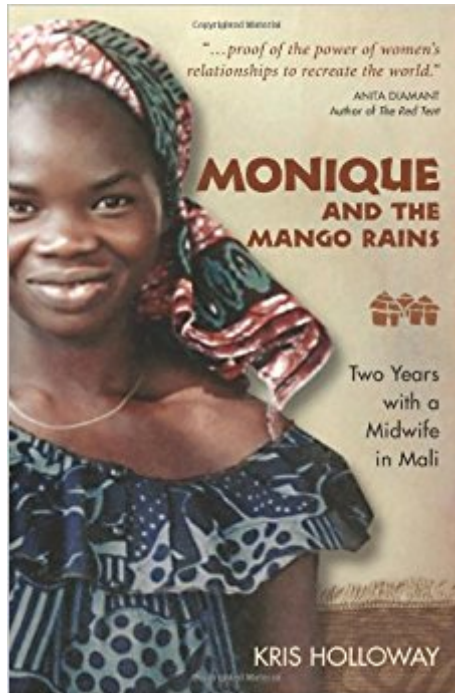




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# Monique And The Mango Rains: Two Years With A Midwife In Mali



## Synopsis

What is it like to live and work in a remote corner of the world and befriend a courageous midwife who breaks traditional roles? *Monique and the Mango Rains: Two Years with a Mali Midwife* is the inspiring story of Monique Dembele, an accidental midwife who became a legend, and Kris Holloway, the young Peace Corps volunteer who became her closest confidante. In a small village in Mali, West Africa, Monique saved lives and dispensed hope every day in a place where childbirth is a life-and-death matter and where many children are buried before they cut a tooth. Kris worked side-by-side with her as they cared for each other through sickness and tragedy and shared their innermost secrets and hopes. Monique's life was representative of many women in one of the world's poorest nations, yet she faced her challenges in extraordinary ways. Despite her fiercely traditional society and her limited education she fought for her beliefs birth control, the end of female genital mutilation, the right to receive a salary, and the right to educate her daughters. And she struggled to be with the man she loved. Her story is one of tragedy joy, rebellion, and of an ancient culture in the midst of change. It is an uplifting tribute to indomitable spirits everywhere. *Monique and the Mango Rains* is a fascinating voyage to an unforgettable place, a voyage spent close to the ground, immersed in village life, learning first-hand the rhythms of this world. From witnessing her first village birth to the night of Monique's own tragic death, Kris draws on her first-person experiences in Mali, her graduate studies in maternal and child health, medical and clinic records, letters and journals, as well as conversations with Monique, her family, friends and colleagues, to give readers a unique view and a friend in West Africa. Latest printing includes "2012 Postscript." Not-for-sale instructor resource material available to college and university faculty only; contact the publisher directly.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This tender, revelatory memoir recalls the two years Holloway spent as an impressionable Peace Corps volunteer in the remote village of Nampossela in Mali, West Africa. It centers on her close friendship with Monique, the village's overburdened midwife. When Holloway (now a nonprofit development specialist) arrived in Nampossela in 1989, she was 22; Monique was only two years her senior. Yet Monique, barely educated, working without electricity, running water, ambulances or emergency rooms, was solely responsible for all births in her village, tending malnourished and overworked pregnant women in her makeshift birthing clinic. With one of the highest rates of maternal death in the world, these Malian women sometimes had to work right up until and directly after giving birth and had no means of contraception. Holloway especially noted Monique's status as an underpaid female whose male family members routinely claimed much of her pay. Monique shared her emotional life with Holloway, who in turn campaigned for her rights at work and raised funds for her struggling clinic. Holloway's moving account vividly presents the tragic consequences of inadequate prenatal and infant health care in the developing world and will interest all those concerned about the realities of women's lives outside the industrialized world. B&w photos, map. (Sept.) Copyright Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Poignant and powerful." Starred review Kirkus Reviews "Achingly real." Editorial board favourite Boston Globe "There are many beautiful books by Westerners about living in Africa... The best ones put the readers in the middle of unfamiliar terrain and make them smell it and hear it. This is one of those books." Minneapolis Star Tribune "I shed several tears while reading this book. Monique and the Mango Rains is a true story that rides the ebb and flow of womanhood in Mali. It also sparks inspiration that differences can be made, and are made, when the right ingredients are combined." Midwives Magazine "Holloway has a fresh and sensitive way of relating events... what she sees, hears, what people say, what she learns and the impact of the different seasons... The postscript describes [her and her husband's] return to Mali in 1999 and again in 2007. They continue to support Clinique Monique in the nearby village of Kouri. You could, too." --Mmegi (Botswana) Mmegionline

