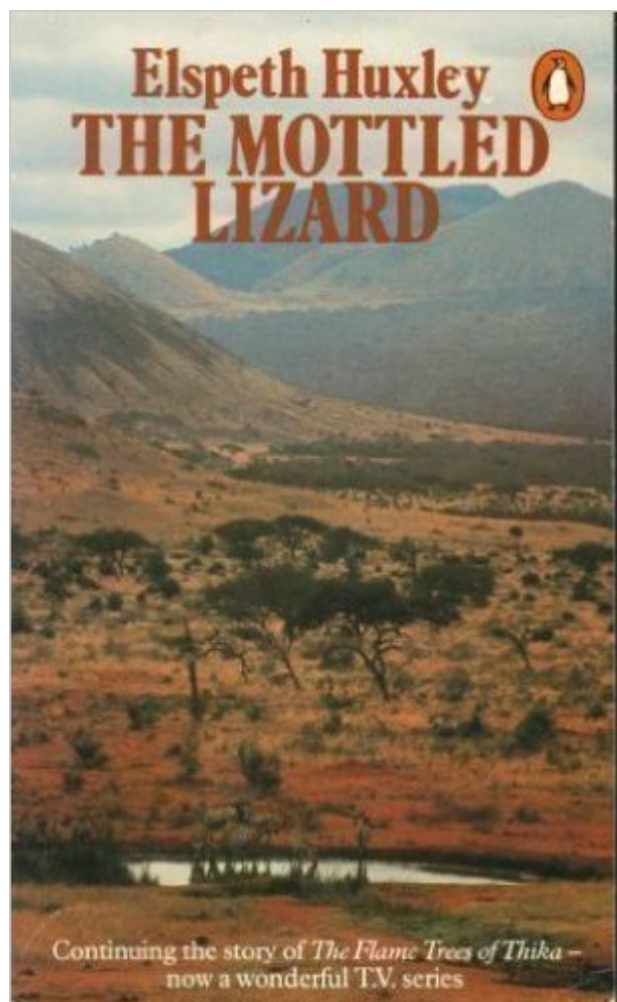


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# The Mottled Lizard



## Synopsis

The author who wrote graphically of her childhood in Kenya in *THE FLAME TREES OF THIKA*. Here she takes up her story again when the family returns to Kenya after the First World War. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

## Book Information

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; English Language edition (March 25, 1982)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 014005958X

ISBN-13: 978-0140059588

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1 x 5 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (18 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #451,192 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in [Books > History > Africa > Kenya](#) #44933 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs](#)

## Customer Reviews

While this book, the sequel to *The Flame Trees of Thika*, is not as focused or carries the same mystical newness of discovery as in the first book, it is, in a way, an even better book because of what it attempts to do: define what Africa is as a real place where real people live. Much of the first half of the book deals with different forms of magic, be it Elspeth's attempts to perform conjuring tricks from mail-order magic kits from England, or the black-magic used by the Kikuyu to punish someone who is guilty. More subtly is the magic of life and death, and death plays a much larger role in this book than in the first. In fact so much of surviving in Africa meant coming to terms with how fleeting life can be. When Tilly's cousin, Hillary, visits them his last act is to photograph the arch of the back of their pet cat. And while this may seem rather silly, it is a lasting image for the transitory nature of life, the need to always be in the moment before death (and death is quite savage here) finds you. Huxley also goes to great lengths to draw the dividing line between who the Europeans are and who the Africans are. Not that she tries to segregate them, but to show how both ways of life are valid - in fact in Africa the European way of life is rather silly since the Africans know better than a bunch of foreigners about how to survive. One of the differences she points out is, "Since routine is simply a means of controlling time, Europeans are better at it, and therefore accomplish more in a day, a month, or a year. They pay in monotony. Africans control time less

efficiently, but enjoy it more: they pay in stagnation.

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