



*Slave: My True Story*  
Mende Nazer  
978-1-58648-318-0

**"Harrowing."** —*People Magazine*

**"Beautiful and at times heart-wrenching."** —*The Washington Post*

**"Slave constitutes an act of tremendous courage. A solitary and profoundly moving voice emerging from the most silenced of quarters."** —Monica Ali, author of *Brick Lane*

At age twelve, Mende Nazer lost her childhood. It began one horrific night in 1993, when Arab raiders swept through her Nuba village, setting fire to the village huts and murdering the adults. The raiders rounded up thirty-one young children, including Mende, who was eventually sold to a wealthy Arab family in Sudan's capital city, Khartoum. So began Mende's seven dark years of enslavement. Normally, Mende's story never would have come to light, but when she was sent to work for another master—a diplomat working in London—she made a dramatic break for freedom.

Published to critical acclaim for the honesty and clarity of its prose, *Slave* is a story almost beyond belief. It depicts the strength and dignity of the Nuba tribe. It recounts the savage cruelty of the secret, modern-day trade in slaves. Most of all, it is a remarkable testimony to one young woman's unbreakable spirit and tremendous courage.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Were you aware that there is a modern day slave trade? Why do you think it gets so little attention? Is there something that can be done to increase awareness?
2. How does Mende's practice of Islam compare to your own prior knowledge or common stereotypes of the religion? How is her captors' faith different from Mende's?
3. What role do family and tradition play in Nuba identity? Do you think Mende had a happy childhood and, if so, how does it sustain and nurture her during her traumatic years as a slave?
4. Mende was circumcised when she was very young, which she describes as a traumatic and painful event. Is female circumcision, controversially termed female genital mutilation, a practice that requires outside intervention, or is it a custom that outsiders do not understand and should not interfere with?
5. How do Mende's experiences as a slave affect her self-worth? Why did Mende lie about her situation to those who might have helped her?
6. How is Mende seen as a commodity by Rahab's female friends and by her husband's male friends? Is their treatment of her different based on gender?

7. What shocked you most about Mende's experience as a slave? Were the physical or psychological abuses that Mende suffered more difficult for you to read?
8. Mende's account, while horrifying, does at times present a comical view of a tribal girl encountering the modern world for the first time. Did her reactions make you view your own culture and lifestyle differently?
9. Mende's choice to write this book created significant consequences for her, her friends and her family. Would you have made a similar sacrifice in order to give a voice to the slaves who remain in captivity?