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McCann's book is as amazing as its title - the botanical properties of the cultigen itself (clearly delineated for the botanically challenged), the continent's unique modern dependence on the crop, the complicated and varied political and economic histories of how it came to be that way, how his Ethiopian research partner's local knowledge connected maize with malaria, and more. Maize and Grace is a readable, highly original, penetrating and comprehensive study of exemplary quality.