



# You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir

By Wole Soyinka

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## **You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir** By Wole Soyinka

The first African to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature, as well as a political activist of prodigious energies, Wole Soyinka now follows his modern classic *Ake: The Years of Childhood* with an equally important chronicle of his turbulent life as an adult in (and in exile from) his beloved, beleaguered homeland.

In the tough, humane, and lyrical language that has typified his plays and novels, Soyinka captures the indomitable spirit of Nigeria itself by bringing to life the friends and family who bolstered and inspired him, and by describing the pioneering theater works that defied censure and tradition. Soyinka not only recounts his exile and the terrible reign of General Sani Abacha, but shares vivid memories and playful anecdotes—including his improbable friendship with a prominent Nigerian businessman and the time he smuggled a frozen wildcat into America so that his students could experience a proper Nigerian barbecue. More than a major figure in the world of literature, Wole Soyinka is a courageous voice for human rights, democracy, and freedom. *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* is an intimate chronicle of his thrilling public life, a meditation on justice and tyranny, and a mesmerizing testament to a ravaged yet hopeful land.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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## **You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir By Wole Soyinka Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

*Starred Review.* In this engrossing follow-up to his acclaimed childhood memoir, *Aké*, the Nigerian poet, playwright and Nobel laureate demonstrates what it means to be a public intellectual. Soyinka revisits a tumultuous life of writing and political activism, from his student days in Britain through his struggles, sometimes from prison or exile, against a succession of Nigerian dictatorships. Soyinka may be on a first-name basis with almost every major Nigerian figure and he's sometimes involved in high-level intrigues; his chronicle of political turmoil is very personal, full of sharply drawn sketches of comrades and foes, and cantankerous rejoinders to critics. His novelistic eyewitness accounts of repression and upheaval widen out from time to time to survey the humiliation and corruption of Nigerian society under military rule. Soyinka also includes recollections of friends and family, of sojourns abroad with W.H. Auden and other literati and of stage triumphs and fiascos. His lyrical evocations of African landscapes, the urban nightmare of Lagos, the horrors of British cuisine and the longing a dusty fugitive feels for a cold beer will entertain and educate readers. By turns panoramic and intimate, ruminative and politically resolute, Soyinka's memoir is a dense but intriguing conversation between a writer and his times. (*Apr. 18*)

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Early in this memoir, Soyinka, the Nobel-winning playwright, says that he is "a closet glutton for tranquillity." The account that follows details a decidedly untranquil life of activism, imprisonment, and exile over the past half century. In 1956, as a Nigerian student in England, Soyinka considered joining the Hungarian uprising against the Soviets, thinking it a "perfect rehearsal" for future African insurgencies, but his father advised, "Kindly return home and make this your battlefield." The bulk of the book concerns Soyinka's struggles against one corrupt Lagos administration after another, shedding light on the outsize characters of African politics. Along the way, Soyinka recalls how once, in Venice, W. H. Auden tried to pass him off as an African prince, and reveals that, after winning the Nobel Prize, he came down with writer's block, "overwhelmed by the futility of everything I had ever done."

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Just when it seems that the premise of the latest tell-all memoir can't get any thinner, this powerful exemplar of the genre arrives on bookshelves. Soyinka, winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize for literature, delivers a book that is as much a history of a country as it is the story of his life. That Soyinka's story so closely aligns with the history of Nigeria testifies to his ongoing commitment to the cause of democracy, but the focus on politics leaves a few reviewers wishing for more of the personal stories found in *Aké*, his first memoir, and *The Man Died*, about his two-year imprisonment. *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* is not always easy going, especially for those unfamiliar with African history. For those willing to take the journey, Soyinka's account breathes with the "fullness of an epic" (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

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## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Christopher Levi:**

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children right up until adult are different content. As you may know that book is very important normally. The book *You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir* seemed to be making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It doesn't matter what advantages for you. The e-book *You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir* is not only giving you more new information but also to become your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your spend time to read your e-book. Try to make relationship with all the book *You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir*. You never feel lose out for everything in case you read some books.

**Betty Serrano:**

As people who live in the modest era should be up-date about what going on or information even knowledge to make these people keep up with the era and that is always change and advance. Some of you maybe will update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know which one you should start with. This *You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir* is our recommendation to help you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and want in this era.

**Martin Kelley:**

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also work as a life style. This reading practice give you lot of advantages. Advantages you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book that improve your knowledge and information. The details you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want drive more knowledge just go with education and learning books but if you want experience happy read one having theme for entertaining for instance comic or novel. Typically the *You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir* is kind of reserve which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

**Jason Howell:**

People live in this new day time of lifestyle always try to and must have the spare time or they will get large amount of stress from both daily life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not really a robot. Then we inquire again, what kind of activity are you experiencing when the spare time coming to anyone of course your answer will unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading textbooks. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, often the book you have read is usually *You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir*.

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