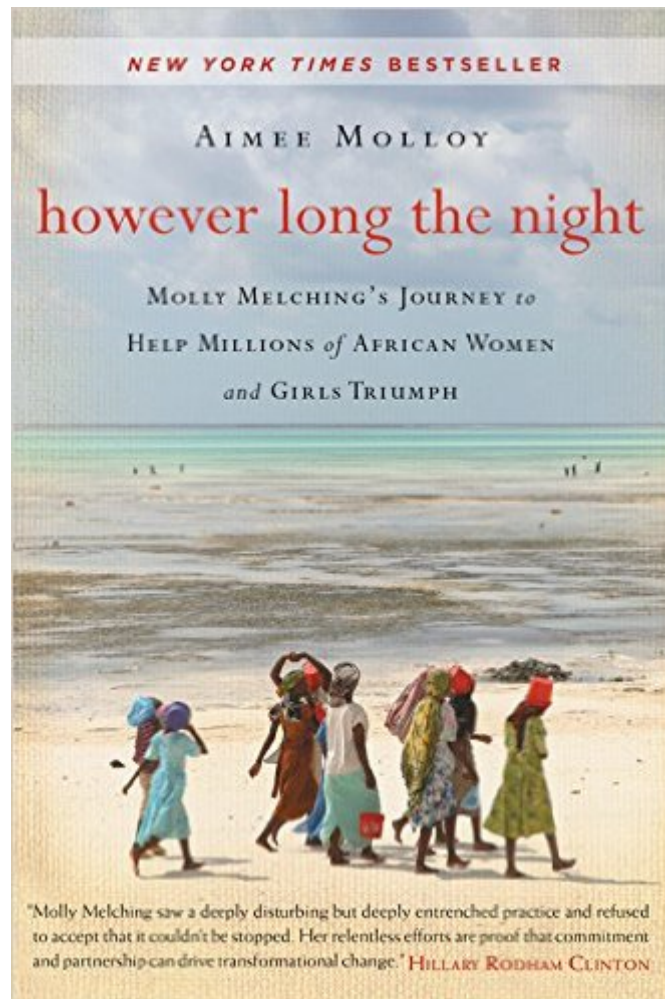


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However Long The Night: Molly Melching's Journey To Help Millions Of African Women And Girls Triumph



Synopsis

In *However Long the Night*, Aimee Molloy tells the unlikely and inspiring story of Molly Melching, an American woman whose experience as an exchange student in Senegal led her to found Tostan and dedicate almost four decades of her life to the girls and women of Africa. This moving biography details Melching's beginnings at the University of Dakar and follows her journey of 40 years in Africa, where she became a social entrepreneur and one of humanity's strongest voices for the rights of girls and women. Inspirational and beautifully written, *However Long the Night: Molly Melching's Journey to Help Millions of African Women and Girls Triumph* is a passionate entreaty for all global citizens. This book is published in partnership with the Skoll Foundation, dedicated to accelerating innovations from organizations like Tostan that address the world's most pressing problems.

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Customer Reviews

My earlier book review in April 2013 of this book hard cover edition remains totally relevant and even more accurate as this remarkable woman and her efforts for women's rights and thus improved rights for their families have since evolved. As I said then, "Finally, finally, finally this remarkable woman's story appears in book form. Having been a personal observer of her programs in Senegal with my wife on two separate occasions, it was evident to me, as a long time activist in trying to help women improve their lot in life, that Melching had embarked on a life journey to put her innovative views to work. For a Mid Western American Caucasian woman to make this journey will

give readers of every political, personal and ethnic persuasion a glorious glimpse at what an open mind, a generous heart and enormous empathy can accomplish. A trait so evident in my numerous personal contacts with Molly has been her constant willingness to shower the main credit for any advance in this unique program on other people. Thus I am particularly surprised and very pleased that author Aimee Molloy and Harper One, a division of Random House, have boldly chosen to tell the story of the substantial curbing of this difficult, long embedded cultural practice. Known as female genital cutting (FGC), the book discloses a heartening story which finally can be one about substantial success, not ineffective finger pointing by outsiders that characterized FGC descriptions for years. Therein hangs the key to understanding TOSTAN's success.

It has been a long time since I have been so moved by a book. Aimee Molloy's *However Long the Night* is a powerful biography focusing on the tireless efforts of Molly Melching who has worked for decades in Senegal to educate and improve the lives of the women and children of villages across the nation. Melching originally traveled to Senegal as part of a graduate program study abroad, and was looking forward to learning about the culture and people. What she hadn't planned on was the cancellation of the program. After convincing the university to allow her to study, Melching couldn't help but fall in love with all that Senegal offered. Rather than returning home, however, Melching extends her stay and secures a position as an Peace Corps employee. She starts a school to teach the local children, focusing on them reading stories that reflect their own culture and language, rather than stories of European children who share little with their Senegalese peers. This venture quickly leads to another and before Melching knows it, she has embedded herself into the Senegal culture, learned the language, and established an NGO named Tostan to help educate the women and children of the nation. While she set out to improve the quality of life, it becomes apparent that one issue needs attention - that of FGC (female genital cutting). Remarkably, after much effort, and devoted educational efforts Melching and the women of the villages begin to notice a change in the FGC tradition. The women feel empowered, and slowly begin to convince others that a change is needed. This powerful book is inspiring, engaging, and insightful. I read it in one sitting, fascinated that I had gone so long knowing so little about Melching and the FGC crisis in Senegal.

Molly Melching will be counted as one of those important world women whose life and work made a great difference in improving the living conditions and future of millions of people. She is comparable to Mary Curie, Eleanor Roosevelt, Helen Keller, etc. Her commitment, dedication, determination, and relentlessness allowed her to face and overcome various sorts of odds and

obstacles in order to secure better life and health to Senegalese girls and women, then extend the target to other African girls and women. Hers, is not only a success story of commitment and courage, but also of love for her fellow-humans. It is because of her care for Senegal and its population, a country and a people she immediately fell in love with on her arrival, that she dedicated her life to serve them. Aimee Molloy's book succeeds remarkably in conveying the outstanding personality and character of Molly Melching, along with her sensitive feelings, ambitions, effervescence, wit, humor, courage, determination, and fearlessness! As mentioned in the review by the Publishers Weekly, the book reads like an engaging novel, thanks to the very clever reconstruction by Molloy of thoughts and conversations among the main 'protagonists' of Melching's 'journey', and the events which took place during her young years as a child then a teenager, and after her arrival in Senegal in the 70s. Another remarkable feature of the book is Molloy's amazingly clear understanding of Senegalese culture, traditions, sensitivities, and taboos. It didn't take her more than a year to reach such clear vision of a country and a society so drastically different from her own. Obviously, Melching must have been the one who helped to introduce her to the complexity and subtlety of African/Senegalese culture.

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