

BUSINESS DAY

WOMEN'S HERO

MARCH 13, 2020

TITILOPE EJIMAGWA

EVIDENCE THAT
IF YOU BELIEVE
YOU CAN, YOU WILL





EDITOR'S

NOTE

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gain, it is another edition of your weekly dose of enlightenment, fun and entertainment.

On the cover of Women's Hub for this week is Titilope Ejimagwa, and she is evidence that if you believe you can, you will. Her story is that of hope, strong-will, focus and result. You will be inspired.

The stories on surviving cancer, being free from slavery, countries that celebrate Easter differently, books to read are some of the stories in this edition.

Others include the First Lady of Ondo, Betty Anyanwu-Akeredolu's view on the importance of promoting political will of those in the grass-root.

Furthermore, the UN secretary has called for reinforcing women's role in counter-terrorism.

These are just some of the juicy stories we have for you in this edition.

Take your time and read it all.

Enjoy!

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Titilope Ejimagwa,

evidence that if you believe you can, you will

BY KEMI AJUMOBI





Titilope Ejimagwa is a seasoned multi-level network marketer with well over 22 years of relentlessness and vast range of experience. She starts any network she joins from the grassroots and then grows it to unimaginable heights. She had worked with six different multi-level network marketing companies and became the world Number 2 in the sixth one.

She joined Longrich (her fifth Multi-level Network company) in Nigeria from scratch and as she is known for her unstoppable, optimistic approach to life, she is now the Number 1 in Africa and 4th in the world. Presently, she is a 5 Star Director, which is the highest level of network marketing in Longrich.

Titilope obtained a Bachelor's degree in Physical and Health Education from Lagos State University, LASU, and later proceeded to obtain a Masters in

Business Administration from Regis University, Denver, California. She is happily married to Emmanuel Ejimagwa, a 3 Star Director who has been very supportive through the years and they are blessed with two lovely children.

Being number 1 in Africa with almost 3 million partners in her team, her passion for humanity and her excellent team spirit has paved the way for her huge success. She is always committed to assisting and ensuring that her partners move to the top along with her even if they are not in her team. She says "if I can succeed as a stammerer in a business that requires talking, then what excuse do you have?"

She is the author of the book *Work What Works*, and has succeeded in ensuring LONGRICH establishes a research institute in Lagos

Being first black 5 star director

I feel humbled, grateful and excited. The feeling is all-encompassing. I am not sure I have the right adjective to describe my feelings. It makes me feel yes, indeed, we can, yes, we all can, yes, it is possible. Never ever underestimate yourself. In short, behind every fear is nothing.

Why did you decide to go into multilevel marketing?

I come from a background of civil servants. My mother is a banker, my father, an Engineer. I come from a family of bankers. I also worked in the bank. When I left university, I went to WEMA bank and I got a job, but I didn't do the job for one month. I'm not just cut out to work. Also, I never liked the fact that at different places in the society, women were being sexually abused. Some women are not employed because of their intellectual abilities but on how good they are on bed. That put me off! I made up my

mind that I was never going to be their victim. Because I refused to compromise, I had an extra year in the university. One of my lecturers then, who was the HOD told me blatantly, "Do you want to graduate? If you want to graduate, meet me in a hotel" and I objected. Today my story is different and I am glad I did not bow to his pressure. All of these inspired me to earn a living.

Despite being a stammerer, I was determined to succeed; I just like to break barriers. All the obstacles I encountered only pushed me into my line of business and I am living my best life. Multilevel marketing is it for me.

Getting into the multilevel marketing

Back then, I hadn't gotten married, I had a friend who lives in America, she married a Nigerian. She was a teacher at the American International School in Victoria Island. She introduced me to my first one which was in 1997. That was my first stint into network marketing. She now

introduced me into another one but later, her husband went into politics and she stopped bringing the products. I wanted to go and bring it myself, but they said they were not going to give me the franchise because they had already given it to someone in Nigeria. So, I needed to go and get from Ghana, but bringing it from Ghana became expensive so I stopped, went into Forever Living Products and later Tainshi and more, now I am with Longrich.

