



Mount Pleasant: A Novel

Patrice Nganang

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In Cameroon in 1931, Sara is taken from her family and brought to Mount Pleasant as a gift for Sultan Njoya, the Bamum leader cast into exile by French colonialists. Just nine years old and on the verge of becoming one of the sultan's hundreds of wives, Sara's story takes an unexpected turn when she is recognized by Bertha, the slave in charge of training Njoya's brides, as Nebu, the son she lost tragically years before. In Sara's new life as a boy she bears witness to the world of Sultan Njoya—a magical, yet declining place of artistic and intellectual minds—and hears the story of the sultan's last days in the Palace of All Dreams and of the sad fate of Nebu, the greatest artist their culture had seen.

Seven decades later, a student returns home to Cameroon to research the place it once was, and she finds Sara, silent for decades, ready to tell her story. In her serpentine tale, a lost kingdom lives again in the compromised intersection between flawed memory, tangled fiction, and faintly discernible truth. In this telling, history is invented anew and transformed—a man awakens from a coma to find the animal kingdom dancing a waltz, a spirit haunts a cocoa plantation, and a sculptor recreates his lost love in a work of art that challenges the boundary between truth and the ideal. Award-winning novelist Patrice Nganang's lyrical and majestic *Mount Pleasant* is a resurrection of the world of early twentieth century Cameroon and an elegy for the men and women swept up in the forces of colonization.

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