

PRESS INFORMATION KIT

for

Nothing Comes Close

Book Information

Book Title: Nothing Comes Close

Author: Tolulope Popoola

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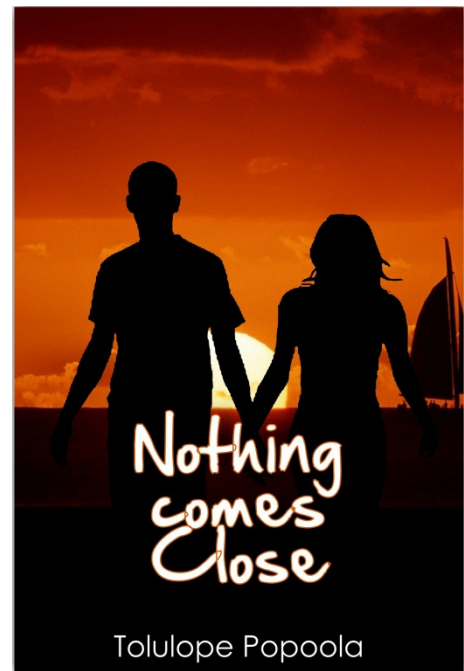
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Available from: Amazon, Waterstones, WHSmith, Barnes and Noble, and most online book retailers.

Description: Confident, sassy, career girl, Lola meets cool, handsome, unpredictable hunk, Wole at a party in London. He pushes all the right buttons for her, and sparks fly. Wole is also irresistibly drawn to Lola, and before long, they get together in a wonderful romance. But Wole is not all that he seems, and he is holding back some dark secrets.

Things start to unravel when Wole's past begins to catch up with him and Lola has to decide if Wole is worth the trouble that threatens to overwhelm her. Find out in this captivating book if their love will overcome the trials of a murder investigation, an arrest, a meddling relative and a trip halfway across the world, or whether they both give up and go their separate ways.

Unique Points: The story in Nothing Comes Close combines elements of romance with drama, mystery and suspense to tell an intensely absorbing story. It is set in London, Milton Keynes and Lagos, Nigeria. It features a cast of intriguing Nigerian characters that the target market will really connect with, as there are not many books of this sort on the market today.



The story follows the adventures of Lola, a confident, sassy, career girl, living in London working and socialising with a group of close-knit friends. Lola meets cool, handsome, Wole at her friend's birthday party in London. He pushes all the right buttons for her, and sparks fly between them. Before long, they get together in a wonderful romance and Lola is delighted to finally be in a relationship where she's happy. But Wole is not all that he seems, and he is holding back some dark secrets. Things start to unravel when Wole's past begins to catch up with him and Lola has to deal with the chaos and difficult decisions that Wole brings into her life. There is a murder, an arrest, a meddling relative and a trip halfway across the world to settle scores and erase mistakes. Will their love be strong enough to withstand these challenges? Will they give up and go their separate ways?

About the Author



Tolulope Popoola grew up in Lagos, Nigeria and moved to the United Kingdom in 2000 for her university education. It was wrongly assumed that she had a head for figures, so she studied BA Accounting and Business Economics and a Masters in Finance and Investment. By chance, she started blogging in 2006, which rekindled her love for writing and telling stories. A few writing classes and an online fiction series soon followed and in 2008, Tolulope quit her Accounting career to become a full-time writer. She now writes short stories, flash fiction, and articles for many print and online magazines. She set up Accomplish Press in 2011 to publish her first novel, *Nothing Comes Close*, when she realised that there were not many mainstream publishers in the UK, willing to take a chance on “ethnic” writers like her. **You can interact with Tolulope online via:**

Blog: www.onwritingandlife.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TolulopePopoola

Twitter: [@TolulopePopoola](https://twitter.com/TolulopePopoola)

Goodreads: www.goodreads.com/TolulopePopoola

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/tolulopepopoola

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Love, Friendship, and Secrets in Debut Novel, “Nothing Comes Close”

Accomplish Press is pleased to announce the official publication of *Nothing Comes Close*, a debut novel by Tolulope Popoola. The story is a compelling tale of the struggle to preserve love in the midst of daunting challenges. *Nothing Comes Close* is set in London, Milton Keynes and Lagos, with a cast of intriguing characters that showcase a realistic portrayal of the lives of young, ambitious Nigerians in the diaspora.

