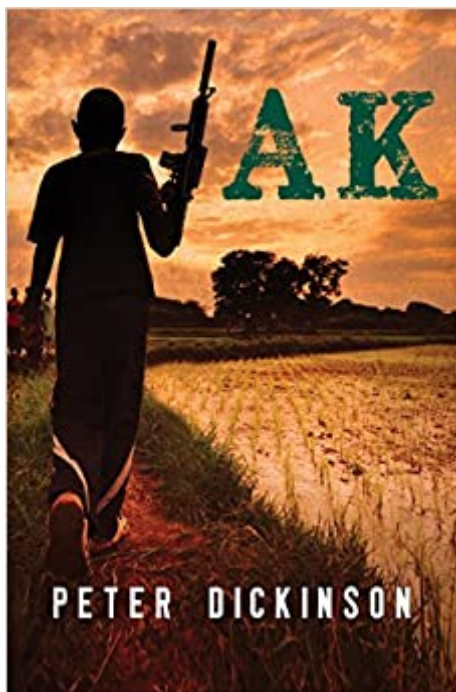


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# AK



## Synopsis

A war behind him, a child soldier tries to learn the ways of peace Paul remembers nothing from before the conflict. Twelve years old, he is not a child. He is a warrior-one of a handful of elite commandos who live only to fight the corrupt government of Nagala. He has no family but the boys who fight beside him, and he owns nothing but his AK-47 rifle. This is the only life he has ever known, and it is one he understands-right until the day the standoff ends and his life changes forever. Paul buries his AK and heads north to join a school and attempt to live life as just another child. But at night, the battlefield consumes his dreams. When a rogue faction stages a coup in the capital and Paul's adoptive father is put in prison, the boy turns into a warrior once more. It is too late for him to have a childhood, but Paul will do whatever it takes to guarantee himself a future. This ebook features an illustrated personal history of Peter Dickinson including rare images from the author's collection.

## Book Information

Paperback: 204 pages

Publisher: Open Road Media Teen & Tween; Reprint edition (May 26, 2015)

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Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

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Historical Fiction > Africa #70 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical

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Age Range: 12 - 16 years

Grade Level: 7 - 10

## Customer Reviews

AK is a book for young adults, ages 12 and up, that's unlikely to be used as the basis for an episode of a television "After School Special." AK is about a boy with his own gun, raised by a guerrilla group during a civil war. "My mother was the war," protagonist Paul Kagomi says. "She was a witch, a terrible demon, an eater of people, but she looked after me. It's not my fault that I loved her." Paul, of the mythical African nation of Nagala, is one of a group of homeless boys trained in warfare by

the National Liberation Army. As the civil war subsides, Paul faces a life with no skills except the ones he learned for battle. AK won a Whitbread Prize in 1990. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Paul, 12, remembers no other life than his nomadic existence as a Warrior--a junior member of a guerilla band fighting a civil war against the corrupt government of Nagala, a fictional African nation. When peace is declared, Paul's mentor, Michael, assumes an important role in the newly formed coalition government, rebuilding the country he loves. Paul--now Michael's adopted son--is sent to school in the north of the country. When the elected government is overthrown in a coup, Michael is put in prison and Paul, his life in danger, flees from the north. Accompanied by two other children, he journeys to the nation's capitol, determined to free his adoptive father. This exceedingly ambitious novel succeeds at everything it attempts: on the same high level as Lloyd Alexander's Westmark trilogy, it is a thorough examination of the nature of both democracy and war; it explores the legacy of imperialism; and it provides the reader with an exceptionally vivid picture of an African country and a handful of memorable citizens. Like all nations, Nagala is possessed of a complicated and specific political history; Dickinson manages to set forth its intricacies without becoming pedantic or talking down to his audience. The narrative has the rare sort of assurance that allows a varied array of vibrant characters to be created with a minimum of fuss. But best of all, AK is a simply rip-roaring adventure story. The exhilarating combination of spine-tingling storytelling and complicated ideas is an uncommon treat for sophisticated readers. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Very glad to be able to get hold of this book finally -- another extraordinary work from one of the very finest writers for young adults. Dickinson has a special, intimate sense of the African landscape and people, having been born and raised to school age there (I also recommend his prehistoric African narrative "The Kin," a rare masterpiece), and his infallible gift for finding the heart of the individual human in the big historical issues is in full force here. This is a great book for middle school reading and discussion -- this narrative of loyalty and loss surrounding one of the world's thousands of child soldiers also features a pair of alternative endings that in lesser hands would have been didactic and even preachy, but here makes a rich source for classroom debate, and above all tells the truth with no fuss or artifice: who can know how the tale will end, or whether it ever will? Just a ripping good story with a heart the size of the beautiful, terrifying world that made it.

