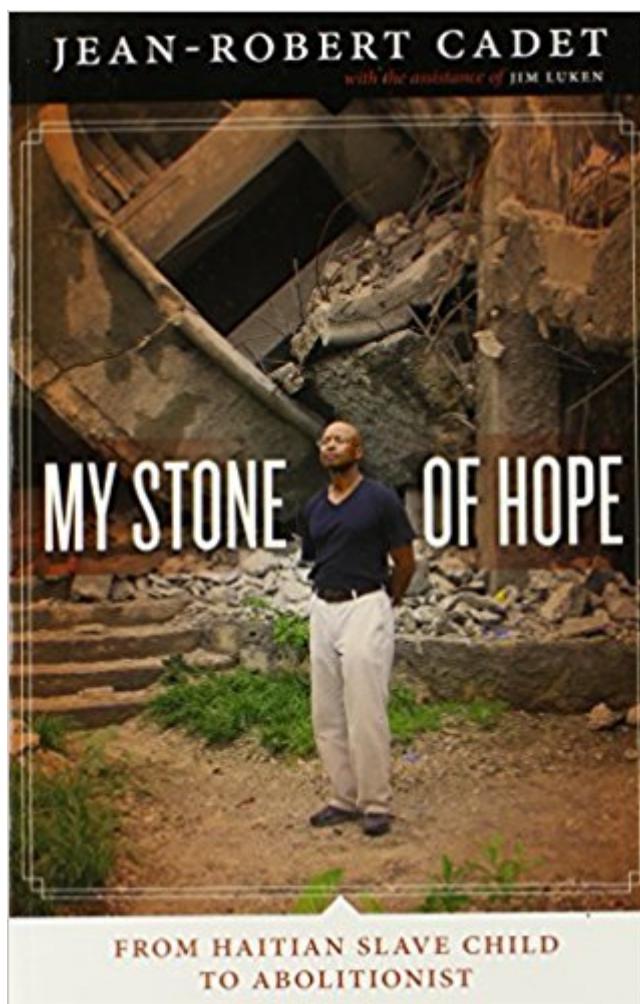


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# My Stone Of Hope: From Haitian Slave Child To Abolitionist



## Synopsis

There are 27 million slaves living in the world today—more than at any time in history. Three hundred thousand of them are impoverished children in Haiti, who "stay with" families as unpaid and uneducated domestic workers, subject to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. This practice, known locally as restavek ("staying with"), is so widespread that one in ten Haitian children is caught up in this form of slavery. Jean-Robert Cadet was a restavek in Haiti from the late 1950s until the early 1970s. He told the harrowing story of his youth in *Restavec: From Haitian Slave Child to Middle-Class American*—a landmark book that exposed ongoing child slavery in Haiti. Now in *My Stone of Hope*, Cadet continues his story from his early attempts to adjust to freedom in American society to his current life mission of eliminating child slavery through advocacy and education. As he recounts his own struggles to surmount the psychological wounds of slavery, Cadet puts a human face on the suffering that hundreds of thousands of Haitians still endure daily. He also builds a convincing case that child slavery is not just one among many problems that Haiti faces as the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation. Rather, he argues that the systematic abuse of so many of its children is Haiti's fundamental problem, because it creates damaged adults who seem incapable of governing the country justly or managing its economy productively. For everyone concerned about the fate of Haiti, the welfare of children, and the freedom of people around the globe, *My Stone of Hope* sounds an irresistible call to action.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"His [Cadet's] is a vivid, moving and highly readable narrative of the struggle with the psychological wounds of slavery as well as the personal determination that got him to set up the Jean R Cadet Restavek Organization, dedicated to ending child slavery in Haiti." - New Internationalist, April 2012

Jean-Robert Cadet is addressing the restavek issue with the Haitian government and prominent citizens to affect change within Haiti. He raises awareness of the issue by speaking at colleges and universities across the United States and to government organizations around the world. He founded the Jean R. Cadet Organization to bring an end to child slavery in Haiti through increased global awareness of the issue while also providing immediate relief to children trapped in the restavek system.

this must be it! Cadet is a brilliant writer, sharing his very emotional and personal story with us so that we can understand Haiti. He speaks honestly and with passion, but never accusingly or negatively about his birth country. The answers are in these pages for why Haiti struggles today, and if you want to know how Haiti can be helped, Cadet answers that question... almost. He does leave out the much-needed spiritual rebirth of the nation, but much of that is tied hand-in-hand with education as well. Please, before you go on another "relief" or "charity" trip to Haiti, read this book. Understand the position and responsibility of "blan" (white people) in and towards Haiti. Work WITH the Haitians, not just FOR them. Make permanent change that will last when you leave. And for God's sake, please make sure your organization is reputable. There are millions of "relief" dollars making organizers of NGOs and other "non-profits" rich without making any measurable change in Haiti.

