

The Interpreter



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著者:Alice Kaplan

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"No story of World War II" is more triumphant than the liberation of France, made famous in countless photos of Parisians waving American flags and kissing GIs as columns of troops paraded down the Champs-Elysees. But one of the least-known stories from that era is also one of the ugliest chapters in the history of Jim Crow. In "The Interpreter", celebrated author Alice Kaplan recovers this story both as eyewitnesses first saw it, and as it still haunts us today. The U.S. Army executed seventy of its own soldiers between 1943 and 1946 - almost all of them black, in an army that was overwhelmingly white. Through the French interpreter Louis Guilloux's eyes, Kaplan narrates two different trials: one of a white officer, one of a black soldier, both accused of murder. Both were court-martialed in the same room, yet the outcomes could not have been more different. Kaplan's insight into character and setting creates an indelible portrait of war, race relations, and the dangers of capital punishment.

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