



A coming-of-age story that is told with journals, photographs, and writing that begins with a young woman in Kenya in 1988 and resumes in 2016 with the woman she became

“A call to action” “A brilliant and indelible work of art” “Remarkable” “Richly rewarding”

Mile 46: Face to Face in Maasailand, by author/photographer Joni Binder, is an engaging and empowering coming-of-age story told with unique three-perspective viewpoints from the author’s journals and photographs ,created at age twenty-one, ultimately intertwined with their creator’s voice a quarter of a century later. Immersed in the beautiful and sometimes violent culture of the Maasai people of Kenya in 1988, Binder found herself confronted with unique challenges of cultures clashing, unique traditions juxtaposed with an obvious universal humanness, and various expressions of isolation. As she was welcomed into a closed community, Binder’s photos and journals deliver intimate moments that reveal as much of the vast differences between the two cultures as they do the powerful oneness of humanity. Her writing from today puts everything into context, and the reader benefits not just from the education to be gotten from the window into the Maasai culture, but perhaps more interestingly a view into how an experience such as hers might define a person and change her life’s course.

Readers who may never embark on an exotic travel itinerary or seek cultural immersion, and even those who may question the wisdom of it, will be intrigued by the first-hand descriptions of life inside a dung hut miles from any roads, electricity, or phones. Binder is one of the only outsiders who has been invited to spend an extended period of time living with the traditionally-living Maasai, who are known for their beautiful beadwork, their ritualistic lifestyle, and their diet of blood, milk, and meat. Seeing the younger Binder’s over forty breathtaking photographs documenting both the daily lives and the special occasions of this family colorfully illustrates the stories she relays in her journals, and her writing from today helps provide not only explanation, but also a counterpoint to how this experience has changed her life-- and how it may change the reader’s, too.

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