



The [intimate and affecting] novel of an Indian couple's quest for a child that sparked national conversations about cast and female empowerment (Laila Lalami, New York Times Book Review). Set in South India during the British colonial period, One Part Woman tells the story of Kali and Ponna, a married couple unable to conceive. The predicament is of major concern for their families; and the crowing amusement of Kali's male friends. From making offerings at different temples to circumambulating a mountain supposed to cure barren women, Kali and Ponna try everything to solve the problem. But a more radical plan is required. The annual chariot festival, a celebration of the god Maadhorubaagan, who is part male and part female, may provide the answer. On the eighteenth night of the festival, the rules of marriage are relaxed, and consensual sex between unmarried men and women is overlooked, for all men are considered gods. The festival may be the solution to Kali and Ponna's problem, but it soon threatens to drive the couple apart as much as to bring them together. Wryly amusing and deeply poignant, One Part Woman is a powerful exploration of a loving marriage strained by the expectations of others, and an attack on the rigid rules of caste and tradition that continue to constrict opportunity and happiness. Longlisted for the National Book Award

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