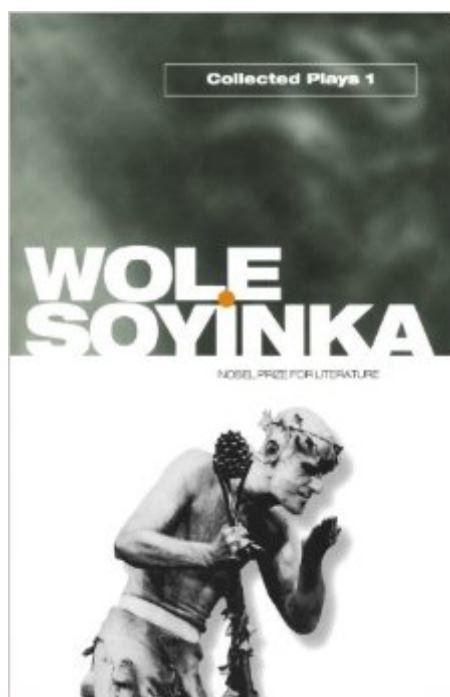


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Collected Plays: Volume 1 (V. 1: A Galaxy Book)



Synopsis

Winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature, this Nigerian poet, playwright, and novelist writes of the rich cultural traditions as well as the hopes and frustrations of black Africa. This two-volume collection of his plays includes *A Dance of the Forests*, *The Swamp Dwellers*, *The Strong Breed*, *The Road*, and *The Bacchae of Euripides* in the first volume, and *The Lion and the Jewel*, *Kongi's Harvest*, *The Trials of Brother Jero*, *Jero's Metamorphosis*, and *Madmen and Specialists* in the second volume.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This, Volume 1 of the collected plays by Nigerian-born Wole Soyinka, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986, contains, *The Dance of the Forests*, *The Swamp Dwellers*, *The Strong Breed*, *The Road*, and *The Bacchae of Euripides* (Soyinka's translation), but not *The Lion and the Jewel*, et al., as the Book Description by above mistakenly has it. Those plays are contained in Volume 2. For this review I want to focus on *The Road* which Soyinka wrote in 1965. It is a quasi-realistic play which incorporates elements from the theater of the absurd. It is a comedy of sorts, not exactly a *comédie noire*, as the French say, but with similar satirical intent. It is also a deeply symbolic play. The action comprises a single day, from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. The scene is a road-side shack presumably in Nigeria with a church close by, parts of which are also on stage. Part of the shack is a used parts store, and there is a dilapidated "mammy waggon" downstage and to the side opposite

the church. The central character is the PROFESSOR who stands for civilization and literacy. He has the power of the Word, and this power sustains him above his fellows. The PROFESSOR uses his literacy to forge documents such as driver's licenses. This too is part of his power. He is a contradictory character, and the Word is slippery and is not always an embodiment of the truth. The PROFESSOR stands in opposition to the Church and its Bishop. SAMSON is the tout for the "No Danger, No Delay" lorry service. A tout is one who finds customers for the company, who seats them and maybe carries their luggage and flatters them. SAMSON is a practical man. KOTONU is a driver who works with SAMSON. SALUBI is a driver trainee, a superstitious man.

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