

Miracles, Mysteries, Death and Dying and Other Supernatural Events

S. T. Ola. Akande

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Witches, death spells, and extraterrestrials are all within the realm of the possible as Akande invites readers to suspend their disbelief and enter the fascinating world of the inexplicable.

Miracles, Mysteries, Death and Dying and Other Supernatural Events is an exceptional collection of documented paranormal incidents that occurred in Nigeria and surrounding countries. This entertaining and well-written compilation by S. T. Ola. Akande, a retired Baptist minister and octogenarian, invites the reader to suspend disbelief and embrace a cultural mind-set where all things are possible.

The book is organized into eleven sections and provides a useful outline for maneuvering through the sometimes overlapping shotgun-style delivery of information. Each section opens with an engaging personal commentary by Akande that explains the background belief system of the subject matter to follow.

For example, in the first section, “Nigerian Witches and Their Supernatural Demonic Powers,” five pages are dedicated to a sometimes jaw-dropping overview of the contemporary witchcraft landscape in Nigeria. And section four, titled “Human Contacts with Extraterrestrial Beings (‘Aliens’) in Nigeria,” opens with a biblical passage (from the book of Ephesians) that, according to Akande, confirms the existence of these visitors and their sinister nature. In fact, every section of Akande’s book lavishly references the Bible and Christian doctrine—always with an African twist—and Akande’s guileless extrapolations are a joy to read.

The dozens of stories Akande gathered over the course of his more than sixty-year fascination with the inexplicable are the meat of *Miracles, Mysteries, Death and Dying and Other Supernatural Events*. Each of the stories is titled with a compelling lure. To illustrate, “Genitals vanished following handshake with neighbor” or “Student in compulsory regular sex with river goddess” are two prurient titles likely to invite further reading. Though many of the stories have a sexual bent and others are quite violent, Akande’s gentle writing style cloaks even the most inappropriate subject matter with an air of childlike innocence.

Nearly every story opens by identifying the name, occupation, and home village of the main actor in the metaphysical vignette. The year and day of the incident are often also included, as is a bit of background information about the personality and habits of the central character. Furthermore, snippets of dialogue and an abundance of superlatives, exclamation points, and question marks all add to the homespun entertainment value of this book.

Akande invests a considerable amount of copy explaining, in a wonderfully open-minded manner, the reality of a host of subjects that fall outside the boundaries of the scientifically plausible. From witches flying in the night, to spells that cause death, infertility, or a change of heart, to people coming back to earth after death and beginning new lives, the list of unbelievable events spun as believable is long.

Africans, and African Americans with a cultural openness to the rich belief system of their ancestral homeland, will find much to like in this book. For a Western audience that can sometimes struggle to think outside the box, *Miracles, Mysteries, Death and Dying and Other Supernatural Events* is a book best read from a detached, anthropological viewpoint. Though there are a few grammatical and typographical errors, these are easily overlooked in light of Akande’s creative writing style.

The book has an attractive cover and would be suitable for public and school libraries as well as bookstores.

PATTY SUTHERLAND (September 11, 2013)

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