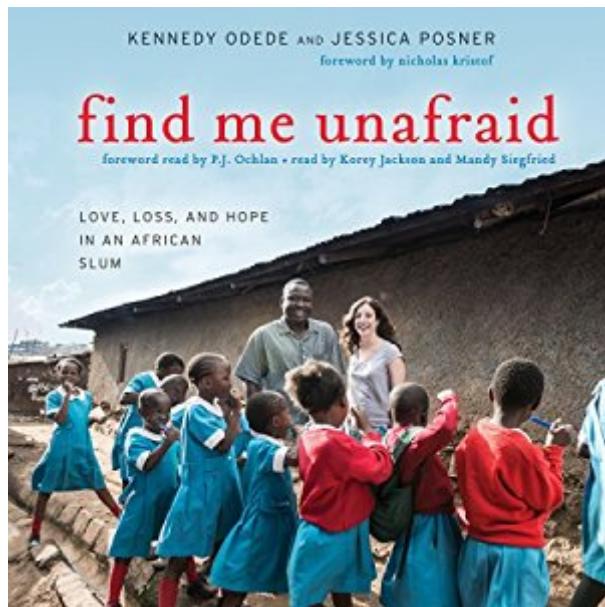


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Find Me Unafraid: Love, Loss, And Hope In An African Slum



Synopsis

Find Me Unafraid tells the uncommon love story between two uncommon people whose collaboration sparked a successful movement to transform the lives of vulnerable girls and the urban poor. With a foreword by Nicholas Kristof. This is the story of two young people from completely different worlds: Kennedy Odede from Kibera, the largest slum in Africa, and Jessica Posner from Denver, Colorado. Kennedy foraged for food, lived on the street, and taught himself to read with old newspapers. When an American volunteer gave him the work of Mandela, Garvey, and King, teenaged Kennedy decided he was going to change his life and his community. He bought a soccer ball and started a youth empowerment group he called Shining Hope for Communities (SHOFCO). Then, in 2007, Wesleyan undergraduate Jessica Posner spent a semester abroad in Kenya working with SHOFCO. Breaking all convention, she decided to live in Kibera with Kennedy, and they fell in love. Their connection persisted, and Jessica helped Kennedy to escape political violence and fulfill his lifelong dream of an education, at Wesleyan University. The alchemy of their remarkable union has drawn the support of community members and celebrities alike - The Clintons, Mia Farrow, and Nicholas Kristof are among their fans - and their work has changed the lives of many of Kibera's most vulnerable population: its girls. Jess and Kennedy founded Kibera's first tuition-free school for girls, a large, bright blue building, which stands as a bastion of hope in what once felt like a hopeless place. But Jessica and Kennedy are just getting started - they have expanded their model to connect essential services like health care, clean water, and economic empowerment programs. They've opened an identical project in Mathare, Kenya's second largest slum, and intend to expand their remarkably successful program for change.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The opening begins with part of the poem "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley, with the final lines foretelling this stunning story of Kennedy and Jessica: "And yet the menace of the years/Finds and shall find me unafraid." These two young people have managed to start two schools for young girls, a health facility, a water tower, a community center for economic empowerment, and numerous toilets throughout what is known as the largest slum in Africa, Kibera, on the edge of Nairobi. Thus far, a few leaders in other slums in Kenya are working to follow their path. You might find this story of hard work and determination difficult to believe, but my hope is that when you read, you will find your own inspiration for change, and the knowledge that when one persists with a dream, amazing things can happen. It's a love story of two people meeting, two you might never imagine would meet, who've accomplished so much, all in their twenties. And that work is just starting. I've followed this story since its beginning because Jessica was a student at my school, and I know her family, had her brother in my class. I have told the story, and followed their blog, and been so proud to see what they are doing. Yet, until I read this whole story, I had no idea of the terrible poverty Kennedy faced, the courage that he, then Jessica, showed in order to carry their hopes and rather fantastical dreams so far. Here is one telling moment to share, among many. In one of the tiniest beginning threads, Kennedy, Jessica and a small group of friends gathered to talk of the needs of the Kibera slum. Kennedy is convinced that change can only happen from within a community. He says: "We are here to start a movement. A movement starts with urgency, when you have been pushed to a wall and all you can do is bounce back."

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