



Days Come & Go

Hemley Boum

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In Hemley Boum's novel *Days Come & Go*, a woman's terminal diagnosis triggers memories of her family's tragic history.

Anna grew up without a mother. Her daughter, Abi, has never known a world without her mother in it. But Anna and Abi's relationship is not affectionate. Now, as cancer erodes Anna's mind and body, she speaks nonstop, hoping that her memories and experiences will enrich her daughter and grandson's lives long after she is gone. Her tumultuous life story is the basis for the book's emotional saga.

The family's lives are intertwined with major events in Cameroonian history, from the war of independence that nearly separated Anna from her husband before they could marry, to the contemporary religious extremism that destroys her grandson's friends in the most intense portions of the novel. Throughout, Anna tries to reconcile her traditional, rural upbringing with the European-sponsored education that allowed her to break the cycle of poverty. Meanwhile, Abi copes with the consequences of her extramarital affair; the devastating effect that the affair had on her son, Max; and the impending loss of her mother, whom she is just now growing close to.

Though it records family scars, this is a novel about resilience. Anna's family's greatest failings have been rejecting the past and refusing to face up to what's obvious. They allowed danger and bad feelings to fester. Now, having endured more trauma than anyone should ever have to, they know all too well the cost of their willful ignorance.

Following as three generations work to leave their painful legacies behind for the sake of their progeny, *Days Come & Go* is a multigenerational story about lost innocence—and about perseverance.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (September / October 2022)

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