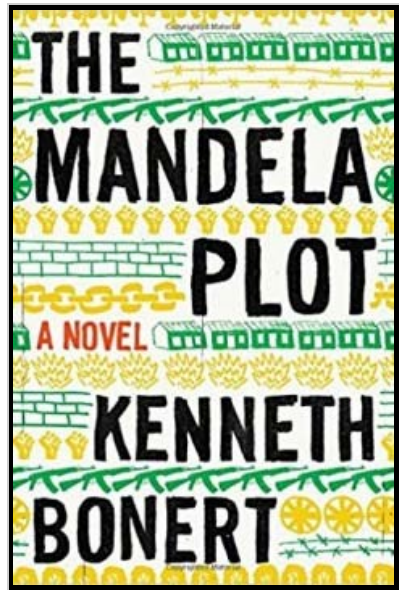


[Home](#) >
 [Top Picks: All Books](#) >
 The Mandela Plot



The Mandela Plot

by Kenneth Bonert

Price: \$27.00(Hardcover)

Published: May 22, 2018

☆☆☆☆☆

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher:

A vibrant, propulsive literary thriller that charts the high-stakes journey of a young man trying to find his place in a country that has lost its wayAs the 1980s draw to a close, South Africa is a maelstrom of political violence with the apartheid regime in its death throes. Young Martin Helger is the struggling odd duck at an elite private boys school in Johannesburg, with his father a rough-handed scrap dealer and his brother a mysterious legend. When a beautiful and manipulative American arrives at the family home, Martin soon finds himself wrenched out of his isolated bubble and thrust into the raw heart of the struggle. At the same time, secrets from the past begin to emerge and old sins long buried return in terrifying new ways, tearing at the Helgers, a second-generation Jewish family, even as the larger forces of history and politics tear apart the country as a whole. Mercy is in short supply and ultimately Martin must rely on alternative strengths to protect himself and fight for a better future. From the acclaimed author of the National Jewish Book Award-winning debut novel *The Lion Seeker*, *The Mandela Plot* is at once a riveting literary thriller, a moving coming of age tale, and an unforgettable journey through a world that entertains and terrifies in equal measure, and holds profound resonance for the present moment.

Rate This Book













☆☆☆☆☆ |
 [Rate/Review](#)



 Add To Wishlist

[Add To Bookshelf](#)

Get This Book

Go to your preferred retailer, click to choose a format and you' ll be taken directly to their site where you can get this book.

[Personalize / Add More Choices](#)


Share This Book

About The Author

Kenneth Bonert

KENNETH BONERT's first novel, *The Lion Seeker*, won the National Jewish Book Award, the Edward Lewis Wallant Award, and the Canadian Jewish Book Award. Bonert was also a finalist for the Sami Rohr Prize and the Governor General's Literary Award. He was born in South Africa and now lives in Toronto, Ontario.

Release Info

List Price: \$27.00 (Hardcover)
Published: May 22, 2018
Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Pages: 480
ISBN 10: 1328886182
ISBN 13: 9781328886187

What We Say

Kenneth Bonert's second novel has a setting of time and place that's so weighty it can feel crushing. Our hero Martin is a Jewish teenager growing up in apartheid South Africa. His family has just enough money to send him to an elite private school for Jews, but not quite enough money to make him accepted there. Martin's father is decent to his black workers, but not enough to avoid the threat of unions and radicals or the unwitting stain of his paternalistic attitude. The boy's

brother is a hard case who turned his back on the safety of university and essentially volunteered for the military at a time when it was engaged in deeply oppressive and brutal battles. And really all Martin wants to do is get closer to the new white American college student staying with them -- pity she turns out to be an activist teaching blacks at a school in the townships. From random violence to anti-Semitism to the disdain of his "betters," Martin simply can't get a break. His world really is filled with landmines -- both literal and figurative -- and every choice he makes is rife with moral complexity. Bonert captures the claustrophobic, dangerous atmosphere of the time with impressive weight; honestly, Martin's options were all poor and you felt dreadful for him, even as he did things that made you like him less. The darkness closes in and Martin's grasp on reality becomes unmoored and this book melted down in impressive fashion. It's a pity to report that the book becomes too cinematic in the final act. The bigger in scope it reached for, the less convincing it proved. Martin is a very memorable character and for a while the poisonous environment seeped off the page in impressive fashion. That will linger long after the fireworks of the finale fizzled out. -- Michael Giltz

What Others Say

A Publisher’s Lunch “Emerging Voice”
A *New York Post* "Must-Read Book"

"This is fiction that illuminates shifting allegiances and power struggles during a dark time and place in recent history. A riveting thriller with a solid historical base."
—*Booklist*, Starred Review

"*The Mandela Plot* is as suspenseful as a thriller, and the truest kind of Jewish family story—suffused with love and secrets both. It's also a masterful, terrifying portrait of a nation, at once bewitching and brutal, whose years on the edge have so much to teach America, and the world, today. You won't be able to put this book down."
—Boris Fishman, author of *A Replacement Life* and *Don't Let My Baby Do Rodeo*

"Propulsive, bare-boned, and riveting, *The Mandela Plot* shows how competing loyalties to family, truth, and history can tear a person—and a country—apart. Kenneth Bonert’s unvarnished characters are fierce and surprising—there are no seat belts on this ride."
—Rachel Kadish, author of *The Weight of Ink*

"Chaim Potok meets Leon Uris: a solid [...] portrait of violence and renewal."
—*Kirkus Reviews*

"It's the late 1980s in South Africa, where an awkward boy named Martin struggles to find a place at an elite private school in Johannesburg. A beautiful American activist comes to live with Martin at his family home, and she makes him see his own chaotic, changing country through a new lens."
—*New York Post*, "This week's must-read books"

What You Say

Filter by
No Reviews Found