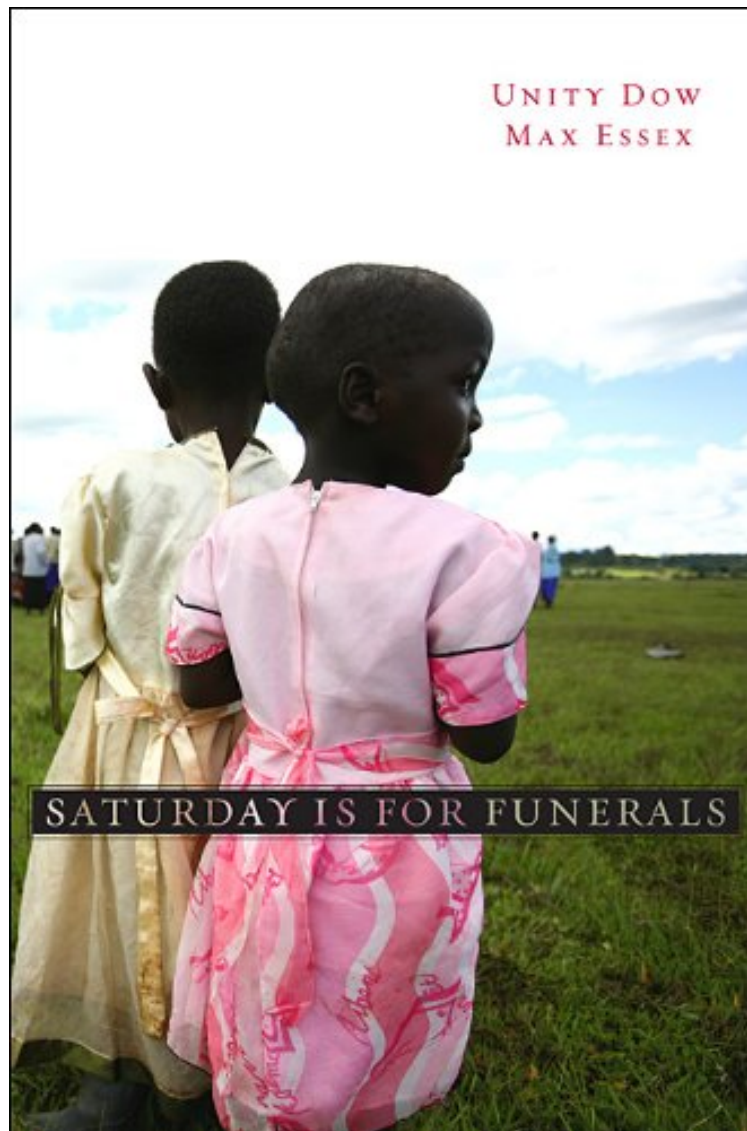


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Saturday Is for Funerals

Unity Dow, Max Essex
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Unity Dow, Max Essex : Saturday Is for Funerals before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Saturday Is for Funerals:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An interesting glimpse of the AIDS epidemic in Southern Africa. By simplexion I read this book soon after it was released, and I appreciated learning about the AIDS epidemic from both a medical and a sociological point-of-view. The impact of HIV/AIDS, particularly in countries like Botswana, is all-encompassing. Max Essex is a forerunner in AIDS research, particularly in Botswana where the infection rates are somewhere close to 30%. The style of this book is written in two voices - Max Essex's and Unity Dow's. Max provides

the scientific understanding of the disease, while Unity illustrates the consequences of the HIV/AIDS infection with faces and names. My favorite genre of books to read that of biographies/autobiographies. I like the way that Unity's human-interest stories alternate with Max's explanation of the research that has been done. At first I had some difficulty identifying who was 'speaking' and when - but the book becomes more fluid with each chapter. It is interesting how culture comes up against research and how, given the incessant deaths from the disease, Botswana culture has had to accommodate these new challenges and adapt accordingly. I work as an administrator in this field, and I found that this book greatly helped my understanding of my work. I was interested enough to read this book in a day or two, and the images still remain in my mind. It is not often that you encounter a book that appeals on so many levels - and imparts complex information without being condescending or pedantic. I have read some of Unity Dow's other work as well, and she has a fine, narrative voice. She captures the spirit of her culture so well that it is difficult not to pay attention. I would highly recommend this book for anyone interested in learning more about the AIDS epidemic in Africa. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful portrayal of the burden of HIV/AIDS both in a narrative and factual manner. By Customer The pairing of the experiences of both Dow and Essex concerning HIV/AIDS makes for a powerful illustration of the burden and suffering created by the disease. Not only informative, but heart-wrenching. Beautifully done. Not just a great read for those interested in Africa and global/public health, but can be easily read by the average audience as well. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Book! By BaylorGirl15 These authors have so much knowledge about this. The style of the book is perfect in helping the reader not only learn about the illness but also helping to relate to those with the disease and understand how HIV/AIDS affects more than just the body and those infected with it. A great read where you will learn much.

