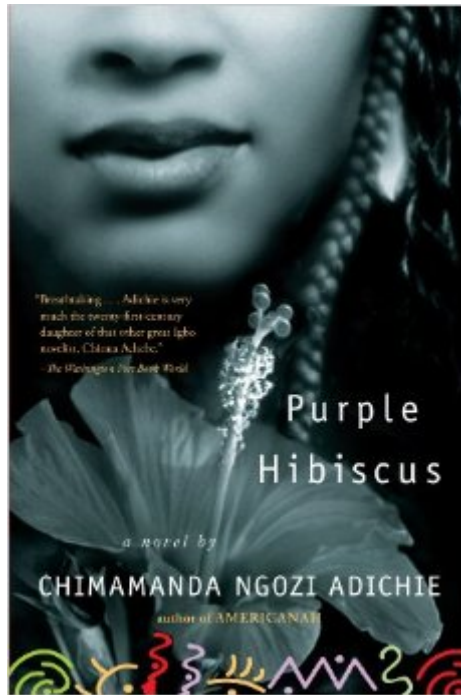


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Purple Hibiscus: A Novel



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In *Purple Hibiscus*, we listen to the plaintive voice of Kambili, whose skill at language does not extend to the spoken word, as those necessary words remain trapped in her throat, a girl who knows her place and keeps her silence. In Kambili's family, there are too many things "we never talk about". Growing up in the political upheaval of Nigeria, Kambili and her older brother, Jaja, are poster children for domestic violence, quiet, well-mannered, high achievers that their father points to with pride, "his" children: extensions of himself in the world. A generous man, beloved in their

village, only Eugene Achike's nuclear family suffers his rages behind closed doors. Jaja's emotions are closer to the surface, more accessible to his spirit of rebellion. But Kambili is her mother's daughter, cautious, constrained and eager to please. Her slow awakening is all the more significant because of the tremendous act of will necessary to break free of her conditioning. This experience is agonizing for Kambili, like the prickling of a limb that has fallen asleep. Her adolescent physical and emotional flowering enhanced by newly found self-expression and self-awareness, Kambili is a product of a world that leaves children unprotected, at the mercy of a merciless man. She is the observer, the reporter, emotionless as she describes the constant abuse. Like a sieve, Kambili filters every action, sorting, learning. Eugene passes on the lessons he has learned in his own childhood, taught by brutal Catholic missionaries who used temporal punishment; the abused is the abuser. Rigid religious instruction, intolerant and unforgiving, is the tool with which this man terrorizes his wife and children.

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