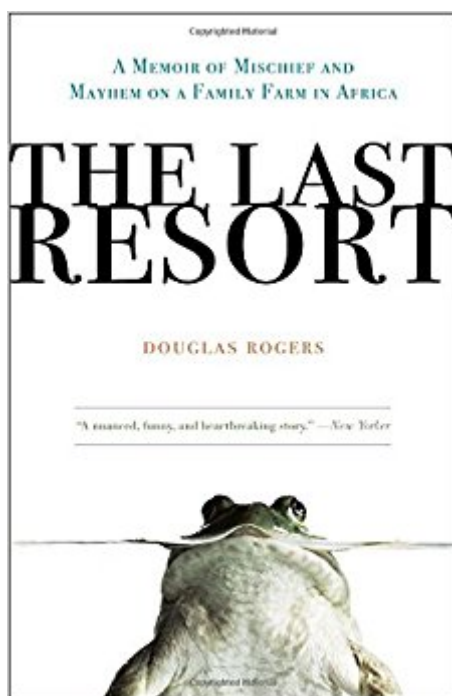


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# The Last Resort: A Memoir Of Mischief And Mayhem On A Family Farm In Africa



## Synopsis

Thrilling, heartbreaking, and, at times, absurdly funny, *The Last Resort* is a remarkable true story about one family in a country under siege and a testament to the love, perseverance, and resilience of the human spirit. Born and raised in Zimbabwe, Douglas Rogers is the son of white farmers living through that country's long and tense transition from postcolonial rule. He escaped the dull future mapped out for him by his parents for one of adventure and excitement in Europe and the United States. But when Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe launched his violent program to reclaim white-owned land and Rogers's parents were caught in the cross fire, everything changed. Lyn and Ros, the owners of Drifters' famous game farm and backpacker lodge in the eastern mountains that was one of the most popular budget resorts in the country, found their home and resort under siege, their friends and neighbors expelled, and their lives in danger. But instead of leaving, as their son pleads with them to do, they haul out a shotgun and decide to stay. On returning to the country of his birth, Rogers finds his once orderly and progressive home transformed into something resembling a Marx Brothers romp crossed with *Heart of Darkness*: pot has supplanted maize in the fields; hookers have replaced college kids as guests; and soldiers, spies, and teenage diamond dealers guzzle beer at the bar. And yet, in spite of it all, Rogers's parents, with the help of friends, farmworkers, lodge guests, and residents among them black political dissidents and white refugee farmers, continue to hold on. But can they survive to the end? In the midst of a nation stuck between its stubborn past and an impatient future, Rogers soon begins to see his parents in a new light: unbowed, with passions and purpose renewed, even heroic. And, in the process, he learns that the "big story" he had relentlessly pursued his entire adult life as a roving journalist and travel writer was actually happening in his own backyard. Evoking elements of *The Tender Bar* and *Absurdistan*, *The Last Resort* is an inspiring, coming-of-age tale about home, love, hope, responsibility, and redemption. An edgy, roller-coaster adventure, it is also a deeply moving story about how to survive a corrupt Third World dictatorship with a little innovation, humor, bribery, and brothel management. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Born in Zimbabwe, New York-based travel writer Rogers moves between two worlds with wit and grace while telling the dire-straits story of his childhood in Zimbabwe and his recent return. Zimbabwe's extremes of beauty and corruption will lure readers into the everyday struggle to preserve property and life against punishing weather, astronomical inflation, and the threat of other people. Angst, humor, beauty and terror mingle freely in his narrative: returning home he finds the family's backpacker lodge has become a brothel, and estates of "irises and tulips and acres of pruned white roses" have disappeared. He marvels at the "untamed roots of blazing flamboyant trees... buckling the city's pavement," the metamorphosis of the hardscrabble poor into diamond dealers, and his own parents: "instead of being crushed by this struggle, beaten down, they had been buoyed by it." This rousing memoir should win over anyone with a taste for exotic can't-go-home-again stories. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"This vibrant, tragic and surprisingly funny book is the best account yet of ordinary life for blacks and whites under Mugabe's dictatorship." The New York Times Book Review  
"A nuanced, funny, and heartbreaking story." The New Yorker  
"A gorgeous, open-hearted book. Rogers manages to do the vital work of taking race out of Zimbabwe's story and putting the heart and humanity back into it. A must read for anyone who really wants to understand the extraordinary decency of ordinary Zimbabweans." Alexandra Fuller, author of *Don't Let Go to the Dogs Tonight*  
"I read it in one sitting. I loved it." Rian Malan, author of *My Traitor's Heart*  
"Do we really need another memoir by a white Zimbabwean? The surprising answer is yes, if it's as good as Douglas Rogers' *THE LAST RESORT*. A ripping yarn that moves beyond memoir to become a chronicle of a nation. There is black and white, yes, but much more in the shades and tones of their mix and it is in exploring them that Rogers, too, find his art." Time  
"Zimbabwe in vertiginous decline is the

