

Marriage is a Private Affair Summary

by Chinua Achebe

Nnaemeka is a young man living in the city of Lagos. Here, he meets Nene, a young woman, and gets enthralled by her. Nene is pushing Nnaemeka to inform his father, Okeke, about their plans to get married. However, Nnaemeka is reluctant because he knows it will be hard to convince his father to approve a marriage between him and a woman who hails from a different community. Before long, Okeke sends a letter to Nnaemeka informing him about a God-fearing girl named Ugoye. Okeke has chosen her to get married by Nnaemeka. Nnaemeka decides to visit his home village. He holds a long conversation with his father. Nnaemeka seeks forgiveness from his father before revealing to him that he is not interested in Ugoye.

Nevertheless, Nnaemeka tells his father about Nene. Okeke is infuriated when he learns that Nene is a teacher, and the bible warns against women teaching. However, what gets him mad at his son is the fact that Nene is not Ibo. To vent his frustration, Okeke declines to take supper. He believes that the devil is influencing the decision of his son. The whole village gets information about Nnaemeka's plan to marry an outsider. Such a decision angers them.

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Nnaemeka goes ahead and marries Nene. His father disowns him. Nnaemeka tries his level best to persuade his father to accept his decision but in vain. Nearly a decade later, Okeke still doesn't want to see or hear about his son. Though the villagers have decided to accept Nnaemeka's decision after several years, Okeke remains adamant. Indeed, he struggles to get him out of his mind. As a result, Okeke becomes depressed. When the couple is blessed with two children, Nene pens a letter to Okeke, narrating how her sons want to meet their grandfather. Okeke becomes guilty and regrets his actions of disowning Nnaemeka's family.