This book was required reading for my summer history course, and although I had very limited time in which to complete the reading, I was pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed it! *Monique and the Mango Rains* is a story of a unique friendship formed between a Peace Corps volunteer (Kriss Holloway) and a Malian midwife (Monique Dembele). The setting, a rural village in Mali; two young women, from very different cultural backgrounds join together to improve the healthcare services within the community. The story is told through the eyes of Kriss Holloway who describes Monique as an altruistic woman, dedicated to improving the lives of the women and children in the community whom she cares for so dearly for. The bonding between the two women deepens through shared experiences from their diverse backgrounds and experiences. I was horrified to read about a patriarchal dominated society in which female circumcision is the norm, but at the same time a little envious of the simplicity of the village life. This book transcends the reader into the lives of the African village people where survival and health often depends on the rains. Since reading this book I have so much gratitude for the simple things in life like running water, access to food, women's rights, and health care services etc. I am giving this book a 10/10 as it was an amazing read that I will recommend to anyone who wants insight into the Malian way of life.

*Monique and the Mango Rains* was a required reading for my bachelorette nursing program. I am not an avid reader, as I get distracted easily and lose interest. This book was easy to read, and broken up in to small sections which I liked. Knowing the stories were personal and true kept me interested in the book. The story itself, was a passionate one about the friendship that blossomed between two young women; Peace Corps. Volunteer, Kris Holloway, and Mali midwife, Monique Dembele. Kris' adventure began in Mali in 1989, and she spent each day working with Monique, until 1991. They both had a clear passion to help improve the health of the women and babies in the community. The strong friendship that formed between two people from completely different parts of life was refreshing and pure. They had a clear passion to help improve the health of the women and babies in the community. Monique proved she could handle stressful work and life situations with ease, and was an inspiration to many women. The harsh reality of the conditions women faced in Mali were agonizing to read about. This narrative is an eye-opening reminder of the many blessings we have in the United States, and all that we should be thankful for. It certainly made me appreciate the medical services we have available, but also saddened me to know of the intense lack of resources that remain in other parts of the world.

I read this book as part of an assignment for a class I am taking in college. *Monique and the Mango*

Rains follows the story of Kris Holloway in the late 1980s into 90s while she was a volunteer for the peace corp. During this time she shadows a midwife Monique Dembele and assists this amazing woman through the many adversities she faces through the village. The story highlights the miracles and tragedies these villagers face and allow us to follow along through the experience. The book is well written, easy to read, and really immerses you into what goes in to literally keeping a village running. There are so many more examples of humanity and heroism and that so much can be done with so little. My wife had the opportunity to meet Kris Holloway while she was a women's study major in college and she told me that Ms. Holloway is everything in person that is depicted in this book. While this is not necessarily a book I would have chosen to read, I did enjoy it and would recommend it to anyone that wishes to learn more about midwifery and everything else associated with nursing and medicine in rural Africa. I give this book a rating of 4 out of 5 stars. Timothy Wrede

Monique and the mango rains is not a book that I would have selected on my own, but thankfully it was required reading for a college level course. This was an eye opening look into the experiences of a midwife in Mali and her experiences in the Peace Corps. Monique's story was heartwarming, and yet there were times that I cringed thinking of the conditions that women were giving birth in, Can you imagine going in to see a patient and seeing a scorpion moving under a rock while you are surveying the situation and condition of your patient? Although conditions are not what many would be considered ideal, Monique provided education to the women that she cared for, in a place that men made the rules. Monique handled family dynamics, in the family compounds that surrounded her, delicately with respect to the culture that surrounded her. As a nurse, this is an excellent opportunity to gain appreciation of the journey that many of us take for granted, not knowing any differently, having grown up with the influence of western medicine. Without the influence and care provided by Monique many people would not have been given the care that we think everyone deserves. Jennifer Tomsic

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