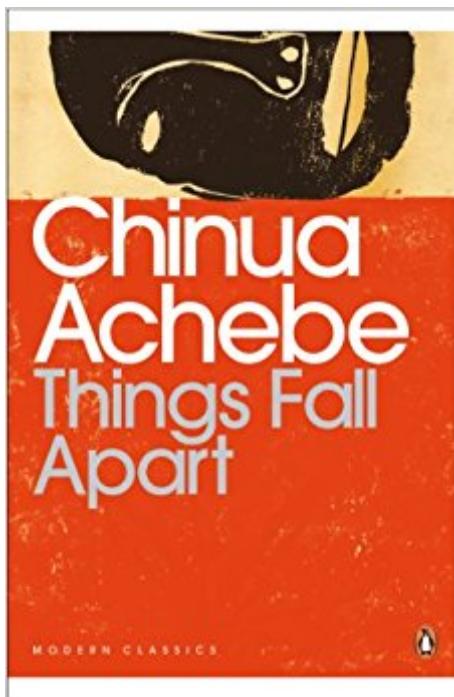


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Things Fall Apart (The African Trilogy)



Synopsis

Okonkwo is the greatest warrior alive, famous throughout West Africa. But when he accidentally kills a clansman, things begin to fall apart. Then Okonkwo returns from exile to find missionaries and colonial governors have arrived in the village. With his world thrown radically off-balance he can only hurtle towards tragedy. Chinua Achebe's stark novel reshaped both African and world literature. This arresting parable of a proud but powerless man witnessing the ruin of his people begins Achebe's landmark trilogy of works chronicling the fate of one African community, continued in Arrow of God and No Longer at Ease.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

SPOILERS AHEAD: This novel was set in the Igbo homeland in what is now southeastern Nigeria in the late 1800s/early 1900s. I read about three-quarters of the book before I could begin to appreciate it. Up to then I'd disliked the main character, Okonkwo, an important person in the village whose major traits were harsh anger, pride and inflexibility, finding him one-sided and uninteresting. I felt the description was plodding and little of importance was happening, and wasn't greatly interested in the village life. Much of the novel was concerned mainly with his point of view, and his

interactions with the other, relatively minor characters were unexciting. When a dramatic event occurred, such as his accidental shooting of a villager that led to his exile, it was described in a flat, undramatic tone that seemed inappropriate and puzzled me. I couldn't help comparing this novel unfavorably with another I happened to be reading, Palace Walk, by Naguib Mahfouz, with its complex, many-sided protagonist, the many other strongly developed people in his family, the dramatic interaction between them, and the rich world around them that was reasonably familiar. It was only after reading some background material on the Internet that I could begin to understand how Achebe's novel aimed to recreate a vibrant culture that had existed before colonization on its own terms, with its oral tradition, rituals and taboos, and guardian spirits, and show what had been lost. The focus on a period before colonization and the depiction of the whites as interlopers has been called innovative for its time. Likewise the use of language in the words of the villagers, instead of pidgin.

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