



Dead Corpse

Nuzo Onoh

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How do you bury a corpse that refuses to die?

The first time she died, Aku didn't realise she was dead. She thought she was suffering a nightmare, at worst, a supernatural attack by malevolent spirits, inconvenient but not life-threatening. But when she died for the second time, she knew that something was wrong... sinisterly wrong.

It would take Aku's third death to free her mind from the dark haze that kept her trapped in a series of harrowing events she'd give ten lifetimes to avoid. Except by then, it would be too late; too late for her to change the chain of tragedy that followed her walking corpse like a swarm of grave-flies.

DEAD CORPSE - Another chilling tale of ghostly vengeance by the undisputed Queen of African Horror, Nuzo Onoh.

Dead Corpse Details

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Author : Nuzo Onoh

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From Reader Review Dead Corpse for online ebook

Eden Royce says

Nuzo Onoh's latest book combines horror with the struggles modern Africa faces today. In addition to political and economic struggles shown, the book focuses on the tensions created between those who follow Christianity and those who follow more traditional African religions and spiritual beliefs.

In the beginning of Dead Corpse, Xikora, an albino witchdoctor, is giving birth. What follows is a horrific description of the process, at the end of which she is on her deathbed. But Xikora won't go quietly. When the gods of Mbana-Oyi come to take her to the afterlife, she fights them with her potent magic. Even so, she dies while her young daughter Owa looks on.

The story then turns to Owa, now an Earth goddess priestess and her daughter Aku, who has secretly converted to Christianity. But that does not stop her from falling prey to the sexual advances of a local businessman. When he is told the body parts of albinos can be used in a magical rituals to gain him power, he seeks out Aku again.

But Owa can't accept her daughter's death and brings her back, along with something else from the beyond.

I enjoyed Onoh's peppering the text with Nigerian and Igbo phrases, giving more authenticity to the book and really transporting me as a reader into the setting. Dead Corpse is once bloody and horrific, as well as a dark mirror of the complexity of mother/daughter relationships and the power of redemption.

M.V. Clark says

Dead Corpse is one hell of a story, about three generations of medicine-women who battle with the evil in gods, men and in themselves to find happiness. It's also about revenge, and the struggle to define the right way to live in the complex and divided world of modern Africa.

The story begins with Xikora, a powerful and somewhat malevolent albino medicine woman, dying in childbirth along with her infant son. Her daughter Owa - also albino and destined to inherit Xikora's powers - is left motherless and vulnerable in a community that disdains light-skinned people.

We return to Owa some years later, when she's established as the medicine-woman in the village. Although she's just as powerful as her late mother, she's much more timid and merciful. She has a daughter called Aku, also albino. But Aku's academic talent has led her to attend a Catholic school and convert to Christianity.

I was already fascinated to see how this fight between old and new gods would play out. But then enter "the fat man", one of the most upsetting villains I've ever come across. His plans for Aku are grotesque but the detail of his petty ambition makes him believable:

"...As I told you, I'm the deputy local government chairman and very soon, I shall become the chairman," he paused, looking her over as if she were a bowl of assorted meats.

Occasionally Onoh uses too many adjectives for my taste - it might be more powerful to talk about some of the crimes that have been committed without mentioning that they are “heinous” for example.

But her writing is invariably vivid and compelling. It also has a consistent pace and clarity that draws you in and makes you forget time – a kind of irresistible narrative conveyor belt with no going back.

Take this passage where Owa and Aku communes with a goddess:

The earth cracked and the flies spewed out in their ferocious, deafening flight; the celestial flies, the forbearers of the great Earth Goddess. The swarm coalesced by the entrance of the shrine, whirling like a black tornado, sculpturing themselves in the smoky gloom till a dark figure emerged, a body formed from flies, a figure shaped like a woman, a towering, terrifying, night-black woman. The figure was so colossal it filled the shrine, seeming to extend beyond the dry, thatched roof. The fly-body swelled and rolled, whirled and surged as it undulated its terrible walk towards the black blood-coated statue. Aku’s head expanded and contracted. Millions of hard glittering fly-eyes blinded her sight as the great goddess drew closer.

The plot is harrowing but that’s how horror works – tapping into deep anxieties and worst-case scenarios to sort out fairly ordinary dilemmas we’d all recognize. For example, is it better to think like ruthless Xikora or merciful Owa?

Xikora tells Owa:

“I make my own destiny. Haven’t you heard a word I said? Those who wait instead of taking action achieve nothing in life, like yourself, who’ve let your powers go to the dogs.”

By the end of the book (view spoiler)

JaeRavenClaw says

Not disappointed

Onoh's work never fails to amaze, terrify and teach me all at the same time. One of my favorite horror authors right now and I look forward to her next body of work.