Nigerian born author, Tolulope Popoola taps into her experience of living in the UK to write a book about familiar themes - real people with ambitions struggling to make the right choices in their romantic relationships. The story also shows the tensions of living within two cultures - trying to maintain a Nigerian identity whilst absorbing British values.

“I’ve always loved reading,” the author said. “Growing up, I read a lot of books by authors such as Enid Blyton, Louisa May Alcott and Jackie Collins. When I started writing, I wanted to write about characters and situations that people like me would recognise, without the burden of adding to the narrative of what’s expected from an African story.”

The plot for *Nothing Comes Close* grew out of an online series titled *In My Dreams It Was Simpler* that Tolulope created and co-wrote with eight other writers. She created the main cast, and picked two of them as protagonists for her novel. “The online series ended on a cliff-hanger.” She said. “I wanted to get my female protagonist to a point where she was satisfied with the choices she had made for her future. With the novel, I got to make that happen.”

The story captures the ups and downs in the lives of a Nigerian girl, her group of friends and her love interest as they try to navigate their lives in London. There are issues such as marital infidelity, career decisions, death, heartbreaks, loyalty and cultural expectations. Each of the issues is dealt with in a sensitive, exciting and entertaining way.

For an enticing preview of *Nothing Comes Close*, visit the Accomplish Press website to download sample chapters and view its exciting trailer at <http://www.accomplishpress.com>.

Nothing Comes Close is available as an ebook and paperback from Amazon, Waterstones, WHSmith, Barnesandnoble, and other online retailers. The book was officially launched on the 1st of December 2012.

Book Reviews

Review by Yejide Kilanko, Author of Daughters Who Walk This Path

In her debut novel, *Nothing Comes Close*, Popoola, explores a theme familiar to most of us, which is that of finding love. The novel is the story of Lola, a young woman living in London, England. We also meet her friends, Funmi, Temmy and Maureen. These middle-class, professional women, are not only bound by a Nigerian origin highlighted by colourful cultural snippets, they share a long-term friendship that has survived boyfriends and the passionate disagreements that come with intimate relationships.

Lola's world, takes an unpredicted tumble when she meets the mysterious Wole at a house party. This chance meeting, is where this fast-paced, romantic novel, really begins. In their circle of friends, Lola has the designation of being the practical one. Yet, she is not equipped to deal with chaos that meeting enigmatic Wole brings into her life. Woven into the story, are glimpses into the lives of the other women as they confront or escape from the challenges life throws at them. Just like people we know, the choices they make are not always admirable. Still one gets a sense, they are trying to deal with life as best as they can.

Nothing Comes Close is not without its imperfections. There are moments when the motives of the characters appear unclear and one becomes impatient with the pace of the story. However, an unexpected death, imprisonment, betrayal and dark secrets, add twists that make this book much more than a boy meets girl story. A fine debut.

Review by Lara Daniels, Author of Love in Paradise and Love at Dawn

One word: Riveting. Sometimes unsettling. That's how I can best describe *Nothing Comes Close* by Tolulope Popoola.

"*Nothing Comes Close*" is the love story of Lola – the most outspoken and independent friend in a group of five girlfriends. The book touches on topics such as romance, loyalty, grief, and tolerance/acceptance of each other among friends who don't necessarily see eye-to-eye on certain issues, for example, having relationships with a married man; or say, cheating on a boyfriend with an ex-boyfriend. The highlight for me, however, was the story of Wole's past. Wole is the male protagonist in the novel and is also Lola's love interest. To make Wole's story pull the reader's heartstrings, the Ms. Popoola did a very fine job of bringing into play a quite forgotten character in Nigeria's history – Dimka – the man who led the abortive military coup against the then head of State of Nigeria, General Murtala Mohammed. I see many readers researching this important piece of Nigeria's history as they read this book and I really appreciate the author's effort in bringing that to the reader's attention.

