



The Slave Factory

Julian Darius

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Slave factories, a crucial but largely forgotten part of the slave trade, were bases on the African coast that existed to buy slaves and resell them to slaving ships. They were places of notorious suffering and exploitation, detested by both the natives and by white slavers.

This story, in 12 brief chapters, focuses on the intersection of lives at one slave factory, Porto de Maria. Diego, its boss, is jaded. Matthew, its resident priest, has a terrible secret that drove him to Africa. Bowlu, his slave, struggles to find recompense for what he's lost. William, the ageing captain of a visiting slaving ship, commands a divided crew, worries about interdiction at sea, and has come to Porto de Maria to determine his future. When these lives cross on the eve of the American Civil War, none of them will remain the same.

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The Slave Factory Details

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From Reader Review The Slave Factory for online ebook

Lenny says

what a wonderful book. Really opens your eyes to things

Daria Narkov says

Perfect for Kindle.

Laura Greenwood says

Original review posted on: <http://a-reader-lives-a-thousand-live...>

This book follows the activities of a slave factory in Africa at the decline on of the slave trade. It follows several main people, Father Finnigan who lives at the Slave Factory, Bowlu, a slave, and Captain Stephenson, who operates a slaver.

There are two stories running side by side, the first is Bowlu's, from when he is captured from the Mene tribe to when he leaves the slave factory, and that of Stephenson's boat arriving at the Slave Factory to purchase slaves.

This book had the potential to be particularly moving, particularly Bowlu's story, but in my opinion the clunky writing detracted from it. Unlike the other characters, Bowlu's narrative is in the first person and is in broken English. I can understand why the author has done this, he wants to get across the alieness of what is happening to him, but personally I just found that it detracted from what could be an emotional tale. It also took quite a while for me to understand who was actually narrating those chapters, which again detracted from the feeling of the novel.

Another issue that I had was that the ending was very abrupt. It didn't actually culminate a plot arc, it just gave you a run down of what happened to the ship, the slaves and the workers at the Slave Factory, ultimately it left me wondering what the point of the story was, which says a lot when any book like this should effectively be about why slavery is bad, or it should leave you with the impression that it is more accurately.

The one thing the book really left me grasping after was why Father Finnigan sent Bowlu away (and why he's pretending to be a priest), it just didn't make any sense because it wasn't explained.

I felt disappointed in this book, where it should have left me reeling about the horrible way people were treated during slavery, it just left me thinking about the clunky writing.

Sadie Hazzard says

Didn't think I'd like this because I don't like preachy stuff and this is about the slave trade. But the writing pulled me in. A complex, literary story that pays off in the end.

Rakisha says

Julian Darius provides a glimpse, from several perspectives, as to what life may have been like at a slave factory on the African Coast. We are witness to, in meticulous detail, the brutality and horrendous conditions endured by the slaves. We are also able to peer into the thoughts and conflicting feelings of the once free and now captured slave who develops a bond with one of his captors. The motives of the slave traders, head of the slave factory, local priest and ship captain are also explored.

I received a signed copy of this book courtesy of the author in a Goodreads giveaway. Thanks!

Sunny says

I received this book for free through Goodreads.

Incredible story that enlightened me to the harsh cruelties of slavery in a way I've never before experienced. At the same time, Darius created a story that showed how experiences can completely change one's perspective. Making a slave "wish to be sold."

There is no happy ending to be found here. It's a small book with large teeth.

Danielle says

I will never cease to be surprised and horrified by the capacity for human cruelty. The Slave Factory is a short, yet brutal look at Porto de Maria, a slave factory. It is mostly told through the eyes of Bowlu, a man who was captured, sold into slavery, and taken to Porto de Maria. The story is told matter-of-factly, without gratuitous sex or violence; but of course the story is rife with violence and violent sex. While well written, this book made me very sad.

Betsy says

A stunning novella about the slave trade that will leave you thinking for long after about all types of bondage from the most obvious in a book about slavery, to that which is self-imposed.

Sydney Squidney says

The human condition is the inescapable features of being human.

But what makes us human? Is it the capacity for compassion, or the ability to lack it?

I've always believed that apathy is a shameful anesthetic.

Indifference is dangerous.

Yet, I cautiously admit that endless reportage of atrocities throughout the world, past and present, can be so overwhelming to acknowledge sometimes, because there is just SO MUCH distress a person can absorb; there is only so many times you can be horrified by the capacity of and for human cruelty... so much that the more you know, sometimes, unforgivably, the more it has less impact on you. Some would say this is despicably egocentric and some may say it's a necessary self-preservation tactic, but however you classify the detachment it is still **a contemptible disconnection**.

Caring less about the victims who have actually had to endure true horrors is simply unforgivable. If it bothers you to even think of another being's suffering, just imagine having had to live through it. And if you can't take the time to honour that, to know gratitude, well... there's that question about the human condition again.

