

Kirinyaga

By Mike Resnick

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Hailed for his grandeur of imagination and superb worldbuilding, winner of and nominee for more than fifty awards for his outstanding work, Mike Resnick has rightfully won a place as one of science fiction's master storytellers. Now, in *Kirinyaga*, Resnick presents the haunting and utterly compelling tale of one man's utopia.

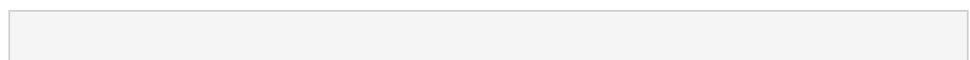
By the twentieth second century in the African nation of Kenya, polluted cities sprawl up the flanks of sacred Mount Kirinyaga. Great animal herds are but distant memories. European crops now grow on the sweeping savannas. But Koriba, a distinguished, educated man of Kikuyu ancestry, knows that life was different for his people centuries ago--and he is determined to build a utopian colony, not on earth, but on the terraformed planetoid he proudly names Kirinyaga.

As the mundumugu--witch doctor--Koriba leads the colonists. Reinstating the ancient customs and stringent laws of the Kikuyu people, he alone decides their fate. He must face many challenges to the struggling colony's survival: from a brilliant young girl whose radiant intellect could threaten their traditional ways to the interference of "Maintenance" which holds the power to revoke the colony's charter. All the while, only Koriba--unbeknownst to his people--maintains the computer link to the rest of humanity.

Ironically, the *Kirinyaga* experiment threatens to collapse--not from violence or greed--but from humankind's insatiable desire for knowledge. The Kikuyu people can no more stand still in time than their planet can stop revolving around its sun.

Deeply moving, swiftly paced, and profound in its implications, *Kirinyaga* is Mike Resnick's most triumphant work to date. His *Fable of Utopia* is the book every science fiction reader will want to own and savor for years to come.

From the Hardcover edition.



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Kirinyaga: A Fable of Utopia collects Mike Resnick's famous Kirinyaga stories and ties them together in a thematic arc that has novel-like continuity. The story focuses on Koriba, a *mundumugu* (sort of like a witch doctor and a wise man rolled into one) of the Kikuyu tribe. Koriba feels that his tribe has been corrupted by "European" technology, so he helps to establish a small, utopian planetoid named Kirinyaga where the Kikuyu can return to their roots, farming the land and worshipping the god Ngai without technological or cultural interference. As utopias go, Kirinyaga experiences its fair share of problems--both from within and without--each of which is detailed in the individual chapters and stories. The writing is not stylish but the stories are all excellent, and Resnick does a good job of integrating the traditional Kikuyu way of life into tales that any culture can appreciate. Readers looking for a novel may come away a bit disappointed because this book is really a collection of stories, but as far as collections go, few are better than *Kirinyaga*.

From School Library Journal

YA-Set in the 22nd century, this stunning sci-fi allegory describes the struggles and ultimate failure of a utopian colony on a terraformed planetoid. In the African nation of Kenya, polluted cities crawl up the side of Mount Kirinyaga. The magnificent animal herds of the past are but distant memories and native crops have been supplanted by European imports. Koriba, a well-educated man, is determined to reinstate the ancient customs and strict laws of his Kikuyu ancestors and invites others to join him in a new society named for their sacred mountain. As the mundumugu-witch doctor-Koriba faces numerous challenges to the utopian society's survival. He must deny a brilliant young woman an education because it is not the ancient way of his people. He watches helplessly as his charges insist on bringing in a white hunter with a gun to kill marauding hyenas when the colony's primitive weapons prove insufficient. With the technology comes subservience to white men's ways. But, in an ultimate irony, Koriba maintains his pure society with a computer link to the rest of humanity, even adjusting weather patterns by communicating his needs to an outside "Maintenance" group. It is the thirst for knowledge that this computer represents that becomes the ultimate threat to the colony. Young adults will love this provocative tale that examines the need for an orderly society, the rights of the individual, and the siren's lure of knowledge.

Pat Bangs, Fairfax County Public Library, VA

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From Library Journal

Seeking a return to the simpler life of their Kikuyu ancestors, a group of Africans colonize the planet Kirinyaga. As mundumugu (wisdom keeper), European-educated Koriba strives to protect his people from the corruption of modern civilization, enforcing tribal traditions with a ruthlessness and clarity born of his commitment to a dream. Written over a decade, from 1987 to 1997, the ten linked stories in this collection chronicle the birth, decay, and death of a Utopian vision. Resnick (*The Widowmaker Reborn*, Bantam, 1997) writes with eloquence and compassion, offering keen insights into the conflict between humanity's desire for stable perfection and its need for dynamic change. Recommended for most sf collections.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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