



BOM BOY
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OMOTOSO

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Leke is a troubled young man living in the suburbs of Cape Town. He develops strange habits of stalking people, stealing small objects and going from doctor to doctor in search of companionship rather than cure. Through a series of letters written to him by his Nigerian father whom he has never met, Leke learns about a family curse; a curse which his father had unsuccessfully tried to remove. Bom Boy is a well-crafted, and complex narrative written with a sensitive understanding of both the smallness and magnitude of a single life.

Bom Boy Details

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Author : Yewande Omotoso

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From Reader Review Bom Boy for online ebook

Sam Beckbessinger says

Really quite lovely.

Read In Colour says

It took me quite a while to figure out who the characters were and which era they belonged to. The author doesn't prepare readers for the characters/time period switches initially and it was so confusing. I also was unable to connect with any of the characters, which was disappointing because I enjoyed the characters in the author's previous work, *The Woman Next Door*.

Ken says

Have you ever watched the TV Show *Mr Robot*? If yes, then you have a pretty good idea of the main character in this book. Frustratingly reticent, socially awkward. I have not read anything else by Omotoso, but this particular book did not really do it for me. The cover screams out that it was shortlisted for this and that, and is a prize winning text. OK. Tastes differ, I guess.

Why didn't I like the book?

1. There is something formulaic about the way Omotoso drags the story on, just keeping key plot turns out of reach until a specific number of words have been written. What I mean it, there are some revelations that I as a reader felt were being unnecessarily delayed (I will not go into details in order to keep this spoiler-free).
2. The book is the story of a young man named Leke, but Omotoso attempts to make it the story of so many more people (one of whom writes in epistolary mode [brilliant move, that. It definitely works]). However, one begins to feel that the cast is too large, for a book this short.
3. There is a bit of love/passion thrown in towards the end. Totally unnecessary, and appears rather forced.
4. The mythical/supernatural angle, with sangomas etc, could have been better developed. There is mention of a curse, that one of the characters attempts to break (OK, now I am spoiling the story). The author could have deliberately meant for the resolution of this curse to be unclear, but its treatment in this novel left me rather dissatisfied.

I am always ready to admit that what I don't like, someone else might.

Sipho Lukhele says

I loved how this book was written. A story of a family curse that is told through a series of letters. It was not hurried and the writing is simply beautiful. I was exposed to other parts of Cape Town, that I could see through the words.

The chapters move from the present and past while linking the story beautifully. If you are curious about the spiritual world and believe in the notion of "black magic", then you are going to love this book.

Fen Kuntz says

I wish the entirety of this was like the first fifty pages. Really sags in the middle. At times I worried I missed key plot points, but it was just the structure of the book to reveal those near the end.

Paige Nick says

So lovely. I really enjoyed it.

Helga Schaberg says

It all came together in the end, but until then I was quite confused. The plot emulated Leke's confusion, but it requires some staying power on the part of the reader.

Puleng Hopper says

The story follows the life of Leke, from childhood until adulthood. He was born of a Nigerian father and a South African coloured woman. He was adopted by a white couple, his mom could not take care of him and his father was in jail. Leke grows up as a recluse and misfit forever grappling with solitude and struggling to belong. Fighting a generational curse cast on his dad's family.

I found the book boring and flat in tone. Many a times I contemplated dumping it. It was the masochist in me that kept me going.

The beginning was slow and not captivating, It was only towards page forty that the pieces of the puzzle started falling into place. The structure was confusing, the author vacillated from different eras.

Events were dragged. The narration was long winded. There were moments of aimless rambling with no clear objective nor direction. It was like driving a car at twenty kilometres per hour , no GPS and no specific destination. Omotoso said in an interview " Bom Boy was my first attempt at something novel length" She had previously done poetry and short stories.

I could not connect with most characters especially Leke the protagonist .Child protagonists are normally adorable , appealing and evoke all sorts of emotions. I remember books like "We Need New Names" by Noviolet Bulawayo, "Nervous Condition" by Tsitsi Dangaremba, and "Thirteen Cents" by Sello Duiker " Not in this book. Leke experiences major tragedy in his ten years on earth. He did not know his real parents. He experiences two deaths of close family members. Strangely I was not affected . I felt zilch compassion for Leke. As an adult he becomes less appealing , filthy, unkempt and behaves strangly . His interactions with Tsotso were surreal.

Omotoso failed to transport me emotionally and otherwise. Her writing is direct and devoid of emotion. Note how she relates a first sex encounter, "Elaine locked the office door. Oscar kissed her neck and breasts . She sat astride him and they made love " No foreplay . No emotion. Nothing steamy.

There were some characters whose significance in the story was not clear to me. I wondered what their purpose was. The semi blind shopkeeper with the dog .Lekes's landlord and Tsotso's grand mother.

