



So Long a Letter

Mariama Ba

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Written by award-winning African novelist Mariama Ba and translated from the original French, *So Long a Letter* has been recognized as one of Africa's 100 Best Books of the 20th Century. The brief narrative, written as an extended letter, is a sequence of reminiscences—some wistful, some bitter—recounted by recently widowed Senegalese schoolteacher Ramatoulaye Fall. Addressed to a lifelong friend, Aissatou, it is a record of Ramatoulaye's emotional struggle for survival after her husband betrayed their marriage by taking a second wife. This semi-autobiographical account is a perceptive testimony to the plight of educated and articulate Muslim women. Angered by the traditions that allow polygyny, they inhabit a social milieu dominated by attitudes and values that deny them status equal to men. Ramatoulaye hopes for a world where the best of old customs and new freedom can be combined.

Considered a classic of contemporary African women's literature, *So Long a Letter* is a must-read for anyone interested in African literature and the passage from colonialism to modernism in a Muslim country.

Winner of the prestigious Noma Award for Publishing in Africa.

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