Being married for 10 years without a child

When Longrich first came to Nigeria, to Africa, it wasn't welcomed at all because it's a very expensive product. The people were not used to buying expensive things especially when it's not a typical need. Who wants to buy supplements when they have vegetables and oranges at home? That's what people tell you. Then their toothpaste is N2, 000, when people can buy for N100 or N200 in the market. So, it was not very easy to break into the



market. We have very good products, noble products, and products that take care of needs.

In fact, my going into Longrich was because of a cure. I was married for over 10 years without a child. My father also had kidney issues, and so he wouldn't know when he wants to urinate. When Longrich

came in 2010 at first, they came looking for me and gave me the sanitary pad as a gift. I told them I wasn't interested. They said "Just take it as a gift". I said okay, let me go and try it. I used the liner and the pad, and I got pregnant. I was like what? Can this actually be real? After taking so much oestrogen, so much progesterone, and others just to have a child, and now,

I used liner and sanitary pad and the second/third month I'm pregnant? I never associated my pregnancy to Longrich at the beginning, it never occurred to me.

I remember reaching out to my dad to ask if he was still using the diaper and he told me he wasn't. I became worried, I asked him why and he said 'you gave me something that I'm using, pant liner. Now I know when I want to urinate'. It took time for that to resonate with me. I didn't understand how a product I didn't pay much attention to but just sent to him worked for him, so I sat him down and asked him to tell me more.

That was how I had to go and look for Longrich. I called them and they said they are in Nigeria but they did not have an office. That certainly wasn't an issue for me; I was all about bringing them to Nigeria. I had experienced their products first hand so I wasn't going to let office be an issue. I gave them an office, a car, and a driver. And that was it. They came looking for me for three years and I didn't answer them. But now, I had to go and look for them. If this could help my family, and can help me, then it can help the whole world. I now sat down and watched the video on the liner, and did a demo on the liner and saw that we've been using rubbish and sold so much lies. I became very angry and made up my mind to liberate many people.

Did you think you would flourish this much when you joined?

I didn't think of money joining Longrich, I didn't even see money back then, for me, I just saw an opportunity to help people that were barren like I was. I saw what WHO said that 60percent of ladies that are walking on the streets will not have a child because of low quality sanitary products. That's the reason why people will tell their girlfriends to get pregnant first before they get married because of barrenness in the system. Guess what? It's not these girls' problem, it's not their fault. It's the sanitary pads they've been used to using, low-quality ones in the market.

Passion for the campaign

It is indeed a campaign. I wanted to go and tell the whole world there is a deception in the business world, imagine what I went through. My mother was staying







with me in the same house, I did not have a child for 10 years, she saw it all. Imagine how women are going through the same problem, a lot of abuse, a lot of frustration and depression you must have gone through because you don't have a child, just because of low-quality sanitary pads.

Your husband's reaction to finding out you were pregnant?

My husband loves children. My husband was much more concerned about having children more than me. He will be crying at night, 'God please answer us. You know I love children, God give me children' he would cry and pray while I was deep asleep. I was going through pain, but I am not that kind of person that is extremely

emotional. He is a very emotional person. When he got to know I was pregnant, I became the queen of England in his eyes. The rest they say is history; I had another child even after that.

How were you able to penetrate into the market?

Anger! I told you it was anger. I was very angry. I had to go and tell the whole world. I had to go and save Nigerians, Africans. I just got angry. For me, what actually motivated me was anger. I was angry with the system that allows people to eat on people's future, eat on people's lives, grow fat on the populace. I went through hell not having a child. But because I am a happy type, people didn't know that I didn't have a child. So, when I became pregnant, I disappeared and came back to Lagos when

I was seven months gone. I did not want other women to experience my experience and since I found a solution, I was determined to share.

...And the profits came

I didn't see money at the beginning. There was no up line to tell me that I was making money, so, I did not even ask for a bonus. I was angry at the situation and was determined to share the solution. Then Alas, they called me and said: "Madam, give us your account number, you have a bonus", I honestly didn't understand how that happened because it was not my focus. So I told them I didn't do anything, I only bought what I needed and kept on telling people and doing a demo. I was

giving sanitary pads and doing demo everywhere. So, I didn't buy so much and there was no repeated purchase from me and they were telling me I had money. How come? I asked how much the money was and they said it was a bit over a million. I was shocked. I gave them my account number and the money came in. The rest again, they say is history. You are not just using the products; you're also making money from it.

