



Botswana Time

Will Randall

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This volume provides a personal account of Africa's great success story, Botswana. Through a series of serendipitous encounters, Will Randall found himself in Botswana, resuming the career as a teacher that had already taken him from an inner-London comprehensive to Poona in India.

Botswana Time Details

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From Reader Review Botswana Time for online ebook

Shonna Froebel says

I've had this one beside my bed for a while, reading it slowly and savouring it. This memoir is by a British teacher about the time he spent teaching and living in Kasane, Botswana. As he becomes part of the community and engages both with the children and with the other teachers and parents, he also learns about Botswana. He has a great respect for the country and its people and that comes through strongly here. His affection for the children also comes through strongly, and he draws the personalities nicely. He also, of course, encounters the animals, sometimes happily, sometimes not so much, but always described with great humour. He is self-deprecating, but not dishonestly. I really enjoyed this book.

Robin Petty says

Laid-back account of teaching in Botswana. For me it didn't hit its stride until the author reached his destination - which was actually later in the book than I would have liked. The humour in the early chapters in South Africa and as a safari-guide, for me, seemed rather 'placed', as if the author felt an obligation to keep readers or perhaps publishers smiling. I would have personally been happier with a shorter, factual preamble describing how he got there. However the smiles flow naturally when he comes into contact with the children - and that's where this book is at its most charming.

If Randall had any hesitancy about getting serious or diverting deeply from the bonhomie, he needn't have been - there were some characters and moments in the book where I felt the tone could have got more reflective and personal feelings could have been bared. Particularly a slipped-in admission/confession on the final page I felt could have been expanded upon - the epilogue would have been the stronger for it. These were clearly good times for the writer and anyone with an interest in southern Africa will enjoy this gentle re-telling of them.

Apesays

Bookcrossing 2006:

This was such a great book to read for so many reasons. I've marked it down as travel, but I think it could come under so many headings. It's a great story, it's a story of school life with some funny six year olds, and you learn a lot about Botswana. Really makes you want to travel there.

There are some laugh out loud funny bits - that mistranslation with the joke about the two statues, the tale of Mr Mango to name a couple.

Also some sad parts. The AIDS problem in Africa is touched upon, all the more real because you get to know some of the victims and their families in this book. Also some of the awful racism on the part of some white Africans (giving everyone a bad name). But overall the book is positive, and has such a warm feeling of humanity. Really enjoyed it.

Chris Hall says

A totally charming, gentle read with lots of interesting details about life in small town Botswana, brought to life by a wonderful cast of characters.

Marie Knock says

I long for the timing, luck and sheer wanderlust of Will Randall (or Mr Mango as he becomes known). This is a tale of how a wedding in cape town led to a job as a teacher in a school in Kasane, Botswana. The tale is told with good humour and stunning detail. As a lover of all things African, this story even challenged my perceptions and thoughts.

As for any teachers out there - I defy you not to be green eyed at the tales he has of how schools are run, the discipline and delight of the children and the incredible attitude and respect towards education. Heck - this made me want to become a teacher in Africa.

A great book - heartwarming and fun to read. It'll certainly make you question the office job!

Claudio Noguera says

Botswana time is a book by Will Randall describing his time in Botswana. It is a real story, autobiographical. The book is a nice read and gives you an idea of what Botswana is like. It is a very good read [1][if you are about to visit Botswana, like I am].

The story starts in Cape Town, where Will is attending a wedding. Will is a school teacher from England who has recently been teaching in India and is currently not working. He got a one way ticket to Cape Town, not knowing what he would do in the future.

In the wedding, he sits in the table with a professor of the Cape Town university, who tells him about a school in Kasane, Namibia. Another friend, who organizes safari trips for foreigners, suddenly finds himself without a guide for his next trip (he is the driver), so he tells Will that he should be the guide. Even though Will has never been a guide before, he accepts seduced by the fact that the trip will take him to Kasane.

From the trip: the Fish river canyon is a must see, Swakopmund is a very nice german city and the wildlife in the Chove river is amazing.

Once in Kasane, Will stays there. The rest of the book describes how it is the life at the school and the society in Botswana: the AIDS, the illusion the kids have for the future, animal trafficking, colonialism, racism... Him being part of a school he gets to meet a lot of people (basically the kids' parents) and to travel quite extensively because of the football league the kids are part of.

Will had a lot of adventures. He was twice in jail during his time in Botswana. However his biggest fear are still elephants.

