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The Mountain

Drusilla Modjeska

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The Mountain

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A luminously written, rich tale of a country on the brink of independence, and split personal loyalties within postcolonial society

In 1968, Papua New Guinea is on the brink of independence, and everything is about to change. Amidst the turmoil ethnographic filmmaker Leonard arrives from England with his Dutch wife, Rika, to study and film an isolated village high in the mountains. The villagers' customs and art have been passed down through generations, and Rika is immediately struck by their paintings on a cloth made of bark. Rika and Leonard are also confronted with the new university in Moresby, where intellectual ambition and the idealism of youth are creating friction among locals such as Milton, a hot-headed young playwright, and visiting westerners, such as Martha, to whom Rika becomes close. But it is when Rika meets brothers Jacob and Aaron that all their lives are changed forever. Drusilla Modjeska's sweeping novel takes us deep into this fascinating, complex country, whose culture and people cannot escape the march of modernity that threatens to overwhelm them. Shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Award, this is a riveting story of love, loss, grief, and betrayal.

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