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Half Of A Yellow Sun



Synopsis

With effortless grace, celebrated author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie illuminates a seminal moment in modern African history: Biafra's impassioned struggle to establish an independent republic in southeastern Nigeria during the late 1960s. We experience this tumultuous decade alongside five unforgettable characters: Ugwu, a thirteen-year-old houseboy who works for Odenigbo, a university professor full of revolutionary zeal; Olanna, the professor's beautiful young mistress who has abandoned her life in Lagos for a dusty town and her lover's charm; and Richard, a shy young Englishman infatuated with Olanna's willful twin sister Kainene. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a tremendously evocative novel of the promise, hope, and disappointment of the Biafran war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. When the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria seceded in 1967 to form the independent nation of Biafra, a bloody, crippling three-year civil war followed. That period in African history is captured with haunting intimacy in this artful page-turner from Nigerian novelist Adichie (*Purple Hibiscus*). Adichie tells her profoundly gripping story primarily through the eyes and lives of Ugwu, a 13-year-old peasant houseboy who survives conscription into the raggedy Biafran army, and twin sisters Olanna and Kainene, who are from a wealthy and well-connected family. Tumultuous politics power the plot, and several sections are harrowing, particularly passages depicting the savage butchering of Olanna and Kainene's relatives. But this dramatic, intelligent epic has its lush and sultry side as well: rebellious Olanna is the mistress of Odenigbo, a university professor brimming with anticolonial zeal; business-minded Kainene takes as her lover fair-haired, blue-eyed Richard, a

British expatriate come to Nigeria to write a book about Igbo-Ukwu art "and whose relationship with Kainene nearly ruptures when he spends one drunken night with Olanna. This is a transcendent novel of many descriptive triumphs, most notably its depiction of the impact of war's brutalities on peasants and intellectuals alike. It's a searing history lesson in fictional form, intensely evocative and immensely absorbing. (Sept. 15) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Based loosely on political events in nineteen-sixties Nigeria, this novel focusses on two wealthy Igbo sisters, Olanna and Kainene, who drift apart as the newly independent nation struggles to remain unified. Olanna falls for an imperious academic whose political convictions mask his personal weaknesses; meanwhile, Kainene becomes involved with a shy, studious British expat. After a series of massacres targeting the Igbo people, the carefully genteel world of the two couples disintegrates. Adichie indicts the outside world for its indifference and probes the arrogance and ignorance that perpetuated the conflict. Yet this is no polemic. The characters and landscape are vividly painted, and details are often used to heartbreaking effect: soldiers, waiting to be armed, clutch sticks carved into the shape of rifles; an Igbo mother, in flight from a massacre, carries her daughter's severed head, the hair lovingly braided. Copyright © 2006 Click here to subscribe to The New Yorker --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Loved other works by this author so decided to check this one out. The subject matter is unique, but I have to admit around page 300, my patience was wearing thin. There were quite a number of character with motivations that didn't quite jive. Ugwu's stint fighting-seem more like a last minute change or something. What happen was quick and short-and kind of unbelievable. The rape was holy out of character and even at the time, the author didn't give a believable reason of why he did it. Then when he returns, he back to being the docile man servant? Doesn't ring true. Maybe if he'd been conscripted earlier in the war and then we watch his metamorphosis to Target Destroyer then maybe. There were to many floating characters that when they popped back up later in the text, you struggled to remember who they were. Richard never seem believable or make sense either. You never learn whether Kainene and Richard ever found their rhythm in the bedroom. If it wasn't important--why bring it up? The Kainene situation at the end is also frustrating because as a reader I would have liked to have witnessed what happened to her--even if the characters never find out what happened. And Olanna--really not that deep of a person. And what happened between her in Richard made absolutely no sense. The timeline jumping was consistent through out the whole

book. Came across as something the author thought of at the beginning and then abandoned for some reason. Anyway. I loved *Americanah*. This one, not too much. But I will check out the movie on Netflix next.

Adichie's novel is perhaps one of the best novels I have read, and her writing is so beautiful and descriptive that I feel her work has already become timeless. Reading *Half of a Yellow Sun* not only painted a beautiful and sorrowful picture of Biafra and Nigeria, but it also convincingly brought the reader into a realm of genocide as best as one can do in a literary work. Genocide does not simply happen overnight, and Adichie's slow build to tension and uncomfortable rhetoric through word of mouth, radio, and witness to events provides the perfect set up for the plot. The reader gradually becomes familiar with the delicate nature of ethnic tension between the Igbo, Yoruba, and Fulani in Nigeria. It is not until Olanna leaves her safeguarded world in Nsukka that ethnic violence becomes apparent. Still, it does not seem probable to her and Odenigo's eyes that political activity could descend into a form of violence inconceivable to humanity. Adichie's treatment of the Biafran Genocide is painstakingly thoughtful. Of course no one wants to read about children dying slow deaths, but Adichie's portrayal of the starvation that grips Biafra is necessary, because we know these facts to be true. It absorbs the reader into the then-current feeling in Biafra, thus enhancing the reader's situational awareness. Too often, people know nothing of the violence in Africa; Adichie's earnest writing style helps to change that, by not only bringing a fairly unknown historical event to light, but to do it in such a way that readers can somehow identify and / or try to understand feelings of helplessness, loss, and anxiety in a war-torn setting. Food is a universal love, and Adichie so excellently portrays the grueling discontent and disbelief of the food shortage that ultimately touches every human in the region. Additionally, her continual reference to radio and other forms of public outreach (billboards, word of mouth) help paint a picture of propaganda, fear, and hope that all take place in wartime.

This was about a middle-class family who felt strongly about their heritage to follow a leader who attempted to start a new country. They never thought anything would come of this philosophy of consolidating a group of people into a nation. It made for a great conversation at a dinner party. But very gradually things began to happen until finally they've gone through war, hunger, death and anything else war can conjure up. And after all their hardships they are at the losing end of the war. From well off to barely surviving. In America we don't think this could happen to us - but that's how these characters felt at first too. Based on true events.

This is an amazing book. I actually was losing so much sleep because I had to find out what happened next. If you are like i was and knew very little about the war in Biafra you must read this book. Through excellent character development you come to know the main characters as if they were your friends and neighbors. She places you in the pre war time so effectively that you feel the incremental losses the characters experience and want to wake them out of their denial of what is to come. Not an easy read because of the nature of the subject matter but a revealing and riveting experience.

Being a white, middle class (ish) Australian, I knew next to nothing about the Biafran war; its beginnings, reason for being and outcome. Now I have a much clearer picture and in the best possible way - a novel that made me want to read about an historical event. And a beautiful, intriguing, disturbing, engaging novel it is too. Not having read any of Adichie's previous work, I am going to check out her other stuff as well. This is a truly amazing novel that I read in two days. I learned, I laughed, I got angry, I was saddened but I was never, never bored. Full of great characters, historical facts, African patois and a real feeling of immersion, this novel is what all great history books should be - entertaining and enlightening. Thoroughly recommended.

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