The Slave Factory can be read as a **powerful, poignant reminder to not forget the ultimate degradations** that you have not had to suffer, of the inhumane treatment and dehumanization of an entire race of peoples who had been reduced to nothing more than a commodity.

This book is to help you remember that even though the Trans-atlantic Slave Trade was finally abolished in the mid-nineteenth century, human beings should never become de-sensitized to the futility and despair suffered among the millions of African people who were mercilessly enslaved and whose painful and tragic suffering should never, ever be forgotten.

It's estimated that more than 15 MILLION Africans were forced from Africa to be sold into slavery, (if they even survived the Atlantic slaving voyages) and that means there are more than 15 million **PERSONAL STORIES, millions of which are UNTOLD**, of enslaved people who had to cope with unthinkable brutality and agony before they ever arrived to a plantation. **It was a process of madness.**

In the short span of just 50 pages, you have a chance to rediscover the cruel and sobering realities of the Atlantic slave trade through the fictitious yet realistic characterisation of a captured man named Bowlu, who has been sold into slavery.

Through a simple narration you see into his mind and heart as this haunting story unfolds describing tragic mental suffering, physical pain and tireless exertions. Also chronicled in several other voices as paths cross at Porto de Maria, the slave factory central to this story.

I really appreciated this story; I needed to be reminded of that level of suffering. How only the absolute, absolute minimum amount of basic needs were provided to these starving and beaten people while the maximum amount of work and other "services" was expected of them.

It will make your stomach turn to know that the suffering of beatings, rapes, starvation, humiliation and tortures were accepted, and in many cases, welcomed, and even lost their edge, as the terror of living in your head, the agony of mind, while being cramped inside a slaving vessel for months on end while in transit to the Americas, was far more dreadful to some people.

"because it means a few hours away from the stink of five hundred chained men and a few minutes of seeing the night sky."

This is a very short story, but is long enough to understand the tragedy, and be affecting. I'm not sure anything longer would bring any more merit to the story.

It's disturbing, it's grave, it's surprising and the ending, well, this is really a story about the human condition, and nothing underlines that more than the ending.

[Disclaimer: I won this book as a First Reads winner during a Goodreads Giveaway on Jun 27, 2012, however the review is my own honest opinion and I was not solicited by the author or any agent of Goodreads.]

Eva says

This was a first read giveaway, for being a fictional book I felt like it did have facts in it that displayed what the African people suffered through at the hands of the white man and their people. I enjoy reading civil war history and that is what attracted me to the book all though I guess I had it in my mind that it was non-fictional and was expecting more facts, however I did enjoy reading this book. It does open your eyes to what this particular race of people suffered through.

Chadwick says

I first read this on Kindle and then bought it in print for my bookshelf! It's short but thought provoking.

Shomeret says

[I note that no reviews mention the GLBT element even as a hidden spoiler, yet it was this aspect that will make me remember this book. It is a haunting demonstration of what can happen to a gay man who is consumed with self-hatred. (hide spoiler)]

Jessica says

It was interesting, but it's not all that original, and it definitely should have been elaborated on. It was way too short and undeveloped in my opinion.

disclaimer I won this book through the Goodreads First Reads Giveaway, but my review is 100% honest.

Kathleen Huben says

Won as a First-Reads book.

Slave factories were the collection points on the coast of Africa where slave ships picked up their human cargo. The Slave Factory is basically the story of a two day encounter between four men: the "factory" manager, a ship's captain, a priest, and a slave.

It's a very short novel (50 pages) but in that space raises some interesting questions about how human beings treat and react to each other. It's a well-written, emotionally moving story.

K.R. Bankston says

Once I first started reading this novella, I was a bit annoyed to rehash such a painful portion of my history, but as I persevered and continued on I realized it was necessary. Never should we as Black and African people forget the sufferings of our ancestors just to exist as human beings. The commodity of black women being nothing more than dumping grounds for every horny male within the boundaries of her existence, of course still annoys the hell out of me; even now the Black woman is objectified as nothing more than s-e-x on a platter. I felt slightly bad for Bowlu, being betrayed by the one person he'd grown to love and trust, it wasn't however shocking. The imagery in the novella was distinct and it definitely put me inside the compound, inside the suffering, inside the pain, fear and darkness of the people living this nightmare. The tossing of LIVE beings overboard with no regard to the breath they took was enough to bring tears to my eyes, both of hurt and fury. Even for as far as we've come we still have far to go, being the ONLY group of American's who STILL have to fight every few years to keep the right to vote. We can never stop fighting for equality, especially against people whose ignorance leads them to believe the color of their skin somehow makes them superior. We are all HUMAN, period. Great Job by the author and I appreciate him tackling this very sensitive issue with class.
