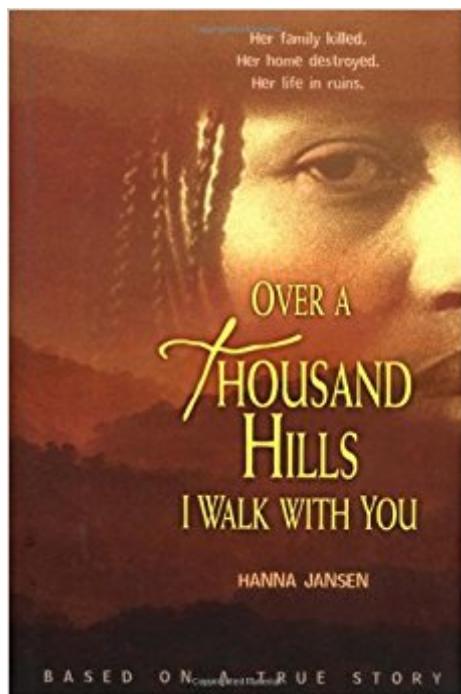


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# Over A Thousand Hills I Walk With You



## **Synopsis**

Before one fateful April day, Jeanne lived the life of a typical Rwandan girl. She fought with her little sister, went to school, and teased her brother. Then, in one horrifying night, everything changed. Political troubles unleashed a torrent of violence upon the Tutsi ethnic group. Jeanneâ™s family, all Tutsis, fled their home and tried desperately to reach safety. Theyâ•along with nearly 1 million othersâ•did not survive. The only survivor of her familyâ™s massacre, Jeanne witnessed unspeakable acts. But through courage, wits, and sheer force of will, she survived. Based on a true story, this haunting novel by Jeanneâ™s adoptive mother makes unforgettably real the events of the 1994 Rwandan genocide as one family experienced it. Jeanneâ™s story is a tribute to the human spirit and its capacity to heal.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Starred Review. Grade 9 Upâ “The patient encouragement of the author to help her adopted daughter, Jeanne d'Arc Umubyeyi, come to terms with her memories provides the frame for this account of genocide in Rwanda in 1994. When Jeanne was eight, Hutu neighbors massacred her family and destroyed her home; she witnessed the murder of her mother and brother, as well as other Tutsis, strangers and family friends. Beautifully crafted and smoothly translated, this searing

novel is all the more remarkable for the sense of place it conveys through vividly remembered details of an African world where the mundane experiences of daily life were cataclysmically interrupted by a few months of unimaginable violence. Jeanne's courage, will to live, and understandable anger come through clearly, leading readers to wonder how a person or a country can ever recover from such events. The young woman's adoptive mother's childhood memories, mentioned in one of the chapter introductions, make explicit the connection between Rwanda and Germany. The title, taken from a story Jeanne's grandmother told, also reminds readers of the importance of human connections and continued trust. Painful to read, but unforgettable, this book will provoke thought and discussion.â "Kathleen Isaacs, Towson University, MD Copyright Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

\*Starred Review\* Gr. 7-10. Eight-year-old Jeanne was the only one of her family to survive the 1994 Rwanda genocide. Then a German family adopted her, and her adoptive mother now tells Jeanne's story in a compelling fictionalized biography that stays true to the traumatized child's bewildered viewpoint. Jeanne is witness to unspeakable horror, but the tragedy isn't exploited in her narrative. Nor is Jeanne sentimental about the world she loses: she feels jealous of her sister and distant from her father, and she takes her comfortable Tutsi Catholic home in Kibungo for granted. Readers unfamiliar with the history may be somewhat bewildered. Who are the Tutsis? Who are the Hutus? Why were almost a million people massacred? But that confusion is part of the story. An appended time line fills in some of the facts, but of course, there's no explanation. Woven into the child's story are brief, contemporary commentaries, set in italics, by the Jeanne's German mother, who speaks to her child about loss, fury, survivor guilt, and healing. Occasionally, the narrative is too detailed, especially about daily life before the massacre, but Crawford's translation from the German is always clear and eloquent. An elemental account of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders ("And the world looked on. Or looked away"), this book is an important addition to the Holocaust curriculum. Hazel RochmanCopyright Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved

I have been searching for a realistic novel to use in order to teach my Humanities classes about the Rwandan Genocide for over a year. This is THE book!! It is beautifully written from cover to cover, and the novel allows the reader to live through the atrocity while questions get humanity. I chose this book because I want my kids to question the things that have happened throughout history, so that they can make better decisions than those who came before them. This book will allow them to do that.

