

Mandela: My Prisoner, My Friend

Christo Brand, Barbara Jones

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Raised in a multi-ethnic farming community, Afrikaner Christo Brand was confused and saddened when he first confronted the realities of South African apartheid. Conscripted into the military at 18, Brand chose to serve as a prison guard rather than embrace the brutality and danger inherent in the work of soldiers and policemen. Assigned to the maximum security facility on remote Robben Island, Brand was given charge of the country's most infamous inmate: Nelson Mandela.

For 12 years Brand watched Mandela scrub floors, empty his toilet bucket, grieve over the deaths of family and friends yet remain as strong as any freedom fighter in history. Won over by Madiba's charm and authentic concern for the well-being of others, Brand became Mandela's confidant and at times accomplice. Celebrating triumphs and suffering through many setbacks, the two men formed an unlikely bond, one that would endure until Mandela's death.

Told with candor and reverence, *Mandela: My Prisoner, My Friend* is both a meditation on friendship and a moving testament to the dedication, determination and—most of all—humanity exuded by one of the world's great leaders.



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