



The Madonna of Excelsior: A Novel

Zakes Mda

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A new novel by a towering presence in contemporary South African literature

In 1971, nineteen citizens of Excelsior in South Africa's white-ruled Free State were charged with breaking apartheid's Immorality Act, which forbade sex between blacks and whites. Taking this case as raw material for his alchemic imagination, Zakes Mda tells the story of a family at the heart of the scandal -and of a country in which apartheid concealed interracial liaisons of every kind.

Niki, the fallen madonna, transgresses boundaries for the sake of love; her choices have repercussions in the lives of her black son and mixed-race daughter, who come of age in post-apartheid South Africa, where freedom prompts them to reexamine their country's troubled history at first hand.

By turns earthy, witty, and tragic, *The Madonna of Excelsior* is a brilliant depiction of life in South Africa and of the dramatic changes between the 1970s and the present.

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