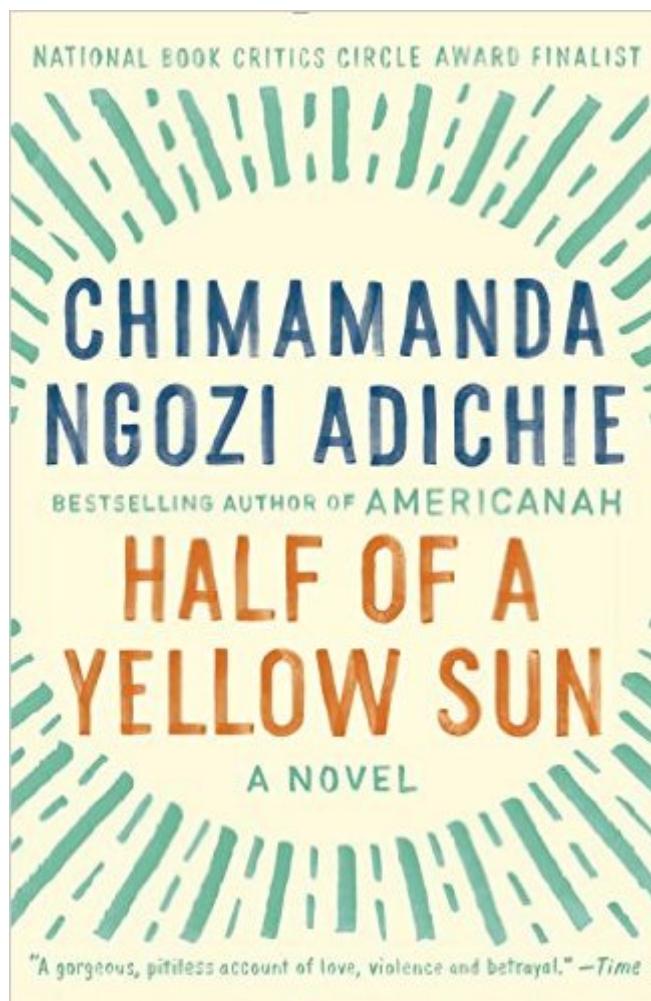


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Half Of A Yellow Sun



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

Every novelist has a unique story simmering in her (his) head, a story that she feels she must write; Arundhati Roy had "The God of Small Things", V. S. Naipaul had "A House for Mr. Biswas", and Chimamanda Adichie had "Half of a Yellow Sun". "This is a book I had to write," Ms. Adichie has said. "I have been thinking about this book my whole life." When a writer thinks of a story for years, and then sets out to write it with care and passion, the prose flows as heartfelt, and the novel shines. As a result, long after you finish reading this novel, you will feel your mind lit with the light of this powerful, frightening and also deeply moving novel. Written in simple but elegant prose, her style reminded me of the great Indian writer R. K. Narayan: "He looked up at the ceiling, so high up, so piercingly white. He closed his eyes and tried to reimagine this spacious room with the alien furniture, but he couldn't. He opened his eyes, overcome by a new wonder, and looked around to

make sure it was all real. To think that he would sit on these sofas, polish this slippery-smooth floor, wash these gauzy curtains."And like R. K. Narayan, who was well-known for his short stories, Chimamanda also has written short stories as well. (She has been compared with Chinua Achebe, but I haven't read any of Achebe's novels.) In Nigeria, in the late 1960s, there was a civil war between the Muslims in the north and Christians in the south, in the state of Biafra. Ethnic cleansing and massacre of Biafrans followed. As a result, Biafrans tried to secede from Nigeria. The half of a yellow sun refers to the emblem of the flag of the state of Biafra.

Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun
By Amanta Usukpam Ukpaghirl finished reading Half of a Yellow Sun and was left with a lingering sense of sadness at having completed the novel too quickly. I wished it continued and that I continued to read it, perhaps, for a very long time. It is a masterpiece of a work, destined to be a classic; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has trod where many others have feared to tread. She has taken the pain and suffering and horror of a people - the Igbos -- and given them novelistic prominence, and by so doing, asked historical questions that still demand answers. She, in effect, stands athwart the current amnesia in Nigeria and requests that the country comes to terms with the Igbo sub-nationality and either accept it as a full member of the polity -- or leave it alone to its own devices. Admirably, she is (as she said in an interview) "insistently and consciously" Igbo - and unlike several economic climbers in today's Nigeria, is never shamelessly apologetic that she is Igbo. This book is truly more than a novel - although even as a novel, it is extremely well crafted, brimming with characters that come alive and leap off the pages and embody events that unquestionably took place in the history of Nigeria. Indeed, this book is a form of historical narrative that tells the story of Igbos' vibrant engagement with Nigeria in the 1960s before the civil war, the massacres of tens of thousands of Igbos following military intervention in politics, and the period of the civil war itself from 1967 to 1970. Chimamanda has achieved several noble things with one stroke. She has furnished literature with simple, elegant and sharp sentences and a (albeit horror) story beautifully woven together in paragraph after paragraph.

Most of us will have little knowledge of the Biafra war, except, possibly, for the media's haunting images of starving children. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie brings her people's world to us in this beautifully crafted, deeply moving, novel. Set in Nigeria during the 1960s, the narrative alternates between the optimistic early years of the decade and the civil war period at the end of it. With her extraordinary storytelling skill, Adichie draws the reader into an absorbing account of fictionalized realities that is impossible to put down - or to forget after the last page is read. With this, her second

novel, she confirms her international reputation, established first with *Purple Hibiscus*, as one of the leading new voices of African literature. While the war for Biafra's independence, born out of highly complex Nigerian and international political circumstances, provides the essential context for the novel, Adichie's focus is on the personal and private, the struggle of the civilian Igbo population. Her depiction of the horrors of war, the starvation and destruction is realistic. Yet she does not allow these scenes to take over and succeeds in not overwhelming the reader with them. By concentrating on one family and its close circle of friends and neighbours, Adichie creates an intimate portrait of these people's lives during both these critical periods. She paints her characters and their ongoing interactions against the panoramic view of events and environments that influence their lives and challenges their peace and even their existence. Central to her story are the twin sisters, Olanna and Kainene, from a wealthy middleclass Igbo family. The beautiful Olanna leaves Lagos for a university environment to be with her political firebrand lover, the math professor Odenigbo.

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