Donnalyn Washington says

Dead Corpse is an African horror, ghost story that will educate and scare you. It deals with a family of empowered women who, through various ways have to deal with their abilities and the responsibility of being the caretakers of their goddess. I enjoyed it. The characters are well developed and the story also deals with forgiveness and loving yourself for who you are and embracing your purpose, not running away from it. Or attempting to take shortcuts. I would read the next book from this author.

Jennie Rigg says

Lyrical, evocative horror from an author fast becoming one of my must-reads.

Stuffed with rich, diverse, and beautifully drawn characters, I think this is actually better than Nuzo's last book, which I enjoyed immensely. It's so nice to read a novel where the characters feel like people and not ciphers or plot devices. The story moves along at a good pace, but never feels rushed, and the ideas in it are original and fascinating.

The star of the show, though, is Nuzo's descriptive flair. She draws you in and spellbinds you until you see the sights, hear the sounds, smell the smells and feel the terror of her cast as they move through the story she weaves.

I genuinely would not hesitate to recommend this to anyone who is even vaguely interested in a good horror story.

Perry Lake says

As a fellow writer of scary stories, I am convinced that Nuzo Onoh cheats. Oh sure, she writes terrific horror stories. But instead of straining her imagination and making up the scary bits, she just copies down what goes on in West Africa today.

For instance, Onoh makes use of the West African belief that albinos are imbued with magical power. Real life witch doctors often use of albinos in their rituals. Or parts of albinos.

The first part tells of an albino witch-woman, Xikora, and her clash with a brace of African deities. At the end of this chapter, her daughter, ?wa, is given a mission in life.

Surprisingly, the next part of the book focuses not on ?wa, but her daughter, Aku. Aku is far less pagan than her mother or grandmother, and goes to a Catholic school. You can't help but like her, although she is mostly shunned by her community.

There's a nice bit of explanation and insight given into the concepts of human sacrifice, reincarnation, and the gods. As it is explained, all these factors tie together quite terrifyingly.

As in earlier books, very nasty things happen to the heroines in Nuzo Onoh's books. Along with witchcraft and curses, blatant government and police corruption is also shown, giving us a well-rounded view of modern Africa. But there's also a scene where a man ponders which of his children he will sacrifice to the gods to obtain his goals—and it's actually funny.

“Dead Corpse” is a wild, nightmarish ride in places and it reaches a surprising, yet appropriate ending. The depth of the spirituality lifts the book from the usual crop of horror stories.

In her fourth fiction book, Nuzo Onoh has again proved to be a very talented writer. Her characters' sentence structure and the occasional Nigerian word dropped in does not distract, but only adds to the authenticity of the setting. The writing is good and straight forward. A few lines could be tightened here and there, but that's

a small quibble.

A few centuries ago, women were persecuted for witchcraft in America and Europe. Bigotry and superstition still exist; even flourish, to this day. But by setting her stories in her native Nigeria, Onoh weaves a unique world, juxtaposing the jungle witchdoctor casting spells in their huts with corrupt politicians driving Peugeots while talking on mobile phones. Those images, and many others in this book, show how today's Nigeria is a hodge-podge of modern technology and spiritual communion with nature, rural villages and opulent palaces, government corruption and savage customs. This is real horror, rooted in the real-life horrors of today in a world many of us have never experienced.

Thanks to Nuzo Ono, Nigeria is the new Transylvania.

Kerry says

Nuzo Onoh transports her readers to a village in Africa where old beliefs reside alongside new. She introduces a family of albinio women who protected the shrine of Ana, goddess of the earth. Although Ana demanded certain loyalties from her witch doctors, the family matriarch Xikora showed not only tremendous talent but also a willful enjoyment of the power at her command. Villagers feared her wrath, curses, and juju. As a child, her daughter Qwa witnessed Xikora's bloody death in childbirth when Walking-Grave and Corpse-Maker claimed Xikora's soul for their cold realm, Mbana-Oyi. The experience shaped Qwa's service to Ana. She devoted herself to the goddess despite the derision of her fellow villagers. Qwa bore a girl of her own, Aku, a teen who, because of her exotic beauty, was targeted by the bad Fat Man.

The back cover of the book outlines Aku's experiences, but the constant in the novel is Qwa. Through her, readers experience devotion to a mother, a daughter, the responsibilities of Shrine stewardship, and a bit of romance. *Dead Corpse at heart* is an exploration of devotion in the face of fear. Nuzo Onoh forces her protagonists to face grief, prejudice, and corruption from supernatural and human sources.

A hallmark of Nuzo Onoh's work is her speckling of Igbo terminology throughout her tale of terror. She introduces terrifying ideas and brutality, mixing the modern world with traditional African beliefs. This fourth book by Nuzo Onoh further cements her title of "Queen of African Horror."

Shinyfluff says

AWESOME. an atmospheric horror set in an Igbo village. Nuzo Onoh takes us on a journey through the eyes of a Night Diplomat as she scours the otherworlds for the soul of her mother and much more. I was totally hooked from start to finish. can't wait to read more from this amazing author
