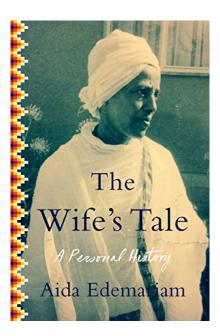
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In this indelible memoir that recalls the life of her remarkable ninety-five-year old grandmother, Guardian journalist Aida Edemariam tells the story of modern Ethiopiaa nation that would undergo a tumultuous transformation from feudalism to monarchy to Marxist revolution to democracy, over the course of one century. Born in the northern Ethiopian city of Gondar in about 1916, Yetemegnu was married and had given birth before she turned fifteen. As the daughter of a socially prominent man, she also offered her husband, a poor yet gifted student, the opportunity to become an important religious leader. Over the next decades Yetemegnu would endure extraordinary trials: the death of some of her children; her husbands imprisonment; and the detention of one of her sons. She witnessed the Fascist invasion of Ethiopia and the subsequent resistance, suffered Allied bombardment and exile from her city; lived through a bloody revolution and the nationalization of her land. She gained audiences with Emperor Haile Selassie I to argue for justice for her husband, for revenge, and for her childrens security, and fought court battles to defend her assets against powerful men. But sustained, in part, by her fierce belief in the Virgin Mary and in Orthodox Christianity, Yetemegnu survived. She even learned to read, in her sixties, and eventually made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Told in Yetemegnus enthralling voice and filled with a vivid cast of charactersemperors and empresses, priests and scholars, monks and nuns, archbishops and slaves, Marxist revolutionaries and wartime double agentsThe Wifes Tale introduces a woman both imperious and vulnerable; a mother, widow, and businesswoman whose deep faith and numerous travails never quashed her love of laughter, mischief and dancing; a fighter whose life was shaped by direct contact with the volatile events that transformed her nation. An intimate memoir that offers a panoramic view of Ethiopias recent history, The Wifes Tale takes us deep into the landscape, rituals, social classes, and culture of this ancient, often mischaracterized, richly complex, and unforgettable landand into the heart of one indomitable woman.

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