

## Uchechi: The Triumph of Love

**Chukwudi Eze**

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The subject of star-crossed lovers subjected to the opposition of parents resisting cultural, religious, and racial differences—a common theme in works of literature—also characterizes *Uchechi: The Triumph of Love*. This short, hard-hitting novel features stereotypical reactions to social interactions among people from various backgrounds.

Uchechi grew up in Umuabi, a rural Nigerian village. Intelligent and destined for success, he enrolled in a prominent international university and excelled in mathematics. His scores were extraordinarily high, placing him above the rest of his class. Annarossa, a sophisticated competitor accustomed to winning in academics, initially found Uchechi's presence unnerving. But in time, the potential rivals fell in love and established an abiding relationship leading to a marriage engagement. The ultimate war then ensued: the younger generation met the older generation in the structured, manipulative home of the bride-to-be.

While the situation is believable, the reliance on a dated attitude toward marriage that puts the woman in a position of implied deference to her family's patriarchs, permeates the story. What's unclear is whether it's meant to describe a country-wide pattern of male domination: "When the spring break arrived, Annarossa and Uchechi boarded a plane to Annarossa's hometown. There to meet them were Grandpa, Dad and Dave only. Annarossa noticed that it was just the men who came to meet them at the airport."

The novel is enlightening in some respects but, as already mentioned, it's steeped in tradition regarding domestic unions, which presents a sometimes confusing mix of past and present ideals. Unfortunately, the plot lacks the freshness that would set it apart from countless other tales of familial woe told over the course of centuries. Take, for instance, this unsurprising passage: "It was apparent to Annarossa and Uchechi that her family wanted to have Annarossa alone with them on the first night. They wanted to see the possibility of changing her feelings towards Uchechi."

The book's editing is adequate, but its formatting is unacceptable, with missing paragraph indentations and improper spacing. An eye-catching, beautiful cover with a single red rose laid across an open book enhances exterior marketability, leaving only an awkward back cover blurb in need of superficial editing to complete the packaging.

Chukwudi Eze has published several books and holds a master's degree from Columbia University. His earnest novel may please readers who enjoy love stories with an underlying Shakespearean delivery in the tradition of *Romeo and Juliet*. Modern and realistic, but with classical themes, Eze's work explores both the commercial and literary definitions of romance.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (January 29, 2013)

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