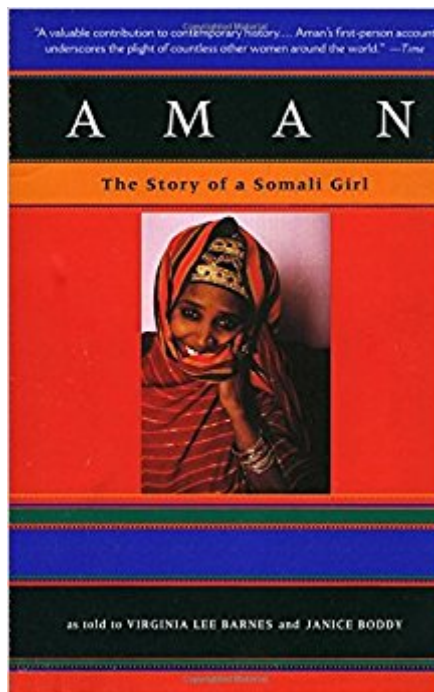


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# Aman: The Story Of A Somali Girl



## Synopsis

This is the extraordinary first-person account of a young woman's coming of age in Somalia and her struggles against the obligations and strictures of family and society. By the time she is nine, Aman has undergone a ritual circumcision ceremony; at eleven, her innocent romance with a white boy leads to a murder; at thirteen she is given away in an arranged marriage to a stranger. Aman eventually runs away to Mogadishu, where her beauty and rebellious spirit leads her to the decadent demimonde of white colonialists. Hers is a world in which women are both chattel and freewheeling entrepreneurs, subject to the caprices of male relatives, yet keenly aware of the loopholes that lead to freedom. Aman is an astonishing history, opening a window onto traditional Somali life and the universal quest for female self-awareness.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

YA?In a frank, candid retelling of a difficult life, the authors present honest actions and reactions to customs and events in tribal Somalia beginning in the late '50s when Aman was the young daughter of a woman whose feminist sensibilities caused her to live apart from her husband and earn her own living, dangerous as that might be. Much of Aman's youth was driven by a need for money as well as a need to remain a virgin until married. Ceremonial genital surgery at age nine was performed to help preserve her virginity, but little could be done to prevent her from falling in love with a boy who was forbidden. Once she broke the taboo at 13, her reputation was soiled and her ability to make money affected. From that point to the end of this book, when she was about 19, she was on a rocky road through a disastrous marriage, poverty, war, great risks, and varying luck. Readers

cannot help but be captivated by Aman's adolescent mistakes, as well as her indomitable spirit and everlasting optimism. ?Ginny Ryder, Lee High School, Springfield, VA Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Though it could have been sensationalized, this is in fact an intimate look at the girlhood of a 20th-century Somali. At eight, Aman was circumcised; at 13, she was married to an older man who attempted to deflower her with a knife. By 17 she had been raped, been divorced twice, borne two children, and lost one. Repeatedly, she ran from a culture that she both respected yet found too restrictive. To survive, she used men, marriage, and entrepreneurial skills, defining her motivation simply: "I wanted to get money so I could help my mama." Editors Barnes (deceased) and Boddy (cultural anthropology, Univ. of Toronto) present more than a tale of survival. Theirs is an honest, objective look at a society that, while often in today's headlines, is little understood outside of Africa. They also show Somalia's intricate patrilineal kinship and social structures. The excellent foreword and afterword by Boddy set Aman's story in Somalia's historical and contemporary social context. Recommended for anthropology, African studies, and women's studies collections. Linda V. Carlisle, Southern Illinois Univ., Edwardsville Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Captivating story about a young Somali girl growing up in post-colonial Somalia. While her life sounded slightly less than ordinary in a conservative world where like sticks with like (she was a tad on the wild side), it gives the reader a glimpse of how life was like for a young woman there at that time. I also loved the prose; it all sounded like spoken words rather than written. It had a rather 'storytelling' vibe to it. Overall, well written and a fantastic read.

I read all the other reviews before buying this book. If you read the forward, you will get more information about where A man is now. I can't imagine the life this poor girl/woman had to endure! I heard about female circumcision but really had no idea the extent and how it affected these girls. I've always been against it but seems the Somalis feel it's still right for their society and religion. Aman and her mother lived a very tough life. Married so very young, always getting in trouble and trying to make a better life for herself. I wouldn't recommend this for anyone under say 16-18 due to the frank, sexual content. I enjoyed this book as I like history and learning about other cultures.

Arrived in a timely manner and was as described in product description.

I read this book to try and familiarize myself with Somali culture. It's an interesting story about a girl who rebels against her culture, but she doesn't entirely reject it either. Her defense of FGM is especially interesting considering her story. I had read the story once before years ago and forgotten most of it so I was surprised how this time around I found her rather unlikable. I had to keep reminding myself that she was just a teenager at the time. As an introduction to Somali culture it's OK but the book is rather dated and it seems like her life was probably not typical of a Somali girl. At the end of the book, the editor/co-author added a lot of information about Somali history and culture trying to tie it together with Aman's story. It doesn't really fit since other than the 1969 coup and a couple of brief instances in her mother and grandmother's stories her life didn't seem much influenced by Somali history and has absolutely nothing to do with more recent Somali history since she hasn't lived there since the 70s. Aman didn't even know as a child that Somalia was an Italian colony. It's an interesting story for what it is but if you're looking for something more current or representative of a typical Somali life then you might want to try something else. It also ends very abruptly, I was interested to hear more about how she adapted to her later life.

Although it reflects the Somali culture I didn't like how sexually graphic the descriptions of things were. Did not feel that it was appropriate for anyone under 18.

It showed me how blessed I am. It showed how different every group of people live. Gave a lot of insight into a culture very different from mine. I very much enjoyed it.

The book is very interesting and it told a lot about her life. I enjoyed reading the story. What a life!

Interesting but repetitive. Needs editing. Clitorectomy scenes not for the faint of heart.

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