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Book Review

Title:	<i>A Father's Rosebud</i>
Author:	Mark Irechukwu
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This work was published at a time when the advocacy for the girl child was the focus of most social and literary critics in Africa. *A Father's Rosebud* is Irechukwu's debut novel, 'Rosebud' (the bud of a rose) here, means a 'pretty young woman' The work centres on the African girl child, with such theme as advocacy for the right upbringing of the girl child.

Such advocacy in the novel includes; Efforts to improve the education of the girl child, putting an end to child marriage, inculcating discipline and moral values, empowering them in entrepreneurship skills and helping a child live out her dreams.

The book is fiction, which could be classified as children's literature. The title '*A father's ROSEBUD*' (as is written on the cover page, with the picture of a girl child) shows a deviation from the normal typeface or font in English and is highlighted or foregrounded to catch the reader's attention. It offers the reader a thrilling story with moral lessons and instructions targeted at the African/Nigerian girl child. It is a teaching tool for the upbringing of a child, using Adanna, the

main character's upbringing by her grandma as a contact point. The author's perspective or technique is that of an omniscient point of view where everything about every character is known. The book is made up of seventeen chapters and one hundred and forty-eight pages, with a title exposing the story for each chapter. The first three chapters explore Adanna's birth. Born into the family of Mr. Ude and Mrs. Ego Udeh as the last child and only daughter among six sons (a daughter among sons). Adanna is loved and pampered by his father, and while growing up, he was excluded from some house chores. Udeh is a trader and a farmer, as well as the choirmaster in their home church. He was outstanding in singing in the church and also sings whenever he's less busy at home. His family members join him each time he sings or hums tunes at home. He goes to choir practice with Adanna and Izu, the immediate elder brother, as they are growing.

Later in the work, Ego, Adanna's mother becomes worried about the way her only daughter is being brought up, the husband's over-pampering attitude and Adanna's untamed character. At 9 years she still bed-wets and each time Ego, the mother scolds her, the father frowns at it. Unlike the boys who could do most house chores and go to the farm with their mother, Adanna could not at nine years old, she always goes out to play with her mates. Gradually Adanna became lazy and stubborn as she grew up. This continued until Udeh, Adanna's father bought her a bicycle for consistently taking the first position in her class from primary one and now in primary four.

In chapters six and seven, it was seen that this gift distracted her in her academic performance as she was not monitored nor checked in her use of the bicycle, she rides it to school and uses it with her friends at unholy hours in school. Thus, at the end of the term, Adanna took the last position in her class. Teacher John's visit to Adanna's house is commendable. As Adanna's teacher, he noticed some of the misbehaviours of Adanna and decided to visit her parents and report to them. The character of teacher John represents the role of the teacher in a child's upbringing.

In chapter eight, Adanna's parents could no longer bear her misbehaviours so they unanimously decided to send her to her maternal home, to be well-trained by her Granny-Mama Rose, Ego's mother, who is a retired primary school teacher, and disciplinarian par excellence. At Mama Rose's house, there were other children also brought there by their parents to be well-groomed and disciplined. The character of Mama Rose stands out as a mother with a burning passion for the progress and success of young ones, even when they are not her biological children. She has this desire to rid them of certain ill behaviours such as telling lies, disobedience, stealing, fighting and other vices. She was able to stop Adanna from bedwetting at ten years (80)

Apart from riding or delivering the children under her care from certain misbehaviours, she also equipped them with skills and good morals (86). We could read that when Ego, Adanna's mum visited her mum's (Mama Rose) house, she was impressed with Adanna's improvement.

In chapter fifteen, Adanna is already an undergraduate of Law at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and was appointed class representative by the Head of Department after scoring the highest grade point in her first year. But something sinister happened to Adanna as soon as she entered her second year. It was noticed that there was mass cheating in the previous exam and some students were found guilty. Out of envy, Adanna was indicted by some of her course mates to be involved in this cheating. Adanna was suspended alongside others by the university authority without further investigation. Adanna's parents believed her when she said she was not involved in any examination malpractice because of the kind of upbringing she got before leaving for the university. After some months at home, she was re-called to school, because further investigation proved her innocent.

As an undergraduate, Adanna was a member of the school choir and music group. She performed excellently well in solo singing and guitar playing. A trait she cultivated from being a chorister at her home church.

The final three chapters move ahead to Adanna's graduation from the university with distinction and several academic awards, her graduation from Law school with excellent grades and her subsequent call to the bar. She practiced for some years, working in different law firms as a solicitor. But that gene of music that was inculcated in her by her father from childhood stood tall. She resigned from her job as a solicitor in a law firm after some years and went into music. With her beautiful voice and skills in guitar playing, as well as dancing, she is featured in different concerts and each time she does, she enthralls her viewers. After a few years of featuring in other people's music, Adanna launched her music brand, a blend of traditional Igbo music and Western music accompanied by guitar and other instruments. She later got married to a famous musician and they continued their music career together, their music albums cut across Africa, Europe and America and they became brand ambassadors to numerous multinational companies. They later established a consulting and mentoring firm which was named after their first son.

Irechukwu's debut novel *A Father's Rosebud* is written with clarity, in a language that a wide range of readers will find accessible. The novel is peppered with a lot of similes for illustration

which helps the reader understand the story. It is a welcome contribution to the course, 'Children's Literature' that is studied in the Department of English and Literary Studies of most Universities. The author's orientation in this work is not feminism, rather it is an advocacy for the good upbringing of the girl child in a male-dominated society so that such woman would stand out, break limits, challenge certain cruel cultural norms and stereotypes and shape the future with boldness in different facets of the economy such as education, technology, medicine, politics, entrepreneurship and business, to mention a few. *A father's Rosebud*, in addition, is advocating for raising a courageous, intelligent and resilient woman, who will support her husband and help build her community and country. The novel underscores the fact that the upbringing of a child in Africa shouldn't rest only on the shoulders of the biological parents, rather the school, the church and the community should be involved. Parents should strike a balance between love and discipline in the upbringing of a girl child, especially an only daughter.

The novel will be very resourceful to pupils in basic five and six and students in junior secondary schools, who are still going through character moulding. Young parents will also find the novel an important teaching tool for the upbringing of a child.