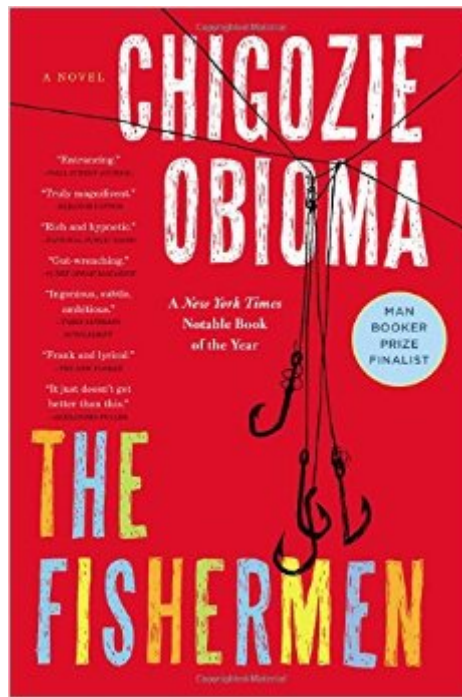


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# The Fishermen: A Novel



## Synopsis

A striking debut novel about an unforgettable childhood, by a Nigerian writer the New York Times has crowned "the heir to Chinua Achebe." Told by nine-year-old Benjamin, the youngest of four brothers, *THE FISHERMEN* is the Cain and Abel-esque story of a childhood in Nigeria, in the small town of Akure. When their father has to travel to a distant city for work, the brothers take advantage of his absence to skip school and go fishing. At the forbidden nearby river, they meet a madman who persuades the oldest of the boys that he is destined to be killed by one of his siblings. What happens next is an almost mythic event whose impact—both tragic and redemptive—will transcend the lives and imaginations of the book's characters and readers. Dazzling and viscerally powerful, *THE FISHERMEN* is an essential novel about Africa, seen through the prism of one family's destiny.

## Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Back Bay Books; Reprint edition (July 5, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0316338354

ISBN-13: 978-0316338356

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (122 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #30,083 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > African](#) #135 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Cultural Heritage](#) #138 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > Australia & Oceania](#)

## Customer Reviews

The book begins in Akure, in the south-west of Nigeria, in 1995, though there will be flashbacks to earlier events. The story is told, twenty years later by Ben Agwu, who in 1995 was nine years old. He has three older brothers: Obembe (then eleven), Boja (fourteen) and Ikenna (fifteen). They started to go fishing in a polluted river which, for superstitious reasons, is out of bounds to the people of Akure. They are discovered; their mother tells their father, who works far away from Akure but who comes home some weekends, and who punishes them brutally. It makes Ikenna into a rebel and he closed himself off from his younger brothers who had up to that time been his unquestioning followers. But perhaps it was not his father's punishment, but a sinister prophesy which a madman (strikingly described throughout) had uttered by the side of the river that made him

behave so unaccountably strangely towards his brothers and to disobey their mother. He destroys objects that are precious to the family. First the brothers are afraid of him; then they become afraid for him, for he was clearly possessed by a spirit which made him afraid, suspicious and angry. He lost his health and his Christian faith. They pleaded with him, swore that the madman's prophecy was false, but to no avail. Eventually Boja, previously the brother closest to Ikenna, can take no more and there is violence between them, with tragic results, the consequences of which for the rest of the family reverberate through the second half of the book. Terrible imaginations haunt their minds. Obembe decides that everything that has happened, all the bad spirits in the house were due to the madman's spells, and he planned to exorcise his influence by killing him, and Ben reluctantly and fearfully goes along with the plan.

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