backdrop for Douglas Rogers's corrosively funny *THE LAST RESORT*, in which Roger's parents, among the country's last remaining white farmers, attract everyone from prostitutes and diamond dealers to their backpacker lodge." •Vogue, featured in "The Season's Best Memoirs" Born in Zimbabwe, New York-based travel writer Rogers moves between two worlds with wit and grace while telling the dire-straits story of his childhood in Zimbabwe and his recent return....Angst, humor, beauty and terror mingle freely in his narrative....This rousing memoir should win over anyone with a taste for exotic can't-go-home-again stories. •Publishers Weekly (starred review)"As President Mugabe's regime turns belligerent toward white farmers, journalist Rogers witnesses the struggle of his family and others to hold on to their land....Rogers' decision to write about his parents' lodge and the people who find refuge there as violence erupts and the economy turns catastrophic brings him close to all kinds of people, black and white, from war veterans and politicians to farmers and squatters. Scrupulous in his documentation, Rogers talks to everybody about the way things were and what might come next....Brilliantly funny and wry." •Booklist"Pitch-perfect, undeniably real, and, most important, achingly funny, Rogers deftly reminds us that after wiping away tears and even burying the dead, a good antidote to the violent, poignant, and completely absurd place that Zimbabwe has become is to throw arms wide to the undaunted African sky and simply laugh." •Wendy Kann, author of *Casting with a Fragile Thread: A Story of Sisters and sAfrica* "Travelogue, adventure yarn, political intrigue, tragedy, and high-wire journalism, *The Last Resort* is a love story about the author and his homeland, Zimbabwe. She is by turns ineffably beautiful, unspeakably hideous, insanely rich, desperately poor, democratic, brutally autocratic, violent, corrupt, and dysfunctional, even though, in person, her people seem to be, one and all, hardscrabble heroes and survivors. Rogers tries to leave her and doesn't even want to write about her, but, in the end, her charms are irresistible. He can't help himself and neither can we." •Richard Dooling, author of *White Man's Grave*"With breathtaking talent, wry wit, and abundant heart, Douglas Rogers tells the compulsively readable tale of his parents' daily struggles to hold on to their land in the nightmarish landscape of present-day Zimbabwe. With every turn of the page, you fear for the Rogerses' survival, as well as the survival of the country they love so much. But even as they face the most difficult of challenges, their indomitable spirit shines through, revealing the ordinary heroism of people in extraordinary circumstances." •Anne Landsman, author of *The Rowing Lesson* From the Hardcover edition.

Born and raised in Zimbabwe, the author tells the story of his parents life on their property in the

eastern mountains of Zimbabwe, on a piece of land that they had turned into a famous game farm and backpacker lodge called Drifters. The family had moved around the country while the author and his siblings grew up, but each of them left to pursue their own lives. This part of the parents lives and his visits back home, are during a very turbulent time in the country, when Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe launched his violent program to reclaim white-owned land and that of some Black farmers as well. I have read quite a few books set during this time in Zimbabwe, and in each one though the subject is the same, the individual stories so diverse. It was so interesting to see what his parents and their neighbors went through, but also how the locals dealt with this issue. Being a reporter the author wanted to get into a bit of the local scene, so we are taken on a journey, through talks over beers with his parents employees at Drifters, to diamond dealers, money laundering, political rallies, prostitution and much more. This was definitely a very interesting book to read. I enjoyed it immensely.