Tsotso , Genes and Tsotso's grandmother were introduced too late , as if an after thought, a filler. I momentarily loved Jane but she was killed off. It did not make sense to me that Leke was not keen on tracing his biological mother who was still alive, as opposed to focusing only on the deceased biological father . There was also Malcolm Feather who makes a brief naked appearance and then dies.

Bom Boy was shortlisted for the Etisalat Price For Africa in 2014. I enjoyed Omotoso's second offering "The Woman Next Door" 2016. Some people loved Bom Boy , but, I regret to inform that I did not feel it. Maybe it is the proverbial, it is not you but me. At some point I suspected mental illness in Leke, when it only took love from a girl to cure him , I discounted it.

Agbonmire says

Lovely book, everybody should read it at least once. A far reaching debut. Leke is a troubled young man who stalks people, who steals small items. This are just symptoms of the yawning loneliness and abandonment he feels. This book is a book of silence, a book of how people deal with solitude. But that's not all, you read about ancestral curses, how myth can become real.

After walking in Leke's mind you can't help but empathize with the cards life has dealt Leke. You would also enjoy the poignant writing. It cuts like a sharp blade. You would enjoy every character. You would yearn for more when you are done with this book. Miss Omotoso delivered.

Tiah says

Plan to highlight on blog. Will post the link to the post sometime next week. Edited: Here is the link:
<http://tiahbeautement.typepad.com/tra...>

Gabrielle says

I have had this book on my list for a while and was eager to read it especially after the less than stellar review I wrote of Omotoso's other book. The novel centers on Leke - a confused and awkward young man. The story is told through Leke's present day actions like hypochondria, thievery, and stalking and meshed with letters his father (whom he has never met) wrote to him as a baby. The novel was captivating from the beginning - I love books told through multiple perspectives with epistolary elements, but it quickly lost its luster. The novel became as confused as its character about mid-way through - I am not sure if this was the author's intentional technique. The book unfortunately never redeemed itself. I am convinced that this author could be much more engaging as a short story writer as her plots are intriguing but cannot be carried as full novels.

Kathe Coleman says

Bom Boy by Yewande Omotoso

Another great read by a South African writer. Leke's father, Oscar, a man from Nigeria arrives in South Africa to study molecular science. Meets African girl, Elaine, who bears him a son (Leke) but unfortunately he (Oscar) is arrested and sent to jail and never gets to raise his son. He writes letters to Leke, (Bom Boy is pidgin for baby boy) and it is through these letters that Leke discovers the curse that has been placed on his family. Oscar in jail and Elaine finds herself unable to care for him and gives him to a white couple to raise which leaves him confused and angry Great plot. Well written and was on the shortlisted for the Etisalat Prize for African literature 2014.

Charles Siboto says

Once in a while a book comes along and reminds you why you love books in the first place. Yewande Omotoso's story about Leke and the family curse that haunts him is beautifully told and it will haunt you after you have read it.

Jayne Bauling says

Leke, his biological and adoptive parents: every one of these characters engages the emotions, as do Tsotso and her grandmother. On a superficial level, this poignant debut novel is about profound loneliness. Leke harmlessly stalks strangers, steals small souvenirs and consults an assortment of medical practitioners in search of simple human contact.

At another level it is much deeper and more complex. Quiet little lives are not the less for being small and mostly silent.

Yewande Omotoso's novel deserves every 'best debut' award going and many more besides. Such accomplished writing suggests a rich and pure natural talent. Remember her name. Congratulations to small publisher Modjaji Books for recognizing such a gift.

Temilade Adebisi says

This has to be the most pointless book I have read in recent history. I think the author must be some kind of marketing genius because the only reason I finished this book was because there was always the promise of something MAJOR about to be revealed.

I kept turning the pages, waiting to get to the "climax" and it is not even a little climatic. I mean, the entire book could easily have been a short story and it would have been better that way. Instead of the reader getting dragged along in what has to be a ploy to meet the required number of words to call it a book.

The big secret/family curse has nothing to do with Leye's strange behavior. Instead of him getting professional help for his anxieties and antisocial tendencies, he "falls in love" and is magically cured. For Serious?!

And the relationship... Don't even get me started on all the ways I think it's unhealthy.

The writing is easy on the eyes, I'll admit. The changing timelines took some getting used to, but I didn't even mind that in the end. In fact, I found myself enjoying Oscar's voice, even if he spent the entire book hinting at a pointless family curse.

The story itself was not very engaging. I couldn't feel anything for most of the characters and I really hate

when a new character's narrative is sprung on me halfway into a story.

This book really disappointed me. I must have written "I'm losing interest" about 5 times in my journal while reading this book and I really hate when I have to work to finish a book. Ugh!!

I could go on but my phone is about to go off.

I do not recommend this book. It is completely pointless. Just don't bother.