How important is it for women to be empowered?

When you empower a woman, you empower a whole nation. Not just the community alone. It's the most important thing. Women need to be empowered. It is time for the women to wake up. When they say 'weaker vessel' it doesn't mean you are weak or subservient or a slave. I, who was given an extra year because I refused to compromise, whose admission letter was torn, is the same person today who earns a salary without working for anybody. It's the same one who is telling you that you can be anything you want to be if you are determined. And you need to stand up and talk. Turn your negativity to positive energy, think of helping others

because when you help others, God will surely have your back. That's what I saw in Longrich.

After your son, how many more children did you have?

One more. I have a son and a daughter. So, you don't have any reason to be barren. Nobody has a reason to be barren. Just throw that sanitary pad you buy on the street away and use Longrich sanitary pad.

Are you worried about infiltration into the business?

That's the beautiful part of the business. You can only buy Longrich from Longrich. You can't get it outside. And because of the way we work and represent the company and the kind of patronage they have in Nigeria and in Africa, and the world, more than 180 countries are using Longrich products and because of that, they need to expand. Longrich is building its factory in Lekki Free Trade Zone, and God willing, without coronavirus, we're supposed to do our car awards and launch

the factory this May.

Longrich will open their factory very soon and we are going to empower, employ over 5,000 youths, we are going to accommodate all of them and pay them well.

What are the challenges you're facing in the business?

Everybody thinks that Multi level marketing is for the low-class people, that's the first challenge that people face when they are involved in network marketing, 'oh it's for people that are poor'. Secondly, it is 'I can't sell'. Thirdly, they expect to make millions tomorrow morning. No, we're not doing get-rich-quick scheme. We're building a team. When you have five people in your team, the kind of money you're going to earn is not the same as when you have 500 people in your team. It can't be.

Network, you have to work first. And what is the work? Talk. Just talk. We talk about everything, why not talk about things that will add value to you? Be focused, be determined, and put in effort. When you work what works, you get the benefits of your work.





How to talk to your kids about covid19

WRITTEN BY DESMOND OKON

Since the deadly coronavirus began spreading, the world is dealing with the consequent realities of a disease that jumps from human to human.

While there is no cure yet, governments are engaged with preventive measures and developing containment facilities to curtail its spread, but the disease is now present in over 50 countries, from Wuhan.

Covid19 has sickened more than 90,000 people globally and is impacting activities worldwide. But how it affects children has received little attention.

"From available data... it is not possible to determine the extent of infection among children, what role children play in transmission, whether children are less susceptible or if they present differently clinically," a report by WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease said.

Since the outbreak, cases recorded around the world have involved mainly adults. But a handful of children have tested positive to the virus: a nine-month-old girl in Beijing, a child in Germany whose parent was infected, and another a child in Shenzhen who was infected but displayed no symptoms.

Chinese authorities later confirmed that an infant in Wuhan tested positive 30 hours after birth. The baby's mother is a coronavirus patient. However, generally,

kids do not seem very prone to the virus.

While there might be a low infection rate for children, it is crucial to begin the conversation with them. "Think of this as an opportunity to help build your child's news and media literacy skills to help separate fact from fiction," said Wendy Ologe, Parent Coach, and Author.

This is because children inhabit the same world as adults. They hear and see the news, they use social media, overhear our conversations. And they talk. And soon, they will begin to ask questions especially since nose masks are becoming commonplace.

So, there is no escaping talking to them about it. "It's your job as a parent to help your child understand why this is a big story and that seeing it everywhere doesn't really reflect the danger in their lives," Ologe told Women's Hub.

When talking to your child about the crisis, try not to talk over your child, you must match the amount of information and the language you choose to their age and stage, according to Ologe who is also the founder of Intentional Parent Academy.

If you are talking to young children, you can start by letting him know that there are lots of different viruses, "Coronavirus is another type of Virus," she said.

Molly Gardner, a paediatric psychologist at Nationwide Children's Hospital in

Ohio, advised parents to stay informed, keep perspective and be honest.

