

AYESHA'S HARMATTAN RAIN ROCKS

Among the many things to love about Ghana during the 1950's are the serendipitous moments of that surreal period.

In Adukrom No. 2 a story about a beautiful teenage girl's journey to redemption unfolds, detailing the ancestral streams, hills and places that still haunt the physical space we dwell to this day. Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Harmattan Rain* weaves into a web the tale of three generations of women whose disparate worlds are connected in the most unlikely fashion — after running away from home to escape a forced marriage, Lizzie Achiaa set out to Accra to locate her sweet-heart, Bador Samed, an ambitious young apprentice healer. The adventure of a renegade village girl in the 1950's is exciting to say the least but the spontaneity of her actions with its dizzying abundance and verve is what brings the novel to life. Her experiences play out like a parallel universe when compared with the impoverished Ghanaian village where Lizzie Achiaa grew up.



Lizzie is a survivor. However, the lessons of the past are not enough to steer her to safety. Instead, in a world full of turpitude and injustice, it is her bold, impulsive choices that challenge the inevitability of despair, transforming a political novel into an affecting story of human triumph.



Harmattan Rain reads like an exhaustively researched and candidly honest novel—sort of a literary time machine going back to the pre-independence period. Whether her depictions of Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana are accurate or fictional Ayesha brings to life the history of Ghanaian politics and social upheavals during the 1950's to 1999 covering notable personalities who have led the country through the not-so-nice periods. 434 pages of intricate stories of three women with characters that feed off each

other through out the different political systems etched in the memories of Ghanaians.

Ayesha pays attention to detail and goes as far as the devaluation of the Cedi and the services that are affected throughout the novel. The novel has a detailed insight of political history that will benefit future generations.

The female characters are depicted as strong-willed and progressive almost to the point of being seductive. The male characters are less flattering with the obvious character flaws associated with adult male behavior. Bador Samed is about the only male character with any kind excitement to his story- he dies in the end with his love Lizzie in a really bizarre accident. You cannot help but love the people in the novel, however. The naughtiness - subtly 'dirty' jokes and great story-telling makes Ayesha a perfect replacement for the old guard in modern Ghanaian literary

works. You cannot help but enjoy the novel regardless of the typos, omissions and word choice issues. Notable is continuous use of Notorious Biggie for slain rapper Notorious B.I.G. *Harmattan Rain* is a collector's item for anyone who loves African writers. It also portrays a

different aspect of the Ghanaian woman-allowing for more open-minded characters, who are nothing like the inhibited straight-jacket women stuck in ancient fairy tales. *Harmattan Rain* is Ayesha's first novel at 25- as we await her second effort, you as well say hello to Ghana's new over-lord of fiction, Ayesha Harruna. What was especially fascinating about this book, is that it was conceived at an African literature center, a nine-month training workshop for talented writers which usually ends with the release of a book per participant. The center is called Per Ankh and is situated in Dakar, Senegal.

Mantse Aryeequaye