Overall, the impression one gets about Botswana is that is a country that is growing, a country with illusion.

However, AIDS is a massive problem and a taboo theme.

And about the book, although not a master piece, a nice read.

Eileen Kay says

This is rather sweet. It also has dramas and even tragedy, has a loveable cast, and is based on real people obviously - which is charming. On the whole it is a warm and uplifting read. I learned a lot about Botswana that I was glad to know. He's a sincere writer and he has a sense of humour. It is indeed a good read. recommended for those wanting a smart and yet gentle read.

Kim says

Just a sweet recounting of one man's adventure and life in Kasane in Botswana. This book is easy and light - it really is just his story.

Will Randall, Mr Mango, lands up a teacher in Kasane in Botswana almost by accident and throws himself into the adventure whole-heartedly. He displays a childlike wonder at the beauty of Africa - something so few adult tourists are willing to do.

It's a delightful book, especially so for me as I had been to many of the places he describes, and have seen many of the things.

Lovely!

Daniel Wright says

Charming, engaging, uplifting, at once tragic and comic, giving an optimistic glimpse into the life of a small developing country. 'It's not all ladies and their detective agencies, you know!'

Denise Kruse says

Traveling vast stretches of Africa with Will Randall is a bumpy, exhilarating, delightful ride. Filled with dry humor and much heart, the reader encounters wild animals, reptiles, and exotic birds along with many obstacles that are overcome by the author and the people who have reclaimed their own country. One wonders how the author survived some of the predicaments in which he found himself adventuring as a teacher/football coach in this far-flung corner of Africa. Thankfully for me, football was only an incidental part of the story. I suspect that the author is less reckless, more purposeful, than he lets on because I think he actually did some good when he was there. Certainly his stint enriched him. It is very well written and a pleasurable way to explore from a safe distance.

Gill says

I've put this book on my AMS shelf, not because of the author (Will Randall) but because of the link with Botswana. AMS is quoted on the cover, and one can see the connection between the two depictions of the country, although there are also great differences - Randall is writing about his own experience of Botswana as an incoming teacher, and someone ignorant of the entire culture and history of the country. This gives him the opportunity to inform the reader by recounting the 'lectures' on history and so on that other people (mainly his head-teacher) give him.

He also does not shy away from describing certain elements of the society which he found uncomfortable or bad.

He does paint a very vivid picture of the place, even though his main thrust is what happened to him rather than deliberately setting out to describe the landscape.

I shall certainly look out for more of his books, and recommend them to others.

Marte Patel says

Reading the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series has made me want to learn more about Botswana, so when I spotted this on Amazon I had to get it. Botswana Time is the wonderfully random story of how Will Randall became a primary school teacher in a small town in Botswana, about his school's football team's journeys around southern Africa, and about Botswana itself. Recommended.

Merlyna Mel says

After ladies first detective agency will read anything on Botswana! Entertaining

Barbara says

This is really a 3.5 rating. An enjoyable adventure with a guy who's willing to go along with a few crazy suggestions (and a little "lubrication") and ends up teaching grade school children in the northern corner of Botswana. His experiences with the children, their haphazard football team, the local bush life, and the many faces and personalities of Botswana make for a lot of fun, a few laughs and a wonderful picture of life...when you take it as it comes.

My only hitch, keeping it from 4-stars, is a peculiar habit in his writing that about 90% of the time I could live with, but once in awhile it just got annoying. I won't point it out because it may not bother other readers...and I'd hate to ruin the fun with a little nit-picky foible of my own.

I gather Will Randall has a few more similar adventures in print--I'll be hunting them out, I'm sure!

Julian Walker says

In a delightfully told tale, Will Randall haphazardly arrives as a school teacher in Kasane, Botswana, via an accidental stint as a cook on an overland travel trip through Namibia and a drunken conversation and a wedding in South Africa.

Learning the ropes of the school, having first repainted it, he brings to life the colourful characters amongst his pupils and their parents and paints an idyllic picture of life in a country, where travelling six hours across the bush through bureaucratic border controls to play a football match, or dealing with the impact of AIDS on family life, are part of his new daily spectrum.

He deals with wildlife, the officious school inspector and the local villain, in the same affable writing style and consistently produces some wry observations on his new surroundings.

This book has the same gentle take on Botswana life that Alexander McCall Smith fictionalises in his No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series and will be liked by fans of these novels and by travel readers alike.
