

## Just Arrived: A Different World

**Bona Udeze**

Stellar Literary Press

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*Just Arrived is an eye-opening novel in which an immigrant learns to live in a new, strange world.*

A Nigerian immigrant runs into challenges while navigating his new home in Bona Udeze's novel *Just Arrived*.

Emeka begins the long and trying process of emigrating from his Nigerian village to the US. After he gets through Nigeria's security and the confusion of the Chicago airport, he is reunited with his childhood friend, Ike. A fellow immigrant, Ike becomes Emeka's guide to living in America.

Cultural parallels play a major role in the novel. Through Emeka's eyes, the stark differences between Nigeria and the US are observed. Emeka struggles with language barriers, changes in mannerisms, and extreme clashes of social norms and laws; he even tries to bribe a police officer to get his friend out of a ticket. Consistent when it comes to confusion and stubbornness, he's a hero who tries to grasp American ways of life while simultaneously growing frustrated at how different the US is from the home he left.

Emeka narrates, combining his current observations and conversations with memories of his past. His timelines are sometimes muddled as a result, obscuring what he speaking about and what is going on in the present. There are few sufficient segues between his changing topics, either. Still, as the book follows Emeka from moment to moment, it is careful to take note of his actions and observations at every step. His excitement and nervousness about immigrating give way to heightened senses, resulting in tension as he becomes aware of all that's around him. The imagery reflects this awareness, with the prose going to lengths to describe his surroundings, from the hot overbearing crowds at the airport to the bold look of the brick houses in Chicago.

While Emeka is the novel's central focus, the supporting cast is also well fleshed out. Ike, Emeka's cousin, and Emeka's new American friends are vivified in the course of Emeka's conversations with them. Much is learned about them because of Emeka's interactions with them and through flashbacks as well. As it progresses, Emeka's story fills out as one about building new relationships as much as it is about building a new life. His time in the US gives him a new outlook on the life and family he left behind in Nigeria, too. Satisfaction is achieved as he settles into his next stage of life, including the start of a romantic relationship with an American woman.

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GRACE ROGERS (October 5, 2023)

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