



Bitter Chocolate: Anatomy of an Industry

Carol Off

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Hailed in hardcover as “compelling” (*Kirkus Reviews*) and an “astonishing [and] wrenching story” (*The London Free Press*), *Bitter Chocolate* is an eye-opening look at one of our most beloved consumer products. Tracing the fascinating origins and evolution of chocolate from the banquet tables of Montezuma’s Aztec court in the early sixteenth century to the bustling factories of Hershey, Cadbury, and Mars today, investigative journalist Carol Off shows that slavery and injustice have always been key ingredients.

The heart of the book takes place in West Africa inside the Ivory Coast—the world’s leading producer of cocoa beans—where profits from the multibillion-dollar chocolate industry fuel bloody civil war and widespread corruption. Faced with pressure from a crushing “cocoa cartel” demanding more beans for less money, poor farmers have turned to the cheapest labor pool possible: thousands of indentured children who pick the beans but have never themselves known the taste of chocolate.

“An astounding eye-opener that takes no prisoners” (*Quill & Quire*), *Bitter Chocolate* is an absorbing social history, a passionate investigative account, and a shocking and urgent exposé of an industry that continues even now to institutionalize misery as it indulges our whims.

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