



# The Rape of Sita (Women Writing Africa)

*Lindsey Collen*

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## **The Rape of Sita (Women Writing Africa)** Lindsey Collen

Banned upon its first publication in Mauritius, winner of the prestigious Commonwealth Prize for Best Novel in Africa, this stylistically radical novel is both starkly modern in its conception and reminiscent of ancient myth in its captivating narrative and allegorical power. Deftly blending oral and literary traditions, Collen has crafted a short epic that evokes legacies of oppression and resistance—of women, of cultures, and of nations.

Through the intersecting frames of Indian, African, and European cultures that make up the tiny African island nation of Mauritius emerges Sita—a living legend in her country and activist in the national struggle for independence. She is also a strong woman who has buried a secret that threatens to overwhelm her. As Sita makes terrifying plunges into the black hole of her fragmented memory, her painful and angry search to come to terms with her past extends beyond her own violation. Echoing ancient folk tales and religious prophecies, Sita's modern-day struggle to remember her own history and rape comes to symbolize all rapes, all violations, and all colonizations.

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