



The Killing Sea

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[Annabel Gibb](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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The setting is Aceh peninsula in Indonesia, Christmas Day 2004 and a chance encounter occurs between a young local boy and an American teenager, holidaying with her family in the region.

The next day, both are swept up in the awful drama of the tsunami, and the story follows their attempts to survive and to trace their fathers from whom both have been separated. Time telescopes as events ensue haphazardly ? the sense of urgent unreality enhanced by the journalistic economy of the writing style. Short chapters, alternating the points of view of the two youngsters, increase our sense of the confusion and bewilderment they are experiencing. Additionally, the author's experience of living in the area, and of helping after the tsunami, gives a picture of the complexity of organising resources after such a cataclysmic event. The difficulties posed by poor communications, a political regime uncomfortable with UN involvement, militant rebels, journalists chasing copy and the differing attitudes of Westerners and the indigenous people are shown without being laboured.

Sarah's quick adaptation to the new normality as she tries to get her sick brother to a hospital, her growing understanding of life in a Muslim culture, her frustration when there is no medicine, her relationship with Ruslan all help us see the resilience of humankind and the strength of the impulse to survive. A short factual account of the events, with a woefully inadequate map of the area, ends the book. A compelling and unsensationalised story which brings complex issues to our attention.

Running Order:

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