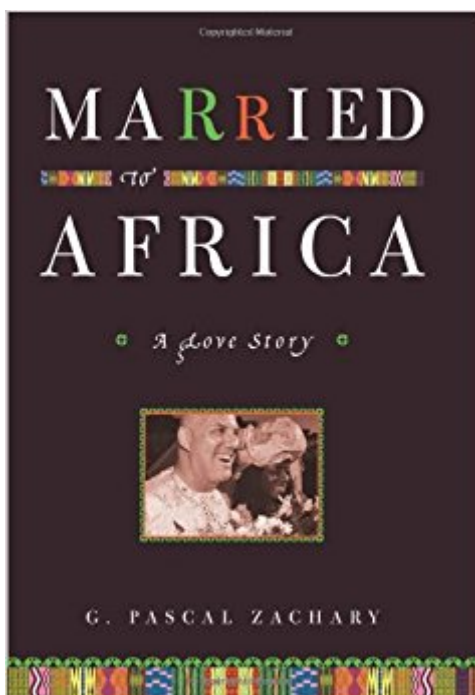


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Married To Africa: A Love Story



Synopsis

G. Pascal Zachary is a foreign correspondent for The Wall Street Journal when he finds love in, of all places, the zoo in Accra, Ghana. That is where he meets Chizo Okon, the surrogate mother for an orphaned chimpanzee. In *Married to Africa*, Zachary tells their warm and humorous story, which is as much about the marriage of two cultures as it is about the marriage of two people. Chizo introduces Zachary to an Africa usually overlooked by visitors. He learns about the spiritual fervor of ordinary Africans, the mysterious power of juju and the rewards of eating bushmeat and other African dishes. He learns how to haggle effectively, pick a reliable taxi driver, live on "Africa time" and adapt to being a white minority in a black society. Chizo, meanwhile, deftly adapts to living with her obruni, the local nickname for a white person. As their romance deepens, the couple learns how differently things can appear to them. While Zachary indulges a passion for traditional African art, Chizo worries about the possible evil spirits harbored in his wooden statues. When the two move to San Francisco, Chizo must learn to navigate a new world. The result is a different kind of immigrant story, powered by a series of wacky, wonderful and unforgettable tales -- such as Chizo taking a machete to Zachary's ex-wife's garden (not out of malice, of course), driving enthusiastically without a license, charming her hard-boiled Jewish mother-in-law and managing requests from poor relatives in Africa. The arrival of Chizo's teenage daughter marks the end of the beginning and the start of a new saga in this uniquely American love story. *Married to Africa* is a tender and charming account of a marriage and a fascinating look at how two people come to know each other across culture and race.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In 2001, Zachary traveled to Africa to write a novel, but instead he became besotted with a woman and a continent. In his book, *Zachary (The Diversity Advantage)*, a former foreign correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*, chronicles his six-year affair with Chizo, a Nigerian woman he met in Accra, Ghana, whom he eventually married. Each of the seven sections is set in the various locations where their romance blossomed— including Northern California, Grand Basdaam in the Ivory Coast, Accra and New York. His love story is sincere, though his descriptions often verge on the saccharine: Turning her head, her eyes meet mine and our lips come together; She moved according to the rhythms of her place. She felt comfortable in her skin. She was beautiful, daring, powerful and upsetting. She robbed me of my routine. There are intriguing passages, however, as when Zachary depicts life in West Africa, relates the stresses of navigating immigration or calms his anxious Jewish parents. (Jan.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"What better way to explore -- and cross -- boundaries between cultures than by falling in love? The story of Zachary's romance and marriage is an intriguing and unusual one that sheds light on two continents, as we see each through the eyes of another." -- Adam Hochschild, author of *King Leopold's Ghost*

"G. Pascal Zachary introduces us to a most extraordinary woman, who takes us -- as she took him -- on a passionate, terrifying, sensual ride into the very soul of modern Africa." -- Michael Tucker, author of *Living in a Foreign Language*

"Though the narrative revolves around the couple's negotiation of issues arising from their differing skin colors and cultural bases -- Zachary's depictions of the in-law introductions for each partner are priceless -- it also reveals the author's great affection for Africa. 'In America, life is cloaked in a heavy garment of fear, anxiety and the relentless drive for self-protection,' he writes. 'In Africa, outer armor is stripped away, and people are permitted -- dare I say entitled? -- to experience the rawness of their own solitary human predicament. For reasons I cannot comprehend, in Africa I feel more human than in America.' Zachary's witty tale of opposites attracted provides an illuminating portrait of African and American daily lives." -- Kirkus

Our chatter about love and match-making is full of cliches that attempt to capture the challenge of people from two different worlds coming together. This is a story about such a match, told by someone who is both fully in the midst of it and a keen observer of it at the same time. It's appropriate to me that Zachary called it "Married to Africa," instead of "Married to Chizo"--because

even though it's an intensely personal story, there's rich context about Africa and Chizo's African-ness, which give the book more color and substance than a "mere" love story. It's a vicarious journey into a terrifying, beautiful, compelling place, a place in space and time and a place in the heart, told with intensity, honesty and a sense of wonder. For those who may follow Zachary's other, more scholarly writing about Africa, and his excellent blog, [...], this is an interesting complement, and reveals some of what drives him to approach Africa with both his eyes and his heart fully open.

Married to Africa: A Love Story Review by Richard L. Weaver II, Ph.D. In a warm, personal, self-disclosing, and endearing writing style, Zachary's story is endearing. Here is how he describes Chizo the first time he sees her not wearing her zoo uniform: "I'm sipping a large Star beer when I see her come down the steps from my room inside the hotel. She wears a backless skintight top, cut low on her chest, and a short black skirt, revealing her thighs, which now seem sexy rather than simply powerful. She wears black vinyl boots with spiky heels, making her seem much taller. I put the beer down and stare at her as she comes toward me. I've never seen her before in anything but her zoo clothes. Now I see what's hidden underneath those clothes....I like what I see" (p. 69). This is a true love story, but it is far more than that. I thought M. Allison's description, in her review of his book at .com, explains well and accurately, exactly what you will get in Zachary's book: "there's rich context about Africa and Chizo's African-ness, which give the book more color and substance than a "mere" love story. It's a vicarious journey into a terrifying, beautiful, compelling place, a place in space and time and a place in the heart, told with intensity, honesty and a sense of wonder." I found the story compelling, the cultural insights and differences he describes intriguing, and the way he approaches Africa incredibly endearing. If you like love stories, you will love this book.

G. Pascal Zachary fell in love with Africa and I in turn, fell in love with how this book described the adventures he and his wife Chizo shared. Everything in this book is a vivid portrayal from the streets they walked, food eaten, clothes worn, beaches, and fearful adventures. The author is gifted in bringing us right into the center of the action as if we were there with them. As a resident of Berkeley, CA. where Zachary lives, I can only hope to meet him some day so I can hear more about their experiences. Hopefully, I'll meet them at Ashkenaz where we are all dancing to African music. His depiction of them is so vivid I would easily recognize them.. I highly recommend this book. Marcia Emery, Ph.D. author of PowerHunch!, The Intuitive Healer and Dr. Marcia Emery's Intuition Workbook

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