Like many of Peter Dickinson's young adult novels, I've read this multiple times. I've also assigned it to students (high school and junior high) in my history and political science classes. It's as fun as a classic kids' adventure book, with an intelligent, sympathetic narrator, and provides insights into the complexities of post-colonial struggles.

AK is truly a book worth reading; it has action, adventure, drama, and friendship in it. With never-ending suspense around the corner, it's hard to stop reading this book until you've finished it! With historical fiction embedded in the pages, you'll find it hard to believe that this is history! AK happens to center on a boy of 12 named Paul Kagomi. He is an orphan in the civil war of Nagala, where the NLA (Nagala Liberation Army) fostered and cared for him. Paul was schooled in violence, and has put his trust onto his little AK to protect him. With an overseer named Michael Kagomi, Paul and his fellow Warriors help liberate Nagala piece by piece. Then it happened. Just as easily as the war had begun, it ended. Now Paul can have a real family with his foster father: Michael. But in the midst of the delicate peace, Michael is kidnapped and taken to a concentration camp. Now Paul must free his father and destroy the corrupt African Government. "My mother with the war. She was a witch, a terrible demon, eater of people, but she looked after me. It's not my fault that I loved her." -Paul Kagomi I kind of liked this story because of its adventure and the cover art, which I thought was cool (and a tad bit funny), but I really like the main character. It sort of reminded me of myself. In a way, Paul and I are alike because we both want to prove to others that we aren't just children. We are the future, the next generation. Anyways, AK is always a thriller, a book that gets you on the edge of your seat then makes you want to come back for more.

This is an awesome book. It is full of violence, but the most harrowing thing about it is that, although it takes place in the made-up country of Nagaland, it has many parallels with historical truth and with the present-day situation. I first read this book 5 or so years ago. I am now in college, and the more I learn about colonization and contemporary Africa, the truer AK seems. There really are child-soldiers like Paul Kagomi. More importantly, this book is well written. You will find yourself cheering for Paul and Jill. The characterization and plotting are excellent, and while the book is sad in some respects, it is realistic and not disappointing. The dual endings show the best and worst possible outcomes to Paul and Nagaland's situation, and while the best is uplifting, the worst is absolutely chilling. This amazing book NEEDS to go back into print! Track it down anyway.

This is a disturbing story - more so because of the authentic voices found within it. Peter Dickinson

writes books that make you think. He will never be the most popular author but he is one you should definitely read. This story follows a young boy soldier in the African bush. When peace comes it seems he can live a normal life, putting soldiering away as neatly as his childhood had already been put away. But nothing stays the same for long, and conflict is never far away.

I did not read the book, but that's not an AK on the cover

What is unique about this novel is the portrayal of life on the African continent in one of these unstable countries. Governments that are here today are gone tomorrow, and adults reading this book will find it educational more so than Young Adults because of this element. However, it is an excellent tale for Young Adults in terms of action and adventure for it places a young boy into very adult minded situations. Books that force their adolescent main characters into adult situations are always popular, and this one is no different. It is not surprising that this novel won an award. It conjures up images for the reader of Lord of the Flies, and other similar novels. It is an excellent addition to any YA section.

I enjoyed reading this book, when I could understand it. The main character is Paul Kindom. This book is about an army [Deathsingers], trying to take over Dugoum, Nagala, but some gangs in Dugoum they try to get together a big group to take and try to defeat the deathsingers [they do]. They also free Paul's so called dad Micheal Kindom. I would not recommend this book to a kid under 13 like me because there are too many names and different languages.

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