



## His Only Wife

**Peace Adzo Medie**

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A brave young woman confronts modern-day sexism and classism in Peace Adzo Medie's novel *His Only Wife*.

Left penniless after her father's death, Afi and her mother survive thanks to the wealth of a benefactor, Aunty Faustina. When Aunty proposes an arranged marriage between her son, Elikem, and Afi, it is an opportunity to repay her kindness and to enjoy the comforts of wealth again. Only Elikem's secret affair with a woman whom his family dislikes complicates the offer. Nevertheless, Afi agrees.

After a wedding sans the groom, Afi moves from her small Ghanaian town to Accra, where she is put up in a ritzy condo and carefully looked after. Weeks elapse before Afi meets Elikem in person. In the meantime, Afi uses her newfound connections to enroll in a design school.

When Eli begins to appear more frequently, the two fall into a storybook romance, though his mysterious mistress remains in the picture. Eli is still a guest in her condo when Afi discovers she is pregnant. As Afi's bravery grows, she defies what's expected of her and demands to be taken seriously.

Colloquial diction and modern amenities help to set the book's stage, though its descriptions of settings sometimes fall short of their potential. Characters are introduced with speed, and even the story's main influencers make minor impressions at first. Still, the pieces of the story connect in a seamless way.

Afi's story is compelling, even if its developments are predictable. Unembellished conversations, combined with Afi's steady internal monologue, help to convey her intentions; her relationships develop at a steady pace. Afi's charm makes her an empowering example of modern womanhood.

Its message bold and its viewpoint appealing, *His Only Wife* is an inspiring novel.

SAMANTHA ANN EHLE (September / October 2020)

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