**Clarion Review**

Autobiography & Memoir

**Thrill of the Rookie**
Osaze Ehigiator
AuthorHouse
978-1-4772-3742-7
Four Stars (out of Five)

When Osaze Ehigiator came to the United States from Nigeria in 1985, he had just under $400 in his pocket, and no family or friends waiting for him. He didn't even have a ride from the airport. Nonetheless, he arrived full of optimism and perseverance, two qualities that allowed him to show resilience in the face of numerous challenges.

Nearly thirty years later, Ehigiator owns a business, holds two degrees, and lives with his wife and three children in Texas. The journey from the moment he arrived at Houston International Airport to the day he finished this first book, *Thrill of the Rookie*, is an intense, personal story of what it takes to embrace the American dream. Told with an intoxicating blend of humility, earnestness, and absurdity, his rookie years as an American are compelling.

To put his immigration into context, Ehigiator first describes the political and economic conditions in Nigeria after World War II. He aptly summarizes increasing friction among major ethnic and religious groups, and how the discovery of oil created more turbulence, leading to oppression, corruption, and crime. He writes, "Many concluded that there was no way out of the hopelessness and social degradation in the near future. Leaving the country became a very attractive alternative for many young Nigerians."

When he secures a visa, Ehigiator understands that it's the beginning of a dramatic turn of events, and he decides to be as flexible as possible in letting fate unfurl for him. Many times, he notes the importance of elasticity as well as diligence, and he combines these qualities with faith that God will guide him through all difficulties.

Told in snippets, Ehigiator's story begins in Greece, where he spends time before coming to the United States, and then shifts to Texas, where he relies on a student visa. As he details the everyday successes and hardships of creating a life for himself, Ehigiator also provides a fuller description of growing up in Nigeria, and his keen political and cultural

observations provide a rich background for his American experience.

Occasionally, Ehigiator's language can be a bit overblown. For example, he notes that immigrants who manage to overcome challenges come out of the experience "purified and shining like gold to the envy of the entire world." But this is a minor drawback, since it's clear that he conveys these sentiments with abundant sincerity. His earnest, unrelenting belief in the value of hard work shines through even the most high-toned passages, giving *Thrill of the Rookie* inspirational weight.

In general, Ehigiator's well-told story provides a valuable glimpse into the immigrant experience. He details the types of challenges and roadblocks that can crop up, but also the generosity and goodwill he encountered, which kept him pursuing his dream of success. For anyone who wants a valuable look at one immigrant's experience from poverty to stability, Ehigiator's story of his "rookie" years will be captivating.

*Elizabeth Millard*