



The Expedition to the Baobab Tree: A Novel

Wilma Stockenstrom

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Learning to survive in the harsh interior of Southern Africa, a former slave seeks shelter in the hollow of a baobab tree. For the first time since she was a young girl her time is her own, her body is her own, her thoughts are her own. In solitude, she is finally able to reflect on her own existence and its meaning, bringing her a semblance of inner peace. Scenes from her former life shuttle through her mind: how owner after owner assaulted her, and how each of her babies were taken away as soon as they were weaned, their futures left to her imagination. We are the sole witnesses to her history: her capture as a child, her tortured days in a harbor city on the eastern coast as a servant, her journey with her last owner and protector, her flight, and the kaleidoscopic world of her baobab tree. Wilma Stockenström's profound work of narrative fiction, translated by Nobel Prize winner J.M. Coetzee, is a rare, haunting exploration of enslavement and freedom.

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