

The Present Moment (Women Writing Africa)

Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye



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This contemporary African classic tells the story of seven unforgettable Kenyan women as it traces more than sixty years of turbulent national history. Like their country, this group of old women is divided by ethnicity, language, class, and religion. But around the charcoal fire at the Refuge, the old-age home they share in Nairobi, they uncover the hidden personal histories that connect them as women: stories of their struggles for self-determination; of conflict, violence, and loss, but also of survival.

Each woman has found her way to the Refuge because of a devastating life experience—the loss of family and security to revolution, emigration, or poverty. But as they reflect upon their tragedies, they also become aware of the community they have formed—a community of collective history, strength, humor, and affection. And they learn that they are more connected than they know, as the murder of a student in the neighborhood reveals how their lives have intersected across generations, how securely the past is tied to the present—and to the future—of their young nation.

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