Further speaking to Women's Hub on the subject, Ologe outlined a few guides:

1. Start the conversation by understanding what they know and their feeling about the topic
2. Process your own anxiety, make sure you are not panicking in the presence of your children around this topic.
3. Validate their fears, gently give them facts to counter any misconception they have and explain where you got your own information from.
4. Don't overload them with information, allow them to share and ask questions.
5. Keep this message simple and factual and focus on the positive messages.
6. Let them know what the WHO and the government of Nigeria are doing to protect them, let them know how the health personals are working hard to find vaccines and prevent further spread.
7. Talk to them about protecting themselves which will include some simple hand hygiene, using hand sanitizer, cough etiquette like keeping 5 meters distance from people coughing or sneezing and avoiding crowded environment.



Surviving breast cancer, Della is ensuring there are more survivors through awareness campaigns

When Della was diagnosed with breast cancer, she was shocked. Now she works in setting up support groups to raise awareness and understanding of breast cancer. In my community, there are huge myths and taboos about black people getting breast cancer. Mainly, that only white people get it. So when she went to the GP with pain in her breast, she was certain it wasn't cancer.

I WAS IN SHOCK

I was with a friend, complaining about agonizing breast pain in my left breast. I was self-medicating with pain killers, but she recommended I go to the GP. I was referred to the hospital for further tests, but I'd ruled out breast cancer. 'Breast cancer is for white people, and it wouldn't feel like that,' I thought.

The doctor did a biopsy, then an ultrasound, and at this point her face dropped. But I still didn't think it was anything bad. I was about to go on holiday, I'd just got a new job, all I could think about was the plane journey! The tests came back, and

the lump was malignant. I was in shock.

I DIDN'T KNOW THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

I was the only black person in my bible study group, and everyone seemed to know more about the signs and symptoms than I did. My vicar's wife came with me to my appointments, and took notes while I sat there in shock. My mum came over from Nigeria on holiday, but I didn't know how to tell her. We went to my vicar's house and had a cup of tea, they helped me tell her.

WHERE WAS THE SUPPORT FOR BLACK WOMEN?

After my treatment, chemotherapy and a mastectomy, I went through depression. As an African woman I'd been brought up to be strong and brave. 'We are not weak,' I told myself.

I was offered a support group, but wanted to go to one with other black women who would have been through the same shock that I had. Normally I'd never go to a support group, my family is my support. But I didn't know how to speak about breast cancer in the black community. It was a taboo subject.

WHY HADN'T I KNOWN THAT BLACK WOMEN COULD GET BREAST CANCER?

I started looking at brochures and websites for cancer charities, and found no black women there. To me, all the images made it seem like a disease that affected white women.

I challenged this, and Macmillan gave me a grant to set up my own support group. That's how my journey started.

PEOPLE THINK YOU CAN 'CATCH' CANCER

For some black people in the UK, myths about breast cancer come from traditions and ideas that haven't been questioned. Many think cancer is contagious, that if your mum has it you shouldn't eat with her, as you could catch it. I wanted to dispel these myths. I needed to get people to talk!

I HAD TO ADMIT MY VULNERABILITY

Talking to others and hearing their stories prompted me to share mine.

In Nigeria, once treatment is over that's it - there is no follow-up. But this is the most crucial time for support. I set up my first

support group there working with one of the only breast cancer charities there, COPE.

That was the first time I cried. Standing there among 20 other black people with breast cancer.

I was surprised at how open people were! This was the first time they'd had the chance to speak about their diagnosis, as Nigerians shy away from the word 'cancer'. There was a queue of people to talk to me afterwards, and one by one they referred their friends to me.

TODAY

We now run groups in Lagos and the capital, Abuja. I hope more and more black communities will talk about breast cancer, and that charities and hospitals will keep working to bridge the gap that I found years ago. My daughters seem to know more than I did, so that's one thing!





Political will is key to leapfrog obstacles women face

Anyanwu-Akeredolu

WRITTEN BY DESMOND OKON

To change the narrative and leapfrog all obstacles currently faced by women, especially those in the grassroots, political will is required, says Betty Anyanwu-Akeredolu, First Lady of Ondo State.

She made the recommendation while speaking at 4th Ekiti Gender Summit held on March 3rd, 2020, at the Adetiloye Hall, Trade Fair Complex, Ado-Ekiti, which coincides with the 25th year anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

She said having political will was the first step, and perhaps, the most important step in tackling the challenges of women's development in the country.

