



When a Crocodile Eats the Sun

Peter Godwin

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The story of the disintegration of a family, set against the collapse of a country, a sequel of sorts to Peter Godwin's award-winning and bestselling memoir, *Mukiwa*. Peter Godwin, an award-winning writer, is on assignment in Zululand when he is summoned by his mother to Zimbabwe, his birthplace. His father is seriously ill; she fears he is dying. Godwin finds his country, once a post-colonial success story, descending into a vortex of violence and racial hatred incited by an embattled dictator. His father recovers, but over the next few years, Godwin travels regularly between his family life in Manhattan and the increasing chaos of Zimbabwe, where inflation runs so fast that the currency can't keep up; where land seizures have made famine a real prospect; and where his parents, emigrants from post-war England, are refusing to abandon their home. It is against this backdrop that Godwin discovers a fifty-year-old family secret, one which changes everything he thought he knew about his father, and his own place in the world. 'When a crocodile eats the sun' is how some remote tribes explain the solar eclipse that coincides with Zimbabwe's torment; a celestial crocodile, they say, briefly consumes the life-giving star to demonstrate his displeasure with man below. In a land in which the forces of light are apparently giving way to those of the dark, it seems the very worst of omens. Peter Godwin's book combines vivid reportage, moving personal stories and revealing memoir, and traces his family's quest to belong in hostile lands - a quest that spans three continents and half a century.

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