In the year 2000 the World Health Organization estimated that 85 percent of fifteen-year-olds in Botswana would eventually die of AIDS. In Saturday Is for Funerals we learn why that won't happen. Unity Dow and Max Essex tell the true story of lives ravaged by AIDS of orphans, bereaved parents, and widows; of families who devote most Saturdays to the burial of relatives and friends. We witness the actions of community leaders, medical professionals, research scientists, and educators of all types to see how an unprecedented epidemic of death and destruction is being stopped in its tracks. This book describes how a country responded in a time of crisis. In the true-life stories of loss and quiet heroism, activism and scientific initiatives, we learn of new techniques that dramatically reduce rates of transmission from mother to child, new therapies that can save lives of many infected with AIDS, and intricate knowledge about the spread of HIV, as well as issues of confidentiality, distributive justice, and human rights. The experiences of Botswana offer practical lessons along with the critical element of hope.

From Publishers Weekly The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Botswana is explored with sensitivity and scientific rigor in this heartening book from Dow, a Botswana High Court judge and novelist, and Essex, a Harvard professor and medical researcher specializing in HIV/AIDS. The authors offer an empathetic account of everyday life in a country where the disease infects one of every four adults the constant funerals, the heroism of community workers and activists and miniature narratives from the lives of the suffering and surviving: a teenager raising his siblings after being orphaned, a newlywed's discovering that her new husband is HIV-positive. In broad strokes, the authors cover the transmission and diagnosis of the disease, how drugs are researched and introduced on the market, and the humble and elaborate initiatives that have been so successful in Botswana: circumcision as well as HAART (Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy). Although occasionally repetitive, this richly informative book dispels much of the mystery still surrounding HIV/AIDS, revealing how life goes on for those infected. Readers overwhelmed by (and even numbed to) the images of desolation that accompany coverage of the epidemic will find a realistic but optimistic assessment of a society successfully tackling the problem and a model for other afflicted nations. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist In 2000, the World Health Organization predicted that 85 percent of 15-year-olds in Botswana would eventually die of AIDS. Life expectancies were projected to be shortened by 44 years. But in 2006, Botswana began receiving antiretroviral drugs, and its health prospects turned around dramatically. Dow brings a legal and human-rights perspective and Essex brings a medical-research perspective to chronicling the extent of the devastation of HIV/AIDS and the lessons learned from treating the disease and beating back the dire predictions. At one point, deaths were so prevalent that every Saturday was set aside for funerals. The traditional yearlong mourning was cut short, and family members had to help overwhelmed hospital staff. Dow recalls his mother's recitation of the long list of friends, relatives, and neighbors who died, the stigma and shame that has led to divorce in a nation that takes marriage very seriously. Essex details the course of the disease, the public health issues, and the private suffering of AIDS patients. Together, they present a compelling look at the toll of AIDS in Africa and some hopeful developments. --Vanessa Bush This is a remarkable account of the human effect of a pandemic, written by two people with an intimate knowledge of Botswana and its struggle to deal with AIDS. I recommend this book most warmly for its humanity and insight. (Alexander McCall Smith) This extraordinary book brings to life the utterly unique stories of people in Botswana; yet the fact is that struggle, suffering and redemption are also universal stories with which we can all identify. The partnership of Dow and Essex, storyteller and scientist,

