



# Sleepwalking Land

By Mia Couto

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“On almost every page of this witty magical realist whodunit, we sense Couto’s delight on those places where language slips officialdom’s asphyxiating grasp.”—*The New York Times Book Review* on *The Last Flight of the Flamingo*

“The most prominent of the younger generation of writers in Portuguese-speaking Africa, Couto passionately and sensitively describes everyday life in poverty-stricken Mozambique.”—*Guardian* (London)

“Quite unlike anything else I have read from Africa.”—Doris Lessing

As the civil war rages in 1980s Mozambique, an old man and a young boy, refugees from the war, seek shelter in a burnt-out bus. Among the effects of a dead passenger, they come across a set of notebooks that tell of his life. As the boy reads the story to his elderly companion, this story and their own develop in tandem. Written in 1992, Mia Couto’s first novel is a powerful indictment of the suffering war brings.

Born in 1955 in Mozambique, **Mia Couto** ran the AIM news agency during the revolutionary struggle. He now lives in Maputo where he works as an environmental biologist and heads the Mozambique side of the Limpopo Transnational Park. In 2007 he was the first African author to win the Latin Union Award for Romance Languages; in 2013 he was awarded the €100,000 Camões Prize for Literature, in recognition of his life’s work. In 2014 he received the \$50,000 Neustadt Prize for Literature, and in 2015 he was shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize.

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## Sleepwalking Land By Mia Couto Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

*Starred Review.* Heralded as one of the 12 best African books of the 20th century by the Zimbabwe International Book Fair, Couto's first novel, a colorfully harsh portrayal of war-torn Mozambique, is as seductive in detail as it is loaded with symbolism. Two refugees of the country's bloody protracted civil war, begun with its independence in 1975, seek safety in a charred bus. Muidinga, a boy recovering from illness, and Tuahir, an elderly companion from the refugee camp they have fled, bide their time by reading the notebooks of a nearby corpse of a young man, Kindzu. The entries recount, in a wonderfully rich idiom, Kindzu making his way in a shattered world, including his attempts to become a naparama, or warrior of justice. As he explores a beached ship, he comes upon a beautiful woman named Farida, who provides a mission worthy of his ambitions: to find and return her lost son, Gaspar. Like García Márquez, Couto, a white writer from Mozambique who is the author of *The Flight of the Flamingo* and *Under the Frangipani*, flirts with magic realism to compound the chaos of a newly independent state. He delivers a brutally absorbing tale of those who suffered a devastated country's vicissitudes.

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## Review

On almost every page of this witty magic realist whodunit, we sense Couto's delight in those places where language slips officialdom's asphyxiating grasp -- New York Times Book Review ?To read Mia Couto is to encounter a peculiarly African sensibility, a writer of fluid fragmentary narratives? New Statesman ?Under the Frangipani is a powerful and trenchant evocation of life in a society traumatised by decades of war and poverty? New Internationalist

## About the Author

Mia Couto was born in 1955 in Mozambique and is the most prominent writer in Portuguese-speaking Africa. He has been active as a journalist and during the revolutionary struggle headed the AIM news agency. He now lives in Maputo where he works as an environmental biologist and runs the Mozambique part of the Kruger National Park.

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