



Under the Udala Trees

Chinelo Okparanta

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Inspired by Nigeria's folktales and its war, *Under the Udala Trees* is a deeply searching, powerful debut about the dangers of living and loving openly.

Ijeoma comes of age as her nation does; born before independence, she is eleven when civil war breaks out in the young republic of Nigeria. Sent away to safety, she meets another displaced child and they, star-crossed, fall in love. They are from different ethnic communities. They are also both girls.

When their love is discovered, Ijeoma learns that she will have to hide this part of herself. But there is a cost to living inside a lie.

As Edwidge Danticat has made personal the legacy of Haiti's political coming of age, Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees* uses one woman's lifetime to examine the ways in which Nigerians continue to struggle toward selfhood. Even as their nation contends with and recovers from the effects of war and division, Nigerian lives are also wrecked and lost from taboo and prejudice. This story offers a glimmer of hope — a future where a woman might just be able to shape her life around truth and love.

Acclaimed by *Vogue*, the *Financial Times*, and many others, Chinelo Okparanta continues to distill “experience into something crystalline, stark but lustrous” (*New York Times Book Review*). *Under the Udala Trees* marks the further rise of a star whose “tales will break your heart open” (*New York Daily News*).

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