Anyanwu-Akeredolu said government at all levels must understand that sustainable development cannot be achieved in societal frameworks where the roles of women are not included; adding women too can contribute immensely to the socio-economic and the political development of Nigeria and must be included in elective roles.

“We must strive to increase the number of women in parliament: This is the only way issues of women can be considered,” she said, calling for the implementation of the affirmation action.

But on the flipside, the First Lady lamented the inability of countries to achieve gender parity—the hallmark of the United Nations’ sustainable development goals, since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Though there have been renewed passions for the issues of women which have led to enormous improvements in women's lives with more women and girls protected by laws against gender-based violence, and living under constitutions guaranteeing gender equality globally, Anyanwu-Akeredolu said the case for women in Nigeria (and most parts of the African continent) was one bedevilled by age-long patriarchy and subjugation of women.

“Most women in this country still earn less than men and are more likely to work in less quality jobs; physical and sexual violence against women still happens on a daily basis; gaps in reproductive health care leave 800 women dying in childbirth each day,” she said.

The story of Grace, no girl should be treated as such

Grace was educated until the 10th grade in Nigeria after which she was sent to work to help support her family, who lived in poverty. She worked for three years at various jobs, during which time she was raped and gave birth to a son. Her father told her that as a woman, she was “predestined by god to save her family from poverty by going to Europe to earn money.”

He introduced her to a woman whose sister lived in Germany. Grace was told that she would have to repay the travel costs by working for the woman's sister, after which she could work as a babysitter or in a restaurant to send money back home. As she was unfamiliar with German currency, Grace didn't have an understanding of the amount she would have to repay, but she decided to take the chance because she didn't have better prospects for her life in her country and her family was pressuring her. As is typical in her community, she underwent ajuju (Voodoo) ritual where she swore never to betray the contact in Germany and that she would pay all the debts.

A “trolley-man” accompanied me and a bunch of other women being taken to various countries in Europe to a hotel to organize our travel documents. I was given the passport of an African woman from a different country and then transported with another woman to Germany. Once I arrived, I was told that my debt was 50,000 euro (around 67,000 USD) which I realized would take a very long time to repay. My family's contact then told me that to pay the debt, I would be working as a prostitute in brothels (which are legalized in Germany). It was then that I realized that my family's contact was a madam. I refused and called my parents to explain what was happening, but they told me to obey her and do whatever she told me to do. I didn't have any papers and didn't

know my rights. She said that if I asked anyone for help, I would be deported, so I didn't think I had any choice but to become a prostitute. In Nigeria, we respect Germany. I didn't even think that they did this as a job in Germany; in Italy and Spain, we know there is prostitution. My mother begged me to do what they said. I cried every time a man slept with me, because I was brought up Christian. Back in Nigeria, the father of my son had raped me, and this reminded me of that over and over.

I worked day and night for months, doing everything they asked me, in order to get the money for my madam; and every day I cried. If I came home (I lived with my traffickers) without enough money, my madam would seriously reprimand and abuse me. And, after servicing clients, I would often have to wash dishes and take care of the children in the house. I worked for seven months and was told by my various employers that I had to have sex without condoms when asked. Men demanded sex without condoms. At a well-known legal brothel, the owners told me directly that I had to have sex without condoms, otherwise I would be fired. The owners would ask the clients afterwards if they were happy, if I willingly serviced them without a condom. My madam wanted me to do it without a condom. She said that I was no better than the other girls, and I should do what the brothels wanted to earn more and pay her back. I wouldn't be able to pay off the debt if I couldn't work, so I did it. The women here are so desperate for money that they don't care about AIDS—people here are ready to die. This is blood money, and it was killing me, too.

Seven months after I started, police carried out a check on the brothel and they asked me if I was working there voluntarily. I was very scared and, remembering the oath I had sworn before leaving Nigeria, I said “yes”. They looked over my papers and, realizing they weren't mine,

arrested me and took me to the immigration detention centre. While there I became sick, vomiting, and was brought to a hospital. I found out then that I had AIDS. My madam managed to track me down after I left the hospital and told me that I had to continue being a prostitute to pay for the remaining debt, which she said was still more than half of the 50,000 euro. I refused and she started threatening me and my family back home, who begged me to comply. By then, I had become acquainted with SOLWODI, and they helped me to get settled and exit prostitution. I refused to go back to my madam and eventually reported her and her accomplices to the police.