Loved this book. Such a heartfelt memoir, funny, sad, real, it felt so descriptive, immediate, real from the authors perspective, but not at all self indulgent. Very informative and educational about a time in history that I was aware of at a distance as a school age British citizen from news reports, but understood here for the first time what was really going on then, which gives an insight to why things are the way they are now. Africa has so many facets, and so much is unseen and unknown. Read this book. It will enrich you on many levels.

As someone who was born in Zimbabwe and got out before Mugabe got into power, this is a great read. We were a pretty racist bunch and could have done a lot better than we did in bringing the country to a state where it could become a stable democracy. Its interesting to read a perspective about what happened to the place after I left. Knowing many of the locations mentioned in the book its sad to see how the place has been plundered. One can only reflect that us old white Rhodesians were not such a bad bunch after all. We were not really the demons that the world made us out to be. We loved the country and its people and did a lot of things really well. In the old days before we handed control of the country the world community made us out to be such demons. The United Nations promoted sanctions against us and we were made out as to be such bad guys. So foreign policy of so many country was directed against us in an attempt to make things right. So in perspective it can be seen that the worlds successful efforts to oust us rulers has ended up in this tragedy. And how much of todays foreign policy is naive and pointless. Wars in various counties trying to install a democracy or overthrow some despot, in the perspective of time can all be

pointless.

I was so impressed with this story written by the son of white farmers in what is now called Zimbabwe. Roger was born and grew up there as did his parents and 3 sisters . They became owners of a Resort popular with backpackers and tourists called the Drifters after many attempts at farming. When Roger returned from years abroad he found his parents in the sad predicament of this countries agrarian reform. Surrounding farmers were losing their farms and leaving the country in droves after years of conflict. The story is one of his brave family and their stubborn refusal to give up in the face of land grabbing and harassment. The people are brilliantly portrayed by someone who was there and as luck would have it was a gifted author . I strongly recommend to anyone who is interested in the history of this beautiful continent.

I found this well-written and often humorous book to be a gripping tale of what is really going on in Zimbabwe. I knew the situation there was desperate, but I didn't know how utterly hopeless it actually is. Mugabe is more of a corrupt despot than I could have imagined. Talk about reverse racism! With just a slip of paper, White Africans, a.k.a. whites born, raised and working in Zimbabwe (sometimes for generations) can lose everything that they and their forefathers have worked for. Unfortunately the recipients of the farms have no interest in or knowledge of how to run a working farm. This has led to the absolute destruction of a once thriving economy. A fascinating book and I salute the author for his ability to find humor in this dreadful situation...that is still in existence today.

Received this book as a Xmas gift from someone who knows I enjoy reading about Africa, but didn't immediately pick it up as I've read a number of books about Zimbabwe in the past few years. My mistake!! This is a wonderful, refreshing story about two people reinventing themselves continuously in an effort to remain in the country they call home. I was touched by the honesty and humor of their story, and finished the book with great admiration for their efforts. It is as much a story about a son's growing understanding and appreciation of his parents, as it is about their daily struggles in a country that is constantly being turned upside down. I particularly enjoyed the author's perspective-a candid look at how his parents face the changes that confront them daily, and his fears for their safety (as well as his own!). I found myself thinking about Mr. Roger's parents long after I put the book down...

Holy Cow I LOVED this book! I loved these people and the fact that this wasn't a "political" story per

se... it was a story about individuals and coping in the midst of absurdity crossed with lunacy crossed with cruelty and a surprisingly large amount of compassion from all sides. I could not put it down. I found myself reading each page with a tinge of dread (waiting for the other Mugabe shoe to fall) and bushels of hope. The only complaint I have is that the book was finished in 2009 and I read it in 2011. What has happened to the Rogers and the Drifters' population in the past two years? I need to know more.

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