

Synopsis of *Women of a Certain Rage*

Kate, a composer and adjunct professor at a small Midwestern college, struggles to pay the bills and provide care for her dying mother, Nor, who lives with her. When her brother neglects to send money for their mother's care, the nursing aide quits, causing Kate to rely on her friends for help. In addition, hospice is threatening to withdraw its services because Nor has been in the program too long. Fracking in the area causes small earth tremors, which add to the feeling that nothing is secure.

Kate, perpetually exhausted from overwork and worry, and Nor, cagey and shrewd, spar continuously. Kate is convinced that her mother loves her absent brother more than Kate. Kate wants her mother to be more communicative. Nor, for her part, has a secret, and it is killing her. Despite this, there are moments of great tenderness and understanding between Kate and Nor. Between Kate and the friends she must rely on, there is also ambivalence. While they support each other, they also undermine each other, and their relationships are shot through with both loyalties and jealousies.

When Kate's daughter, Mia, appears unannounced to "help" her mother with Nor, she throws into relief Kate's relationship to her own youthful ambitions. Accusing her mother of stagnating, Mia offers to help her reluctant mother revive her career through the use of social media. But underlying Mia's "help" is Mia's own fear of not being successful, for Mia too has a secret. Mia and Nor have an easy relationship, which makes Kate feel left out.

Against the backdrop of Trump's America, Kate and her friends navigate the realities of a dysfunctional healthcare system, of workplace misogyny, of ageism, and of parenting grown children. As the country seems to renege on its promises and ideals, these women face the crumbling of their own bright expectations while struggling to hold onto their humanity.