I am very mixed up now. Sometimes I have high hopes for the future and other times I feel very beaten down. I do not want to go back to Nigeria and I know I would be at risk there. I have a partner now who accepts me for who I am and the support of SOLWODI, which makes me happy. However, I wish people would tell parents that it is good to educate girls and get them proper job training, rather than sending them into prostitution. A child is a gift of God, whether it is a man or a woman.

Women are not slaves and traffickers should stop taking other people's children. No one should be forced; buyers, pimps and traffickers are killing human beings and spreading sickness. They should prostitute themselves if they want money! Some people are paying 90,000-100,000 euro to buy people. Stopping the sex industry would be the best, it should not exist—that's blood money!

When I was in the sex industry, I prayed that someone would take me away. If men would be charged, given severe punishments, it would stop.

-Equality Now

UN Secretary calls for reinforcing women's role in counter-terrorism

WRITTEN BY DESMOND OKON

As the world celebrates women, the United Nations Secretary-general, Antonio Guterres wants member states to bolster women's role in combating terrorism as he reminded them that "misogyny is a common feature of violent extremism."

IWD provides an opportunity to also reflect on how women and men can be differently impacted by terrorism, Guterres opined.

Guterres, in a statement by the National Project Officer, Outreach and Communications, UNODC Nigeria Country Office,

Sylvester Tunde Atere, described sexual violence as a brutal weapon of war targeted at women.

"Between 2009 and 2017 the United Nations recorded some 7,000 incidents of sexual violence against women and girls committed by members of Boko Haram, and more cases have come to light each year since. It is a cruel and brutal weapon of war and terror that is emphatically repudiated by international law," he said.

For Oliver Stolpe, UNODC Country Representative, this year celebrates women's contribution to peace and security and sets forth an ambitious agenda to promote gender equality and enhance the rights,

participation, and protection of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

He further recognized the Nigerian authorities' commitment to addressing gender concerns.

"UNODC is greatly encouraged by the Government of Nigeria's recognition of the core role of women and girls as actors in preventing and countering violent extremism through its National Action Plan to implement resolution 1325 and the Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, and its efforts to mainstream gender throughout the criminal justice system more broadly," he said.

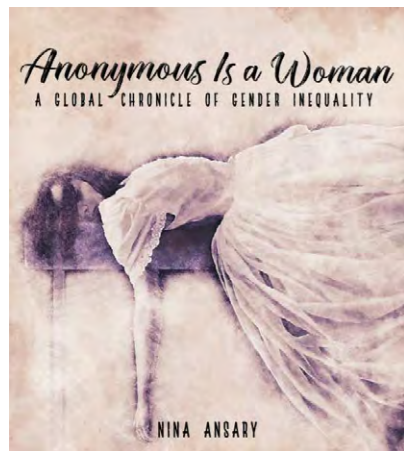


BOOKS TO READ

1

ANONYMOUS IS A WOMAN

It is a Global Chronicle of Gender Inequality which takes readers on a 4,000-year historic journey to expose the roots and manifestations of institutionalized gender discrimination; dismantle centuries of historical bias through biographical profiles of fifty extraordinary, yet forgotten women innovators; and challenge ingrained stereotypical assumptions to advance an unconventional argument for



equality and inclusivity.

2

HONEY WHY ARE WE POOR? By Steve Harris

Steve Harris is a trusted authority in the fields of Life & Business Strategy, a highly sought after Management Consultant and Chief Executive Officer of EdgeEcution, Motivational Speaker & Author of this phenomenal book. He says poverty has evolved. It drives a car, has a job, lives in a nice part of town and is broke, and it just

might be reading this right now. He has been there and knows what it's like to look rich from afar but to be far from rich; to look like he had the trappings of success, when he was really trapped by his perceived success. It took him 7 years to write this book because he had to live it. He experienced many of the highs and lows and promises you will connect with this book.

3

CONJURE WOMEN by Afia Atakora



Conjure Women is a sweeping story that brings the world of the South before and after the Civil War vividly to life. Spanning eras and generations, it tells of the lives of three unforgettable women: Miss May Belle, a wise healing woman; her precocious and observant daughter Rue, who is reluctant to follow in her mother's



footsteps as a midwife; and their master's daughter Varina. The secrets and bonds among these women and their community come to a head at the beginning of a war and at the birth of an accursed child, who sets the townspeople alight with fear and a spreading superstition that threatens their newly won, tenuous freedom.



