

Dead of Night by Michael Stanley

5 Stars

Rhino horns = poaching = syndicates determined to wipe out these beautiful animals.

When Michael Davidson a journalist for National Geographic goes missing in South Africa, his friend Crystal Nguyen, a fellow journalist working for the Duluth News Tribune, offers to take over his assignment.

What Crys doesn't realise when she arrives in South Africa in search of Michael is how much danger she's placing herself in by trying to discover what has happened to Michael at the same time as gathering information for National Geographic on rhino horn smuggling, primarily as the gang operated out of Mozambique with the final market and main bosses in Vietnam.

Crystal's first stop in South Africa is Tshukudu Nature Reserve owned by Anton Malan and his son Johannes. They breed rhinos and follow the relatively new practice adopted by so many nature reserves, which means removing the horns of the rhinos on an annual basis. This is done, with the hope that the rhinos will no longer be targets for poachers.

Crys Nguyen is out on safari with Johannes Malan and several guests of the Nature Reserve. Johannes had been feeling unwell when they set off on the journey, but by the time, they reached the campsite, his (recurring) malaria has developed into a very high fever. Crys offers to take over some of his duties while one of the drivers takes Johannes back to the lodge. Bogani, Head Ranger at Tshukudu Nature Reserve and fully trained in security and tracking stays with her.

Crys is sure that nothing untoward can go wrong while they carry on with the safari. However, her optimism is short-lived when Bogani wakes her in the middle of the night to say that an aeroplane has crash-landed nearby. What she discovers once she reaches the site of the plane will throw her into the very heart of those involved in the smuggling, from the perpetrators themselves hellbent on getting their horns regardless of the cost to life and the police, under the command of Colonel Mabula of the Giyani police, determined to destroy this ring of poachers.

This book grabs you from the opening lines and doesn't let you go even when you reach the end. You know that although *this gang* has been destroyed and rhinos have been saved, tomorrow, a new group will

emerge and once again the fight will start to find out who's involved and how they can be stopped before another rhino horn is brutally removed from these animals,

What I'll never understand is where the myth arose that the horn, ***made up primarily of keratin – a protein found in hair, fingernails, and animal hooves***, is considered by those in the Far-East as the elixir of life. It's not!

Imbali

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.