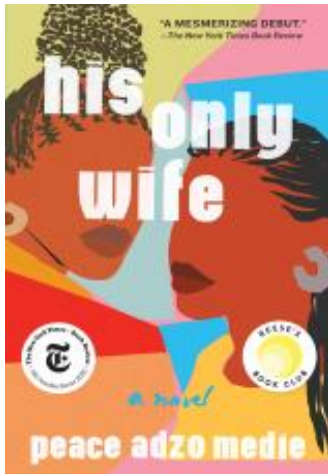


His Only Wife

by Peace Adzo Medie



About the Book

Afi Tekple is a young seamstress in Ghana. She is smart; she is pretty; and she has been convinced by her mother to marry a man she does not know. Afi knows who he is, of course --- Elikem is a wealthy businessman whose mother has chosen Afi in the hopes that she will distract him from his relationship with a woman his family claims is inappropriate.

But Afi is not prepared for the shift her life takes when she is moved from her small hometown of Ho to live in Accra, Ghana's gleaming capital, a place of wealth and sophistication where she has days of nothing to do but cook meals for a man who may or may not show up to eat them. She has agreed to this marriage in order to give her mother the financial security she desperately needs, and so she must see it through. Or maybe not?

HIS ONLY WIFE is a witty, smart and moving debut novel about a brave young woman traversing the minefield of modern life with its taboos and injustices, living in a world of men who want their wives to be beautiful, to be good cooks and mothers, to be women who respect their husbands and grant them forbearance. And in Afi, Peace Adzo Medie has created a delightfully spunky and relatable heroine who just may break all the rules.

Discussion Guide

1. How does the opening sentence reflect the rest of the novel? What does it lead you to expect about how Afi and Eli's relationship would develop?
2. How much do Afi's mother and her other relatives influence Afi's decision to marry Eli? Do you think she would have agreed to the union if this pressure were absent? Do you think women in your society are also subject to pressure to get married? If so, where does it come from and what does it look like?

3. Do you think Afi's decision to marry Eli was the right one? Why?
4. Other than their wish to see Afi and Eli married, are there other similarities between Afi's mother and Aunty?
5. What are the ways in which the novel shows the effect that Afi's social class has on her choices and on the way her relationship with Eli unfolds?
6. What does marriage mean to each of the women (Afi, Mawusi, Yaya, Evelyn, Afi's mother, Aunty) in the book? What do they expect of a marriage and what are the reasons for their expectations? Do their expectations change as the story progresses, and what explains the change or lack thereof?
7. How and why does Afi's relationship with her mother differ from Mawusi's relationship with her own mother (Daavi Christy)? How does Afi's relationship with her mother shape the decisions she makes?
8. How has Afi's mother's unwillingness to be open about sex, and her strictness regarding boyfriends, affected Afi's romantic relationships?
9. Afi, Muna, Evelyn, Yaya and Mawusi are all dealing with society's expectation of how they should behave. What are the similarities and differences in what they face and in how they respond?
10. How is women's physical beauty defined in the novel by the Ganyo family and by others who comment on Afi's appearance? How does colorism factor into this definition?
11. Do you think Afi's decision at the end of the novel reflects evolving attitudes toward marriage? How so? What do these evolving attitudes look like in your society?
12. What does Eli's treatment of Afi during her pregnancy (after she returns from Ho) say about his character?
13. Do you think Eli's mother and siblings enable his behavior? How do they do this?
14. What do you think of Eli's approach to his relationship with Afi? What should he have done when his mother proposed marriage to Afi? What choices do you think he should have made after they were married?
15. Do you think Afi makes the right decision in the end? Why do you agree or disagree with what she does?

Author Bio

Peace Adzo Medie's debut novel, *HIS ONLY WIFE*, was a *New York Times* Book Review Editors' Choice, a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2020, and a *Time Magazine* Must-Read Book of 2020. It was also a Reese's Book Club pick. Her book, *GLOBAL NORMS AND LOCAL ACTION: The Campaigns to End Violence Against Women in Africa*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2020. She has won numerous awards for her scholarship and has held several fellowships, including the Oxford-Princeton Global Leaders Fellowship. She holds a PhD in public and international

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