ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

ROMANCE

The Banana Skin: Love Magic
Udo Nwabueze Agomoh
Xlibris
978-1-4771-4088-8
Three Stars (out of Five)

An inability to distinguish between ego-driven attraction and genuine affection is one of the most common mistakes in young-adult dating and early marriage, a situation explored in *The Banana Skin: Love Magic*. With an African flavor, this playful-sounding novel addresses issues far more serious than its humorous title and banana peel artwork suggest.

Omanma loves Emeka; at least she thinks she does. Along the way, she meets Chinedu, but she does not see the friendship they share as a worthwhile pursuit compared to associating with someone like Emeka, a popular man on the social scene. Soon Omanma discovers that Emeka lacks integrity, exhibits violent outbursts, and resorts to manipulation to control women. Unfortunately, by the time she realizes that her dream lover is, in reality, a manifestation of romantic hell, Chinedu is gone.

With physical dramatics and exaggerated emotion that turns dangerous—frequent occurrences throughout the book—these protagonists interact with little restraint. This may enhance the plot for some readers, but the shock of an often-violent environment could detract from the real love story between Omanma and Chinedu, which remains secondary in importance. “Omanma stayed awake until twelve midnight before Emeka came in, stinking of alcohol. That night, Emeka and Omanma fought since Emeka wasn’t prepared to change or to appear remorseful … Both of them sustained injury, particularly Omanma … Omanma was in the hospital for about two weeks before she was fully recovered.”

As this thought-provoking story progresses, Omanma matures and gradually comes to accept herself; she sees her error in judgment in selecting an unsuitable companion. This realization, however, is not the end of this tale of incompatibility.

Despite the valuable message of hope behind Udo Nwabueze Agomoh’s heartfelt book, the narrative is riddled with awkwardness, misuse of language, and numerous typos. The plot itself is solid, but the implementation of the story line is stylistically flawed. Rather than polished and flowing, the prose distracts from the normal course of reading. For instance:

“Emeka was delighted with the intelligent idea of the wife … Omanma was now more settled in mind as she now knew her husband’s problem, which, of course, was now cured. Emeka and Omanma missed their baby, which they lost after the last quarrel.”

The Banana Skin will appeal to culture connoisseurs and readers of gritty, realistic relationship novels. A learning experience for young adults as well as romance enthusiasts, Agomoh’s soul-searching novel is worth the pursuit.

Julia Ann Charpentier