



Purple Hibiscus: A Novel

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

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Fifteen-year-old Kambili and her older brother Jaja lead a privileged life in Enugu, Nigeria. They live in a beautiful house, with a caring family, and attend an exclusive missionary school. They're completely shielded from the troubles of the world. Yet, as Kambili reveals in her tender-voiced account, things are less perfect than they appear. Although her Papa is generous and well respected, he is fanatically religious and tyrannical at home—a home that is silent and suffocating. As the country begins to fall apart under a military coup, Kambili and Jaja are sent to their aunt, a university professor outside the city, where they discover a life beyond the confines of their father's authority. Books cram the shelves, curry and nutmeg permeate the air, and their cousins' laughter rings throughout the house. When they return home, tensions within the family escalate, and Kambili must find the strength to keep her loved ones together. Purple Hibiscus is an exquisite novel about the emotional turmoil of adolescence, the powerful bonds of family, and the bright promise of freedom.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Purple Hibiscus, Nigerian-born writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's debut, begins like many novels set in regions considered exotic by the western reader: the politics, climate, social customs, and, above all, food of Nigeria (balls of fufu rolled between the fingers, okpa bought from roadside vendors) unfold like the purple hibiscus of the title, rare and fascinating. But within a few pages, these details, however vividly rendered, melt into the background of a larger, more compelling story of a joyless family. Fifteen-year-old Kambili is the dutiful and self-effacing daughter of a rich man, a religious fanatic and domestic tyrant whose public image is of a politically courageous newspaper publisher and philanthropist. No one in Papa's ancestral village, where he is titled "Omelora" (One Who Does For the Community), knows why Kambili's brother cannot move one of his fingers, nor why her mother keeps losing her pregnancies. When a widowed aunt takes an interest in Kambili, her family begins to unravel and re-form itself in unpredictable ways. --Regina Marler

From Publishers Weekly

By turns luminous and horrific, this debut ensnares the reader from the first page and lingers in the memory long after its tragic end. First-person narrator Kambili Achike is a 15-year-old Nigerian girl growing up in sheltered privilege in a country ravaged by political strife and personal struggle. She and her brother, Jaja, and their quiet mother, who speaks "the way a bird eats, in small amounts," live this life of luxury because Kambili's father is a wealthy man who owns factories, publishes a politically outspoken newspaper and outwardly leads the moral, humble life of a faithful Catholic. The many grateful citizens who have received his blessings and material assistance call him omelora, "The One Who Does for the Community." Yet Kambili, Jaja and their mother see a side to their provider no one else does: he is also a religious fanatic who regularly and viciously beats his family for the mildest infractions of his interpretation of an exemplary Christian life. The children know better than to discuss their home life with anyone else; "there was so much that we never told." But when they are unexpectedly allowed to visit their liberated and loving Aunty Ifeoma, a widowed university professor raising three children, family secrets and tensions bubble dangerously to the surface, setting in motion a chain of events that allow Kambili to slowly blossom as she begins to question the authority of the precepts and adults she once held sacred. In a soft, searing voice, Adichie examines the complexities of family, faith and country through the haunted but hopeful eyes of a young girl on the cusp of womanhood. Lush, cadenced and often disconcerting, this is an accomplished first effort.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-Kambili, 15, and her older brother, Jaja, live under a brutal dictatorship in their native Nigeria and also in their home. Their father beats them and their mother for the slightest perceived offense. Papa is also a fanatic Christian who gives freely of his immense wealth and is admired by all. The children's world changes when they are allowed to visit their Aunty Ifeoma, who teaches in a university town nearby and lives a relaxed life on little money. Her children talk back, have messy rooms, and help cook wonderful food. And their beloved grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu, favors the old gods. Kambili meets Father Amadi, a liberal priest, and falls in love with him. Upon Nnukwu's death, Papa arrives to take them home, but Jaja now questions his authority, and when Papa finds Kambili with a picture of her heathen grandfather, he kicks and beats her so severely that she is hospitalized. Mama poisons Papa's food, but Jaja confesses to the murder and is imprisoned. The Nigerian government falls; Aunty Ifeoma loses her job and leaves with her children for America; and Father Amadi leaves for his next assignment. Yet there is hope that after three

years in prison, Jaja will be released, and Mama finally smiles. Aunty Ifeoma and their cousins have brought joy and laughter to Kambili and Jaja, and that cannot be taken away. This is a harsh story, almost unbearable at first, but beautifully written.

Molly Connally, Chantilly Regional Library, VA

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Cockrell:

Often the book Purple Hibiscus: A Novel has a lot of knowledge on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was written by the very famous author. The writer makes some research before write this book. This book very easy to read you will get the point easily after reading this book.

Hye Elliott:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of information. Even you love Purple Hibiscus: A Novel, you may enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh seriously its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

James Stevens:

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