

On Bullfighting

A. L. Kennedy

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On Bullfighting A. L. Kennedy An Anchor Books Original

One day, on the brink of despair and contemplating her own mortality, novelist A. L. Kennedy is offered an assignment she can't refuse—an opportunity to travel to Spain and cover a sport that represents the ultimate confrontation with death: bullfighting.

The result is this remarkable book, which takes Kennedy and her readers from the living room of her Glasgow flat to the *plazas del toros* of Spain and inside the mesmerizing, mystifying, brutal, and beautiful world of the bullfight. Here the sport is death: *matadors* (literally "killers") are men and, increasingly, women who, not unlike the Roman gladiators before them, provide a spectacle to the crowd, a dance in which their own death is as present as that of the bull. Wonderfully relaying the elements of the sport, from the breeding of the bulls and the training of the matadors to the intricate choreography of the bullfight and its strange connection to the Inquisition, Kennedy meditates on a culture that we may not countenance or fully understand but which is made riveting by the precision of her prose and the passion and humor of her narrative.



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