



David's Story (Women Writing Africa)

Zoë Wicomb

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With the 1987 publication of *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town*, Zoë Wicomb won international critical acclaim: Toni Morrison wrote, "Zoë Wicomb has mined pure gold. Seductive, brilliant, and precious, her talent glitters." As richly imagined and stylistically innovative as Wicomb's first work, *David's Story* is a striking and passionate novel—a moving exploration of truth, memory, political vision, power, and history.

Unfolding in 1991 South Africa, at the moment of Nelson Mandela's release, the novel explores the underground world of activists, spies, and saboteurs in the liberation movement—a world seldom revealed to outsiders. It also journeys back to the early twentieth century to find the forgotten history of the mixed-race "coloured" people of South Africa, and back further still to the history of early colonial settlement. What emerges from this history—the larger themes of freedom, identity, and power—reflect back upon the dilemmas of the present, in a nation newly freed from apartheid, but not from the weight of its complex past.

The effect is a bold and deeply resonant reversionary novel which powerfully scores the markings of race, class, and gender, while questioning what and how this can be told.

Multiple rich voices weave together especially the voices of women, which question the certainties of men. As these voices respond to, illuminate, and sometimes contradict one another—Wicomb depicts a world where "truth upon conflicting truth wriggles into shape."

Zoë Wicomb, the author of *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town*, was born and raised in Namaqualand, South Africa. After twenty years in Britain, she returned to South Africa to teach at the University of the Western Cape. She currently teaches at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland.

Dorothy Driver is professor of English at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

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