4

THESE GHOSTS ARE FAMILY by Maisy Card

It revolves around the consequences of Abel's decision and tells the story of the Paisley family from colonial Jamaica to present day Harlem. There is Vera, whose widowhood forced her into the role of single mother. There are two daughters and a granddaughter who have never known they are related. And there are others, like the house boy who loved Vera, whose lives might have taken different courses if not for Abel Paisley's actions. These Ghosts Are Family explores the ways each character wrestles with their ghosts and struggles to forge independent identities outside of the family and their trauma.



5

BLACK SUNDAY by Tola Rotimi Abraham

Written with astonishing intimacy and wry attention to the fickleness of fate, Tola Rotimi Abraham's Black Sunday takes us into the chaotic

heart of family life, tracing a line from the euphoria of kinship to the devastation of estrangement. In the process, it joyfully tells a tale of grace and connection in the midst of daily oppression and the constant incursions of an unremitting patriarchy. This is a novel about two young women slowly finding, over twenty years, in a place rife with hypocrisy but also endless life and love, their own distinct methods of resistance and paths to independence.

6

REMEMBRANCE by Rita Woods

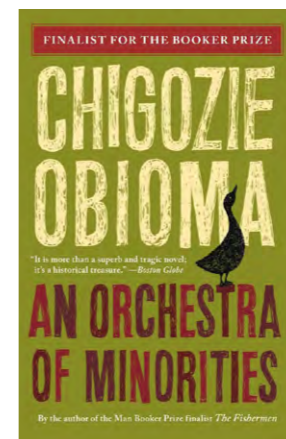
It is a breakout historical debut with modern resonance, perfect for the many fans of The Underground Railroad and Orphan Train. It's a rumour, a whisper passed in the fields and veiled behind sheets of laundry. A hidden stop on the underground road to freedom, a safe haven protected by more than secrecy...if you can make it there.



7

FOLLOWERS by Megan Angelo

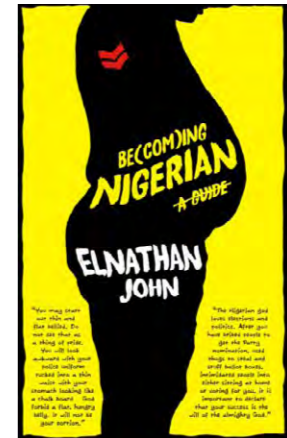
An electrifying story of two ambitious friends, the dark choices they make and the profound moment that changes the meaning of privacy forever. Orla Cadden dreams of literary success, but she's stuck writing about movie-star hookups and influencer yoga moves. Orla has no idea how to change her life until her new roommate, Floss, a striving, wannabe A-lister, comes up with a plan for launching them both into the high-profile lives they so desperately crave.



8

AN ORCHESTRA OF MINORITIES by Chigozie Obioma

A contemporary twist on the Odyssey, An Orchestra of Minorities is narrated by the chi, or spirit of a young poultry farmer named Chinonso. His life is set off course when he sees a woman who is about to jump off a bridge. Horrified by her recklessness, he hurls two of

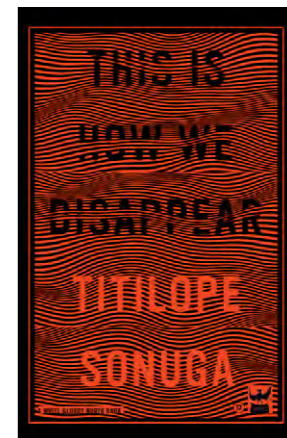


9

BECOMING NIGERIAN: A GUIDE by Elnathan John

Becoming Nigerian: A Guide, is a satirical collection that takes a searing look at how different forms of power are abused, negotiated and performed both in the private and public realm. Through attempting to satirise those who abuse privilege or power, it recognises that power can be found everywhere: in politics, business, religious institutions and homes. From the exploration of religious hypocrisy in How To Worship The Nigerian God, to A Letter to My Future Kidnapper which tackles the growing scourge of kidnapping, the collection is a jab at Nigerian society and what it means to be a Nigerian. Beyond poking fun at the holders of power, it is a summon, a provocation and a call for introspection among all levels of society.

his prized chickens off the bridge. The woman, Ndali, is stopped in her tracks. Chinonso and Ndali fall in love but she is from an educated and wealthy family. When her family objects to the union on the grounds that he is not her social equal, he sells most of his possessions to attend college in Cyprus. But when he arrives in Cyprus, he discovers that he has been utterly duped by the young Nigerian who has made the arrangements for him. Penniless, homeless, we watch as he gets further and further away from his dream and from home.