Excellent book and touching story.

...But to then attempt to pull up the hope for a whole nation, Haiti must think this author, 'Cadet' is a true reincarnate of Hercules himself! Never before have I felt so inspired by one man's writings, both in his earlier memoir "Restavec: From Haitian Slave Child to Middle-Class American" which recounts his survival as one small native boy in a 'loveless' country, where cruelty to children either orphaned or born out of wedlock is still common, accepted practice in Haiti. Dumped on the doorstep by a stranger that was his father at just four years old; to become a child slave in the 'house of horrors', should make most people shudder to the core. How Cadet comes to terms with his impoverished childhood, in a house where poverty was not to blame; to then rise from the

ashes of broken despair as the eloquent voice of hope and strength for every 'restavek' child who does not belong anywhere, is a true testimony to the human spirit if one, like Cadet, is truly willing. Dedicated to the cause, Cadet's latest title, "My Stone of Hope" takes the tragedy that was his childhood, like the 300,000 other children that are allowed to subsist under the anachronistic restavek system today and empowers readers like me, to feel passionate about the axiomatic but unrealised right to protect every child citizen of this world, not just the fortunate minority. Cadet reminds us that there are 27,000,000 slaves living in the world today, more than any other time in human history. I cannot recommend this book enough; when you read how Cadet transfers an often humourous and candid sincerity of his acculteration to American life, his vision of hope for Haiti, has proven itself to be an irresistible call to action.

Beyond its socio-political message, My Stone of Hope is a reflection of our most basic human needs: home, family, identity, meaning and love. Jean-Robert's story is one of perseverance and hope. His book teaches us several things: what an individual on a mission can achieve and strive to accomplish, how much one person can overcome an incredible situation and better his life and the lives of others, that there is much about our own lives that we take for granted that others cannot, that we in the United States are fortunate to live in a society which values the innocence and beauty of childhood, that all nations do not and with full knowledge condone the enslavement of children because it is apparently politically convenient, that the restavek system is part of Haiti's culture, and finally that child slavery exists in Haiti and is frequently justified because the country is "poor". The story is compelling and moving but even humorous at times. Here's a man who sees life in a way most of us never will. There are far too many memorable scenes in this book to recount here but my personal favorite is when Jean-Robert returns to Haiti to find the answer to the simplest thing - his birthday. His quest became mine. Read this book.

This is an amazing story of compassion, hope, conviction and action. Cadet tells difficult stories of slavery in Haiti and prejudice in the United States, but he weaves into all of them a sense of hope that we can be different. We don't have to settle. We can be curious and ask questions and challenge ourselves and those around us to do better. The words of the Constitution and the oaths taken by those serving in the Armed Forces are not only words but ideas to live by. JFK and MLK don't only apply to the people of the 1960's, but they can inspire all of us today to do what we know is right. My favorite theme from the book is seeing the invisible around us. Cadet can go to Haiti and pick out children who are obviously child slaves, but who many within Haitian culture do not even

recognize. They are unable to see the pain and suffering of children who are living right under their noses. Cadet sees them, kneels to their level and looks them in the eye, hugs them and makes them visible for the world. Thank you, Jean-Robert!

Jean-Robert Cadet rose from unimaginable poverty and abuse in Haiti to the middle class in America. His life in Haiti isn't unusual. "Restavec" children (literally "those who stay") are sent by their parents to stay with distant relatives who are expected to house and educate the child. Often they are subjected to long hours of work, abuse and are almost never sent to school. They are in fact child slaves, with little hope of ever achieving a better life. Mr. Cadet's foundation works to rescue them. The book has moments of humor, such as Mr. Cadet's struggles to understand American life with his "sponsors", at school, in the military and at college. It is clear there are still things about our country he doesn't understand. It is also full of unbelievable horror. Overall it's an inspiring story. See [...] for more info.

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