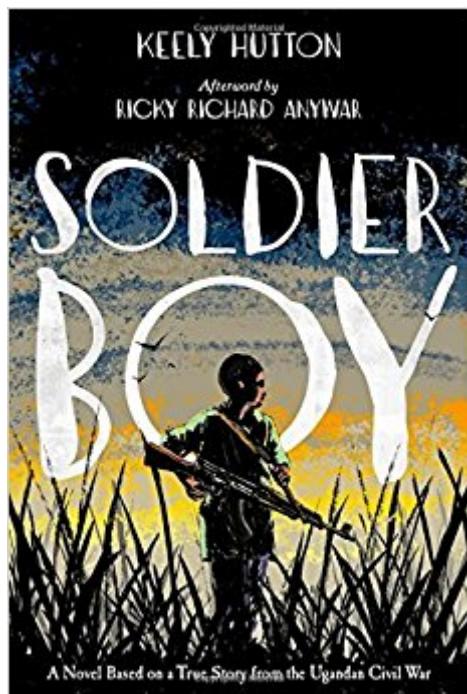


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Soldier Boy



Synopsis

An unforgettable novel based on the life of Ricky Richard Anywar, who at age fourteen was forced to fight as a soldier in the guerrilla army of notorious Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony. *Soldier Boy* begins with the story of Ricky Richard Anywar, abducted in 1989 to fight with Joseph Kony's rebel army in the Ugandan civil war (one of Africa's longest running conflicts). Ricky is trained, armed, and forced to fight government soldiers alongside his brutal kidnappers, but never stops dreaming of escape. The story continues twenty years later, with a fictionalized character named Samuel, a boy deathly afraid of trusting anyone ever again. Samuel is representative of the thousands of child soldiers Ricky eventually helped rehabilitate as founder of the internationally acclaimed charity Friends of Orphans. Working closely with Ricky himself, debut author Keely Hutton has written an eye-opening book about a boy's unbreakable spirit and indomitable courage in the face of unimaginable horror. This title has Common Core connections.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

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Historical Fiction > Military #2774 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction

Customer Reviews

"A visceral indictment of man's inhumanity to man, while also celebrating human beings' ability to empathize and to rescue those who desperately need saving." *Booklist*, starred review "Hutton approaches the setting, conflict, and characters with unremitting honesty, drawing from Anywar's own life (he contributes an afterword) while using the fictional Samuel as a stand-in for the current generation of unwilling soldiers . . . Eye-opening and relevant." *Publishers Weekly*, starred review "A compelling tale . . . with a message of hope . . . A must-purchase for teen collections." *School Library Journal*, starred review "Hutton's debut novel seamlessly

blends the biographical account of Anywar's experiences with the fictional story of Samuel . . . Anywar will inspire a multitude of readers with his phenomenal ability to make peace with his past and his desire to help others like him . . . A must-have for every library with a teen collection. "A story that stands up for the unrelenting power of the human spirit to reject evil, the nigh-impossible odds that must be conquered to escape enslavement, and the deep scars that remain for a lifetime . . . Unapologetically searing and catastrophically truthful." Kirkus Reviews "Over the years I have read many novels and memoirs about children and warfare in modern Africa, but *Soldier Boy* stands out as one of the very best. Based on actual historical events, this compelling novel is a story of great violence and pain, but it is also one of tremendous strength, courage, and resilience. I will definitely be assigning it to my students for many years to come." Alicia Catharine Decker, Associate Professor, Pennsylvania State University, author of *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda*

Keely Hutton is an educational journalist and former teacher. She is the recipient of the Highlights Foundation Writers Workshop scholarship at Chautauqua. Since 2012, she has been working closely with Ricky Richard Anywar to tell his story. *Soldier Boy* is her first novel. Ricky Richard Anywar is the founder of the internationally acclaimed charity Friends of Orphans, and a former child soldier in Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Since escaping the LRA, Anywar has dedicated his life to rehabilitating other survivors and advocating for peace in their communities.

I really, really enjoyed this book. It was completely different than my standard reads (social satire, adventure/crime, etc.). But, well worth stepping outside my comfort zone! Wow! What a page-turner! Although I listened to the Audible version, I couldn't "put this down"! I don't think I've ever been so focused on every word. Every scene. Every emotion. Besides telling a heart-breaking story, the author, Keely Hutton, helps us understand the history of the Ugandan Civil War through the eyes and sole of Ricky Anywar. At times, tears came to my eyes. Thankfully, the author also successfully weaved in chapters that surface hope and warmth through the story of Samuel, a "rescued" soldier boy. As mentioned, I took the audio book route. Love this medium. The narrator, Kevin R. Free, is fantastic! He captures the emotions very well, and also does a remarkable job differentiating the voices of the characters with consistency. Very easy to tell who is speaking. Highly recommended! Congrats, Keely!

Is this book on your summer reading list? It should be. Two words: Page turner! Caution: Once you start reading it, you will never want to put it down. I read 148 pages in one sitting! I had to put it down to eat dinner! This novel will take you on a remarkable journey in which you will find hope in the face of fear, love in the shadows of hate, and forgiveness in a heart filled with despair. Keely tells a story of a remarkably strong young boy, Ricky, who was kidnapped by the LRA and pressed on through the trials and torture he faced as a child soldier in Joseph Kony's war. Ricky's strength of mind and spirit serve as his guide as he tries to find 'Obeno' (home) once again. This novel should be in the hands of everyone...adults and students.

I think this book should be read in every school so that kids in this country would know how fortunate they are. There was some violence and lots of scenes that were hard to read but I finished with a feeling that I had really learned something. As the mother of three sons, I can't imagine the horror that these poor people suffered at the hands of really evil people. I commend Keeley Hutton for writing this book. It must have been very difficult.

Last night I finished reading Keely Hutton's **SOLDIER BOY**. Actually, I completed it at 3AM, because I couldn't put it down. I'm so impressed with Keely's commitment to her craft and her gift as a writer. Despite the agony in those pages, she pulled me through, with her amazing ability to find just the right words. And the hope both she and Ricky Richard Anywar offer. Though there are violent scenes (it IS real, after all), nothing is gratuitous. And the alternating stories create a perfect balance. Well done!

A very powerful book- I highly recommend. Heartbreaking and shocking at times. Beyond distressing that such unspeakable atrocities can occur in our modern world. What an amazing human being to find a way to show acts of kindness amidst such horror and rise above it to help others. Really inspiring. Thank you Keely Hutton for sharing Ricky's amazing story.

This book is at times overwhelming but is a must read. Constant action and good narrative. It is such a sad situation in Uganda and any nation that kidnaps children to fight wars. What Ricky and the others witness at such a young age is beyond belief. Keely Hutton's writing and this story highlight the need for all of us to support the orphans and the children who are so misused in this world.

This is without a doubt one of the best books I have read in years. It is based on what really happened and I encourage all to read it. High School English teachers: this would be an excellent book for your students to read and discuss. Keely is an up and coming author. I cnot wait to read her next book!

This book opened my eyes to what was going on in Uganda. Very powerful book. Keely Hutton really engages you into the story. Can't wait for her next book!!!

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