



Yaya's Story: The Quest for Well-Being in the World

Paul Stoller

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Yaya's Story is a book about Yaya Harouna, a Songhay trader originally from Niger who found a path to America. It is also a book about Paul Stoller—its author—an American anthropologist who found his own path to Africa. Separated by ethnicity, language, profession, and culture, these two men's lives couldn't be more different. But when they were both threatened by a grave illness—cancer—those differences evaporated, and the two were brought to profound existential convergence, a deep camaraderie in the face of the most harrowing of circumstances. *Yaya's Story* is that story.

Harouna and Stoller would meet in Harlem, at a bustling African market where Harouna built a life as an African art trader and Stoller was conducting research. Moving from Belayara in Niger to Silver Spring, Maryland, and from the Peace Corps to fieldwork to New York, Stoller recounts their separate lives and how the threat posed by cancer brought them a new, profound, and shared sense of meaning. Combining memoir, ethnography, and philosophy through a series of interconnected narratives, he tells a story of remarkable friendship and the quest for well-being. It's a story of difference and unity, of illness and health, a lyrical reflection on human resiliency and the shoulders we lean on.

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