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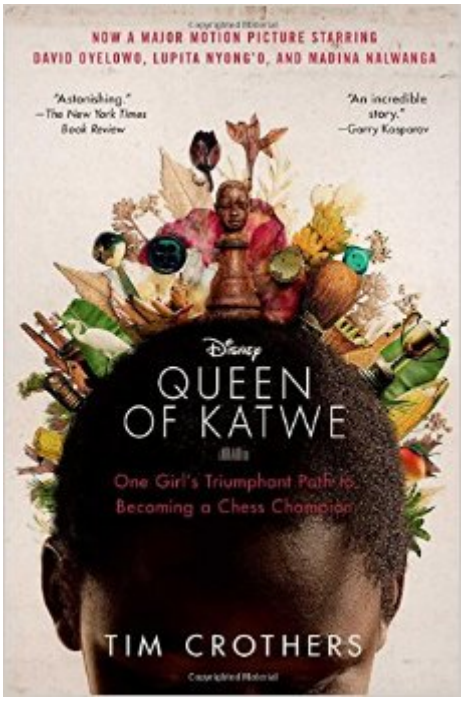
The Queen Of Katwe: One Girl's Triumphant Path To Becoming A Chess Champion



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Synopsis

Soon to be a major motion picture starring Academy Award winner Lupita Nyongâ ™o and David Oyelowo, directed by Mira Nair. The â œastonishingâ • (The New York Times Book Review) and â œinspirationalâ • (Shelf Awareness) true story of Phiona Mutesiâ ”a teenage chess prodigy from the slums of Uganda.One day in 2005 while searching for food, nine-year-old Ugandan Phiona Mutesi followed her brother to a dusty veranda where she met Robert Katende. Katende, a war refugee turned missionary, had an improbable dream: to empower kids in the Katwe slum through chessâ ”a game so foreign there is no word for it in their native language. Laying a chessÂ-board in the dirt, Robert began to teach. At first children came for a free bowl of porridge, but many grew to love the game thatâ ”like their daily livesâ ”requires persevering against great obstacles. Of these kids, one girl stood out as an immense talent: Phiona. By the age of eleven Phiona was her countryâ ™s junior champion, and at fifteen, the national champion. Now a Woman Candidate Masterâ ”the first female titled player in her countryâ ™s historyâ ”Phiona dreams of becoming a Grandmaster, the most elite level in chess. But to reach that goal, she must grapple with everyday life in one of the worldâ ™s most unstable countries. The Queen of Katwe is a â œremarkableâ • (NPR) and â œrivetingâ • (New York Post) book that shows how â œPhionaâ ™s story transcends the limitations of the chessboardâ • (Robert Hess, US Grandmaster).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Phiona Mutesi is one of the best chess players on earth. At 11 she was her country’s junior champion, at 15 a national champion. Soon after she traveled to Russia to participate in the Chess

Olympiad, the most prestigious event in the Chess world. Only in her teens, she sat across the board from experts several years older, yet she played with an intensity and instinct that had more experience players struggling to keep the upper hand - and not always succeeding.Her command of the game at such a young age certainly had people talking. Certainly she must have the best of coaches, the best education, and the best backing to be as good as she is. Certainly the best chess players have the best pedigree.Certainly....not.Phiona Mutesi is from Uganda, a country at the bottom of the pecking order of African nations. And she lives at the bottom of the pecking order of Uganda itself. She's a child of Katwe - one of the worst slums in the world.The Queen of Katwe, by former Sports Illustrated senior writer, Tim Crothers, is a gritty inspiration. Crothers introduces us to a culture where human life is cheap. Where life, moment to moment, is not guaranteed. Where a teen girl's goal is to give herself to a man, or more than one man, in order to secure food and shelter - and hopefully support for children when she gets pregnant. But in a country rampant with AIDs, it's not uncommon for that male support to succumb to the disease and leave his offspring homeless and scraping for food.This was the life that Phiona was born into. A world of mind-numbing destitution and hopelessness.But while Phiona and other children like her fought to survive in the squalor that is Katwe, there were people who were determine to bring hope.

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