results in a precious alchemy: a book that is engrossing, transforming and an important addition to the canon of the literature of HIV. (Abraham Verghese, author of *Cutting for Stone* and *My Own Country*) This is the AIDS book to read first, because of its novel approach of describing true and very moving stories of the Botswana experience, coupled with lucid and relevant scientific explanations fitting for each of the stories, and second, because of the experience and caliber of its authors. *Saturday Is For Funerals* is at once highly moving, while providing unforgettable lessons from the greatest pandemic in medical history. Unity Dow knows her people and their tragic stories, and as we would expect from a highly regarded novelist, displays these stories with grace and beauty. Coauthor Professor Max Essex has as much or more public health scientific experience and more insights into HIV/AIDS than anyone I know in the world. This book would be valuable not only for people impacted by HIV, but also for politicians, educators, students, and anyone who wants an education on mankind's greatest 'plague.' (Robert C. Gallo, M.D., Director, Institute of Human Virology, University of Maryland School of Medicine) This wonderful book is an inspiration to anyone who wants to learn more about the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its impact on Africa. The authors have collaborated on a well-written tome that is highly informative yet easy to read and digest. This book will have to be considered for a Pulitzer Prize and other suitable recognition. (Mark A. Wainberg, President Emeritus, International AIDS Society) Unity Dow and Max Essex have crafted an extraordinarily effective synergy of science and societal journalism. *Saturday Is For Funerals* explores the fragility and resilience of human spirit through poignant personal narratives around courtships, young love, and family tradition, centered in the Botswana 'hot zone' of the most devastating epidemic in recorded history. In conversational and gripping prose *Saturday Is For Funerals* engages as it informs, standing alongside Randy Shilts (*And the Band Played On*) and Abraham Verghese (*My Own Country*) as a heartfelt chronicle of the turbulent times that AIDS has engendered for global society, for science, and for amazing African peoples. (Stephen J. O'Brien, AIDS researcher, author of *Tears of the Cheetah: And Other Tales from the Genetic Frontier*) The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Botswana is explored with sensitivity and scientific rigor in this heartening book... This richly informative book dispels much of the mystery still surrounding HIV/AIDS, revealing how life goes on for those infected. Readers overwhelmed by (and even numbed to) the images of desolation that accompany coverage of the epidemic will find a realistic but optimistic assessment of a society successfully tackling the problem and a model for other afflicted nations. (Publishers Weekly 2010-03-15) The narratives provide a human touch and convincingly illustrate the tremendous impact of AIDS on women, children, infants, friends, family, and culture. While Botswana was hard-hit by the AIDS epidemic, it has provided a successful model for other countries by taking a proactive approach to dealing with the disease. (Tina Neville Library Journal 2010-05-01) A decade ago, the AIDS epidemic in the southern African country had gotten so bad that leaders feared its people were in danger of extinction; the World Health Organization estimated that 85 percent of 15 year olds would eventually die of the disease. Today, Botswana is the pride of Africa. The country's remarkable journey is detailed in *Saturday Is for Funerals*, a new book by renowned AIDS activist Unity Dow and researcher Max Essex. Weaving together personal anecdotes and medical history, the authors reveal how a combination of proactive government intervention, education, research, and foreign aid have achieved the near impossible... Bringing *Saturday Is for Funerals* to life--and distinguishing it from other books about AIDS in Africa--are its first-hand, often heart-wrenching stories of the epidemic's victims... [Dow] shares evocative stories of marriages torn apart by the disease, and saved through drug therapy, of tribal leaders encouraging circumcision to reduce infection, and of AIDS orphans. (Danielle Friedman Daily Beast 2010-06-04) Unity Dow, a judge of the Interim Independent Constitutional Dispute Resolution Court of Kenya, and Max Essex, a Harvard professor of health sciences, have worked at the Botswana-Harvard Partnership to control, contain, and curtail the HIV/AIDS epidemic that has devastated Botswana. In this informative book, they present the many difficulties they face--medical, cultural, psychological, and financial. (Barbara Fisher Boston Globe 2010-06-06) The epidemic of HIV and AIDS marching across Africa is threatening to crush entire countries under its weight. *Saturday Is for Funerals* tells the story of how one country, Botswana, is stemming the epidemic with bold political leadership, a strategic and scientific approach, and more than a little grit. (Priya Shetty New Scientist 2010-06-19) The book is compelling because it tells us the real stories of people living with HIV/Aids and the devastating effects it has on families. There are stories of deadly sexual betrayal and bitterness, but also resilience, caring and kindness... This hook is then used to engage the reader and explain the science behind the disease in a generally accessible way. It is a work of both literature and science and works brilliantly. (Pdraig Carmody Irish Times 2010-07-02) A compelling look at the toll of AIDS in Africa and some hopeful developments. (Vanessa Bush Booklist 2010-05-01) Tragic and heartwrenching stories of victims, coupled with scientific explanations, are effectively woven into chapters on mother-to-child transmission, fear of diagnosis, AIDS in children, highly active antiretroviral therapy, drug resistance and toxicities, stigma, and orphans. The book comes at a critical time as news of HIV/AIDS "donor fatigue" makes headlines, and funding to battle AIDS in Africa is shrinking. This is very important reading for politicians, educators, students, and those seeking an education on humankind's greatest plague. (P. Wermager Choice 2010-10-01) Dow and Essex bring their distinct and complementary knowledge of HIV infection in southern Africa into a book that effectively depicts both the personal and the scientific facets of the Botswana AIDS epidemic... The science is competently explained in terms that a lay person could understand, and the combination works well, making

this book a good introduction to the key facts about HIV/AIDS as well as a moving depiction of the individual tragedies this disease can inflict...This book would be worthwhile reading for people who want to learn more about the HIV epidemic but would never pick up a textbook or scientific article...In my view, this book should be compulsory reading for policy makers and leaders throughout Africa, who often appear to be unaccountably remote from the suffering of ordinary people in their countries. (Sarah Rowland-Jones Nature Medicine 2010-12-01)Unity Dow and Max Essex illuminate the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa by reporting on its consequences for the lives of those living in a single country, Botswana. Dow is a human rights lawyer and judge. Essex is an AIDS scientist at Harvard University. They have deployed their complementary experiences to examine multiple aspects of AIDS, dividing each chapter in half. Dow describes the personal stories of those affected by AIDS. She creates play scripts of conversation to situate the issue at hand--AIDS among children, access to medicines, fear and stigma, diagnosis--in a context that illustrates the intimacy and tragedy of the epidemic. Essex follows up with a scientific explanation of the preceding drama, together with his own reflections about what is being done to prevent such an episode from happening again. It is an effective strategy, drawing the reader into the particular culture of AIDS in Botswana, while showing what the global medical research enterprise into HIV can deliver for people who live in often excruciating poverty. (Richard Horton Times Literary Supplement 2011-01-07)