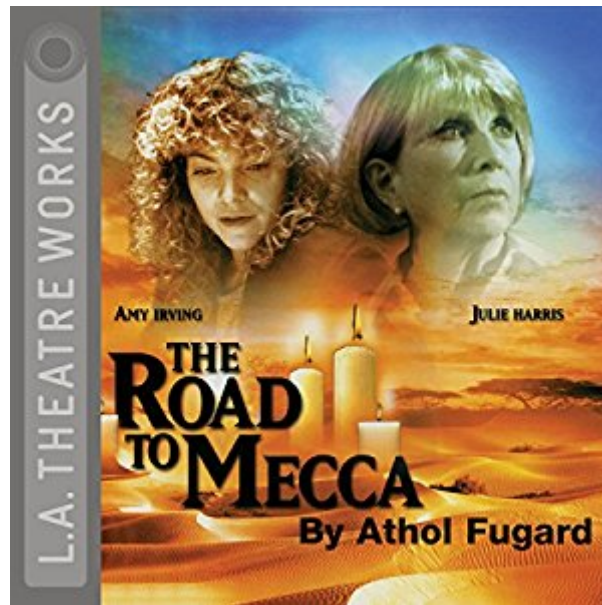


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# The Road To Mecca



## Synopsis

When her husband dies, aging Miss Helen begins to fill her home in the remote South African bush with strange sculptures made from beer cans and old headlights. A local clergyman and a young woman visitor try to decide whether Miss Helen's peculiar art is an outpouring of creativity or an outbreak of madness. An incandescent drama by South Africa's most celebrated playwright. An L.A. Theatre Works full-cast performance featuring Julie Harris, Amy Irving, and Harris Yulin.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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## Customer Reviews

Helen, whose husband's death has caused her to stave off various bouts of depression and battles with, to use her word, "darkness," has recently re-discovered her gift for sculpture. Her back yard - which Helen calls her Mecca - is full of bright, colorful, life-sized figures of biblical wise men, birds, and anything else her imagination encourages her to make. One of Helen's only remaining friends, Elsa, pays her a surprise visit from Cape Town. During their discussion, Helen mentions that the dominee at her local Church, Byleveld, has taken it upon himself to suggest to her that she should consider moving into a convalescent home. Byleveld claims to express concern for the Church, but also for others in New Bethesda who think that Helen has become a mad eccentric, tottering on senility. Even though Helen is unable to do some things for herself, she has a local woman come to her house a few times a week, and seems very capable of living alone. Elsa vehemently urges Helen to resist Byleveld's "help," and refuse his offer. He's even gone so far as to fill out the paperwork for the home; all he needs is her signature. The play consists of only three characters, but the balance, dynamism, and tension between them is beautiful and subtle. While Byleveld could

easily come off as patriarchal and overbearing, Fugard leaves plenty of room for the reader to believe that he's really doing what he thinks is in Helen's best interests, even though we are not to mistake his interruption as anything other than heavy-handedness. He's not the easy-to-hate bigot that would have been caricatural. In a number of ways, Elsa is more of a caricature, with her youthful idealism and cosmopolitan, rigorous rejection of Afrikaner tradition.

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