world that few have survived to tell.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Seven-year-old Francis Piol Bol Buk was living happily on his family's southern Sudan farm. One day in 1986, he was sent on errands to the marketplace. There, a slave raid ripped him from his contented life and threw him into a wretched existence serving under a northern Sudanese Arab. After he escaped at age 17, Buk made his way to Cairo with a black market passport incorrectly listing his name as Bok and became a U.N. refugee allowed to settle in the U.S. in 1999. Although he found contentment in Iowa among other refugees, the following year Bok decided to work with an American antislavery organization, and testified before Congress about the atrocities in Sudan. While this is a remarkable story, its power is conveyed most effectively through Bok's simple retelling. His sincerity compels, especially when he describes the decade of mistreatment he endured. After two failed escape attempts, he's told he'll be killed in the morning, and while bound, he thinks of the morning ahead: "I would be dead and finally through with this place and this family. My mind preferred death." Yet when his master changes his mind, Bok immediately starts plotting again. For all his emotional strength, though, Bok remains humble. He thanks God and everyone who helps him escape slavery. This is a powerful, exceptionally well-told story, equally riveting and heartbreaking. Although legal strides have been made, with the help of people like Bok, the persistence of slavery in the world makes this a work that can't be ignored. Maps, photos not seen by PW.

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From [Booklist](#)

As a seven-year-old boy growing up in the southern Sudan, Bok was caught up in a raid on a regional market center when marauders from the north set upon the market, killing the men and kidnapping the women and children to work as farm slaves. He went from a loving and supportive extended family to the brutality of slavery in a strange land and culture, dominated by Muslims who considered him a Christian infidel. After enduring 10 years of slavery, Bok escaped to freedom in Cairo, where he became a U.N. refugee, eventually making his way to the U.S. at the age of 21. Having learned Arabic in Northern Sudan and English in America, Bok, with incredible determination, became involved in the antislavery movement, speaking around the country while seeking to earn a high-school degree. Yet it is his simple account of being a child cut off from his family and culture that shows the inhumanity of slavery. Bok's saga provides another--more contemporary--perspective on slavery for Americans reckoning with their own troubling history of such inhumanity. *Vernon Ford*

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Review

"A gripping story of terror and triumph." *?Ebony*

"A touching modern-day slave narrative...an inspirational story meant to heighten support for the antislavery movement of the 21st century, and it most likely will." *?Joanne Skerrett, The Boston Globe*

"Gripping...mindblowing. A-." *?Karyn L. Barr, Entertainment Weekly*

"Incredible." *?Lewis Beale, USA Weekend*

"[*Escape from Slavery*] carries the uncalculating ring of truth." *?San Francisco Chronicle*

“How will the world respond to Francis Bok's true story? Some will welcome its commercial profitability and entertainment value. And some will seek to change the world.” ?*Anne Grant, Providence Journal*

“Francis Bok is too young for anyone to predict a life of immortal dimensions. But if his heart-rending and powerful memoir...has just one-tenth of the impact of [Frederick] Douglass, his name will be remembered by more than a few.” ?*Cary Clack, San Antonio Express-News*

“This is a powerful, exceptionally well-told story, equally riveting and heartbreaking. Although legal strides have been made, with the help of people like Bok, the persistence of slavery in the world makes this a work that can't be ignored.” ?*Publishers Weekly (starred review)*

“Bok's saga provides another--more contemporary--perspective on slavery for Americans reckoning with their own troubling history of such inhumanity.” ?*Booklist*

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