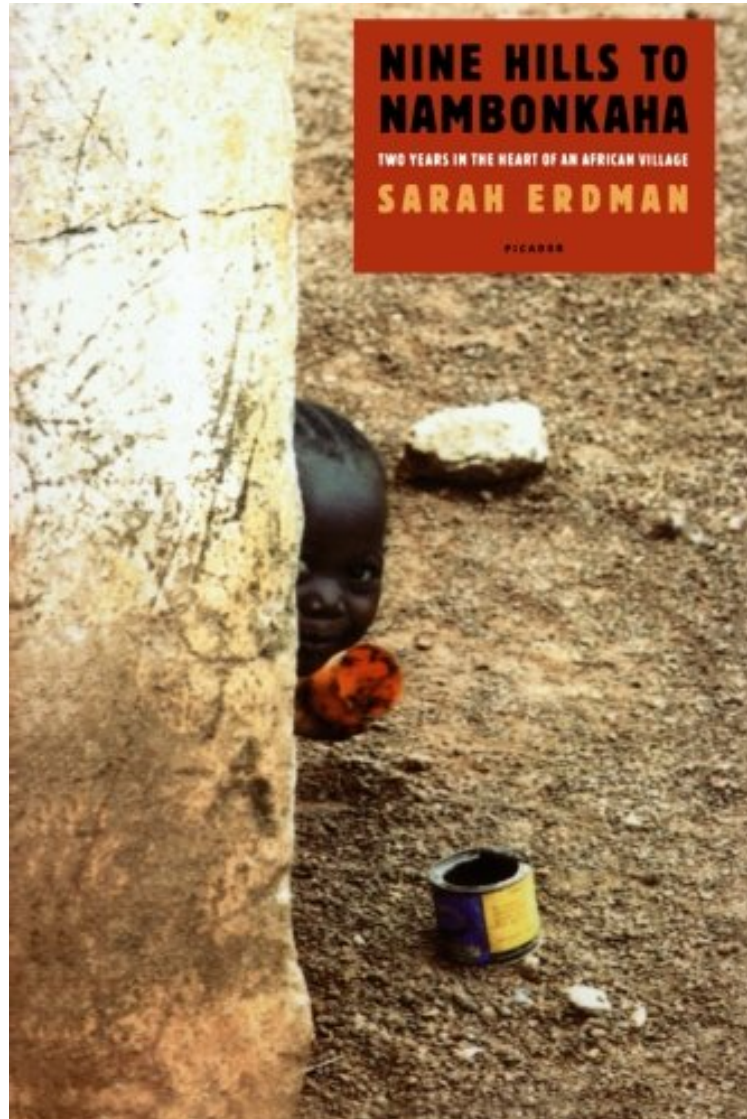


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Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village

Sarah Erdman

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Sarah Erdman : Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Easily the best book by a PCV in AfricaBy Ken CarlsonI will

recommend this book to anyone that is interested in the life of a PCV that learned to live with and love the people of her assigned village for two years. I hope she will always be able to stay in touch with her friends there and possibly return to visit someday. Because of this book, I feel that I have been there when I see and read the poor reporting on our media. Ken Carlson 10 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great read for a future PCV By Rebecca Refoy-Sidibe I thought this book gave a great insight into a West African village as a Public Health volunteer. I am a future PCV headed to Guinea and greatly appreciated the first hand knowledge of a PCV's time in their village. The author expressed things she loved about Nambonkaha and things that she didn't love. The book felt honest and true to a PCV's service. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Getting to know West-African culture By Suzanne Merkus Fantastic book if you want to truly understand West-African culture. Well written. The writer takes you as a silent companion with her through her experiences, showing everything about village life.

The village of Nambonkaha in the Ivory Coast is a place where electricity hasn't yet arrived, where sorcerers still conjure magic, where the tok-tok sound of women pounding corn fills the morning air like a drumbeat. As Sarah Erdman enters the social fold of the village as a Peace Corps volunteer, she finds that Nambonkaha is also a place where AIDS threatens and poverty is constant, where women suffer the indignities of patriarchal customs, and where children work like adults while still managing to dream. Lyrical and topical, Erdman's beautiful debut captures the astonishing spirit of an unforgettable community.

From Publishers Weekly Erdman, who now works for the Peace Corps in Washington, D.C., spent two years in Nambonkaha, a northern Ivory Coast village, starting in 1998. As a culturally sensitive community development volunteer, she took her time finding her niche. She started working on maternal and child health by introducing the regular weighing of babies, as a means of monitoring malnutrition and as a way of opening the door to a wider range of health-care interventions. Without funds or equipment, this boiled down to rudimentary first aid: cleaning and bandaging wounds, cooling down a fever or recognizing malaria and going to the nurse for pills. By the end of Erdman's stay, with the support of the village, she'd moved on, very successfully, to birth control and AIDS prevention education. Happily, Erdman focuses on the story behind the story: how she learned local ways, how she gained the confidence and friendship of assorted villagers and even how she couldn't do anything about some atrocities, like female genital mutilation. In the end, she understands the village world view so well, she can imagine better ways to deal with certain issues, like promoting condom usage: what if international health organizations had depicted AIDS as a sorcery problem and "introduced condoms, with the help of chiefs and fetisheurs, as the only fetish that can stave off" the disease? This is an engrossing, well-told tale certain to appeal to armchair travelers and to anyone—especially women—considering international volunteer work. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Erdman spent two years as a Peace Corps worker in the small town of Nambonkaha, Ivory Coast, at the end of the last decade. Erdman, who acted as a health-care worker and instructor, is surprised to find herself called upon to help women in labor, surrounded by curious children who want to learn to read, and honored with gifts from the chief. She also faces the challenge of trying to meld medical knowledge with traditional sorcery, as the village denizens believe most illness and misfortune is caused by witchcraft rather than infection. This is particularly dangerous in regards to AIDS, which arrives in the village in the form of a young widow and her son. With the help of several of the town's residents, including Sidibe, the only nurse in the town, Erdman begins teaching classes and sets up a baby-weighing station in the market. With graceful, thoughtful prose, Erdman ponders the problems the village faces and describes in vivid detail the many people she met there. Kristine Huntley Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Sarah Erdman's voice rings with a distinct and refreshing intimacy.... This book is simply about people and their stories. In the joys and failures of daily routines in a small African village, she finds life itself. Peter Hessler, author of *Rivertown* Exemplary... The writing has the narrative pulse of good fiction, and is as absorbing. Norman Rush, author of *Mortals* Sarah Erdman has been blessed with these gifts: a fervent curiosity, a generous heart, a lightly self-mocking manner, and a fluent and poetic language... A vivid, at turns hilarious, at turns terrifying, important, and beautiful book. Melissa Fay Greene, author of *Praying for Sheetrock* It is rare to be so completely transported to another land.... [Erdman's] powers of observation, her prose, and her daring are truly Orwellian. Abraham Verghese, author of *My Own Country*