



House of Stone

Novuyo Rosa Tshuma

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Novuyo Rosa Tshuma shapes the history of a family into a riveting, detailed novel. Following in the footsteps of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Tshuma crafts a political, historical tale of both a country at war and the individuals caught inside it. Though it starts off a little slow, *House of Stone* quickly reaches an engaging tempo to tell an important, complex story.

To their horror, Abednego and Agnes find that their son has disappeared in the midst of a charged political protest. One of the last people to see him, Zamani, jumps at the opportunity to fill the new hole in their family. He fixates on becoming a surrogate son. In doing so, he unravels their family history in order to claim it for himself.

Most of the novel concerns the past, exploring both the personal background of two grieving parents and the larger history of Zimbabwe. Through Abednego's and Agnes's memories, we discover the past and a family's place in it. *House of Stone* ties together intimate moments of love and family in the midst of revolution and turmoil, perfecting the balance of the personal and the political. It explores the dissolution of Rhodesia, the inception of Zimbabwe, and the violence and chaos along the way.

The eloquent narrator, Zamani, provides tangible details and stories that come together to paint a picture of a vibrant, struggling country. Tshuma completely inhabits her obsessive narrator's voice, allowing for total immersion. Her prose flows easily. It is simultaneously realistic and literary, pulling you into a family as it falls apart.

The careful opening plunges deeply into Zimbabwean culture and life before the story picks up, transforming into a powerful meditation on identity, politics, and what makes a nation.

MYA ALEXICE (November/December 2018)

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