This is a deeply affecting and important book about the bewildering phenomenon of the Rwandan genocide - how six months during 1994 devastated and changed forever this part of Africa. It is sensitively written, told from the point of view of Jeanne, an eight-year-old survivor. I shall ponder the wisdom within it for months to come. I have a criticism about the quality of the writing but cannot say whether the problem is in the translation. Perhaps the author, Hanna Jansen, is not a natural writer but even so the translator might have done a better job and used fewer word repetitions. I found her American voice palled at times too. I liked the chapter intros each of which were short scenes in Jeanne's adoptive home in Germany. This showed how healing was taking place, although I found the end where Hanna Jansen, the author and adoptive German mother, claimed to completely share and understand what Jeanne had been through. Sorry but no - you cannot possibly! Nevertheless it is a powerful story which deserves wide readership.

I picked up this book in the Atlanta library young adult section, and it proved to be one of the most impactful books I have ever read. I was in 7th grade watching coverage of these events on Channel One from my cozy classroom - but I never understood in any meaningful way what happened. I can't even put into words how much this book changed my world view. Thank you to the author and her daughter for sharing this story. It is one that needs to be told over and over again.

OVER A THOUSAND HILLS I WALK WITH YOU is the horrifying novel that is based on a true story about the 1994 Rwandan genocide. This was a subject that I didn't know too much about until I read this book, which made me realize how horrible events such as this one are still happening in today's society. How we could let this happen is beyond me. The book is written by the adoptive mother of Jeanne to tell the story that is often called the modern day Holocaust. As with the original Holocaust, many children were left to fight for themselves and try and find a new way to survive. Jeanne's family is killed and she is left to fend for herself, and the book is about how she achieves that. When you read this book you aren't on the basic level of thinking. You are much beyond that. The imagery in this book is not good, because in no way do you want this to happen to anyone, but at the same time it's very real. I felt as if I were standing the fields and forests and homes of these people and was surrounded by people fighting for their lives. Reviewed by: Taylor Rector

Hanna Jansen's OVER A THOUSAND HILLS I WALK WITH YOU is a touching tribute to her adopted daughter who was orphaned in the Rwandan war. Based on her daughter's recollections of

her childhood--memories both pleasant and bittersweet--Jansen weaves a tale of sorrow, hope, fear, joy, and love. For example, the early chapters of the book feature a young girl living life large. She is visiting her grandmother. She's playing with her cousins. She's fighting with her sister and brother. Her mom works outside the home, her dad is away a lot...and she has an incredibly whiny sister that she struggles with on a daily basis. She's vibrant and unaware that her world would change in just a few short years. Later chapters reveal the pain, the loss, the confusion, the fear of not knowing if one is going to survive another day. Witnessing such atrocities as seeing your parents and siblings killed by strange soldiers. Seeking help from family friends, yet being turned away because they don't want to risk dying too. Her survival story is inspiring. The story is beautifully told, Jansen has done a great job here. Her book is definitely worth reading.

Over A Thousand Hills I Walk With You is a story about a Rwandan-Tutsi girl who survives the genocide in 1994. She is 8 years old at the time, and is the only survivor from her family. Her adoptive mother writes the story and has reflections of Jeanne dealing with her new life throughout the course of the story. It really is a fascinating read. It shows Jeanne dealing with the trials of the massacre and her strength in healing while living in Germany with Jansen. I would highly recommend it.

Fantastic book. Easy to read and flows wonderfully. Very touching story.

In all honesty, I was rather disappointed with this one. The story is that of Jeanne, a survivor of the mass genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Now living with a foster family in Germany, Jeanne told her story to her new mother, who in turn put the words on paper. It's not that the story itself isn't good, because it is...what that poor child went through is inconceivable to most. I was interested in the story line, but the way it was narrated bothered me. First of all, at the start of every chapter, the foster mother/author, Hanna Jansen writes a page or two. Usually some sort of anecdote, or a story of some sort. Which is all fine and good, but lady, I didn't buy the book to read what you think. Were you in Rwanda running for your life? Didn't think so. So shush and let the girl tell her story. It frustrated me. My second complaint is the overall language used in the book. There's no way that those words came out of a teenagers mouth. Sorry, but it feels to me like Jansen edited and embellished where she saw fit. Maybe something got lost in the translation and its not Jansen's fault at all, I don't know. Regardless, it irritated me. The book has so much potential. I was so excited to read it when I picked it up, but seriously folks, it was a disappointing one.

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