10

THIS IS HOW WE DISAPPEAR by Titilope Sonuga

This Is How We Disappear is at once an exploration of the physical and emotional disappearance of women and a celebration of the magic of shapeshifting as an act of survival too.

The poems sit in conversation with each other in a way that highlights how women survive and thrive in spite of the obstacles often stacked against them.

The collection is about our small and large acts of resistance, how we choose life, how we are the architects of our own joy even in the face of death.

7 countries that celebrate Easter differently

WRITTEN BY NANDI MAJOLA

Germany

Like many other countries in Europe, Easter is recognised as the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and it also coincides with the coming of spring. In Germany, trees are decorated with embellished easter eggs called Ostereierbaum or Easter Egg Trees. It's also a custom in Austria, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Moravia and the Czech Republic.

Bermuda

On Good Friday, the shores and skies of Horseshoe Bay Beach are filled with kaleidoscopic colours because of the Bermuda Kite Festival. It is said that the kites are a celebration of the ascent of Christ. Bermudians also dig into fish cakes when it's Easter.

Spain

In Verges, locals observe Easter by having Holy Festival Week or Semana Santa. The culmination of this is Maundy Thursday which commemorates the Last Supper. There is also a procession by hooded penitents and 'Jesus' and 'Mary' through the town of Verges

Chios (Greek Islands)

Chios is the fifth largest island in Greece and in the vil-

lage of Vrontados, Easter is marked with an explosive rivalry between its two churches, Agios Markos (Saint Mark) and Panagia Erethiani (Virgin Mary Erethiani Church). The event is called Rouketopolemos and is an all-out rocket war that starts the night before Easter.

During this time, congregants attend mass and it is for this reason that windows and doors are boarded up or covered in mesh. The rockets are a DIY project for participants and the point is to see how many hits the rockets have made or to see which church bell is impacted first. Up to 60 000 rockets fill the sky.

Locals aren't sure how the tradition originated but it is said to come from the island's occupation by the Ottomans who got rid of cannons in the nineteenth century; as a result, the locals of that time relied on firing rockets. It could also be an ode to the nineteenth-century sailors of Chios who fought against piracy. It attracts a lot of tourists and is a big revenue generator. This celebration can get quite intense as there has also been a lot of resistance against the rocket wars.

Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church celebrates Easter or Fasika one or two weeks after churches in the West and it is considered to be more important than Christmas. After a 56-day fast that includes following a predominantly vegan diet (no meat or dairy products), families dress in white and gather for a gastronomical affair where they enjoy doro wot (spicy chicken stew), Injera (flat-bread) and honey wine.

Italy

In Florence, they have Scoppio del Carro or 'Explosion of the Cart' where a cart filled with fireworks and pyrotechnics is lit on Easter Sunday. The cart or waggon is pulled through the city square by oxen followed by a concert of drummers and people dressed in historical costumes. When the cart arrives at the cathedral, the Archbishop lights a dove-shaped rocket called the 'Colombina' which symbolises the Holy Spirit. The rocket then flies down a wire to the outside of the church and impacts the waggon, resulting in a spectacular firework display.

New York, USA

On Easter Sunday, New York City partakes in a tradition that has been around since the late 1800s. The Easter Parade began with the decoration of sanctuaries in churches with Easter flowers. The flower decorations became more flamboyant and stylish over time and by the late nineteenth century, people wore fashionable clothing and paraded down the streets to see the flowers in church. Today, eye-catching Easter bonnets are worn by people of all ages in a procession from 49th to 57th street on Fifth Avenue, Manhattan. The best place to watch is from St Patrick's Cathedral.



GLAM & GENUINE

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