Review by Ainehi Egoro, for Bella Naija

A truly African love story, *Nothing Comes Close* shows us how African women fall in love—cautiously but completely. It is London sometime in the 2000s. Four young women—Lola, Funmi, Temmy, Maureen, and Titi—are caught up in the usual London hustle, doing the career thing and still finding time to look pretty at parties and bars. But their lives aren't perfect, especially for Lola, who is nursing a broken heart and hanging on to a job—as a financial analyst—that she doesn't like. At a house party organized by one of the girls, she meets Wole. The attraction is instant, but in her classic Nigerian-girl approach to romance, she is hesitant, always worrying about “losing all sense of caution.” But when unexpected tragedy strikes in the form of a murder, the force of desire heightened by the pain of loss drives Lola into Wole's arms. From that point, the driving question of the plot becomes: will Wole reward her need for comfort with love or will his dark past destroy their chance for happiness?

Right there you have the elements for a perfect romance story—a broken hearted young woman and a guy with a dark secret. But, then, it is what Popoola does with these elements that makes the novel such an entertaining read. The “dark secret,” for example, is smart and significant. Of course, I'm not telling. All I'd say is that I appreciate that in creating this defining characteristic of the romantic hero, Popoola dips into Nigerian history in a way that is not only learned but lovely.

Review by Shola Okubote, Editor of Femme Lounge

Tolulope Popoola's *Nothing Comes Close* is a book that I enjoyed reading, not only because of the story but because it was well written.

Tolulope Popoola is a good communicator. Her writing connects readers to the story in a way that makes it easy to relate to the characters. I particularly like her description of objects and events, and how they are tied into the story effortlessly. I think she is a writer who has taken a lot in from her environment and has articulately used it to tell a story in a beautiful way.

The book is about Lola, a young Nigerian woman living in the UK. She's got four girlfriends each with her own dynamic personality and relationship issues, but great friends nonetheless. Along came Wole, she loves him, he loves her too, but it will not be that simple. Riveting secrets, intruding sister, murder charge and a friend's death are few of the many things they will have to deal with. The characters are quite familiar, almost all of the characters reminded me of someone I know, and that is one of the things I love about the book. The lead characters are also well developed for the plot. I would have loved to see more of Nigerian culture sprinkled here and there in the story though.

The story is also captivating, I was really eager to know how it will all end. My prediction turned out wrong though, I was actually hoping there will be a more dramatic ‘no-happy-ending’ turn of events. But the unpredictability added a tasty

spice to the story. I find the end a bit mushy, but I guess it will be the delight of some readers especially the hopeless romantics.

I have this habit of picturing books I like as a movie in my mind. *Nothing Comes Close* is a book I will really love to see as a movie, I can actually picture the characters and scenes in my mind already! I hope that day will come.

Review by Pamela Stitch; Writer, Blogger and Radio Presenter

Tolulope's book belongs to the genre of chick lit in that it shares the stories of Lola as the main character and three of her other educated, highly achieving Nigerian friends looking and in some cases finding love in London, United Kingdom. These young women are Lola, Funmi, Temmy and Maureen and each of these women come with different personalities that will seem quite familiar to those who keep and have a close knit collection of female friends. Almost like sisters, we get to feel the familiar angst as they circumvent different issues of love and life in London while keeping close ties with their cultures. For many of us, these stories will resonate – you know the story of a woman who dates a married man, another who crosses tribal lines because of love and also the issues that come with such crossings and of course another who deals with having a loved one on the other side of the law. We find ourselves crying, jumping with glee and generally, 'cheesing' at different junctures of the book. I also have to add that this is a clean romantic book, so you can give it to anyone.

Recommendations

Nothing Comes Close has been recommended by Africa Book Club as one of the "Best Books of 2012"

Suggested Interview Questions

1) Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I grew up in Lagos, Nigeria in a household where I was surrounded by books from an early age. As a child, I was a real bookworm; the introvert who preferred staying at home reading to going out and partying. I left Nigeria for the UK in 2000 for my university education. I studied Accounting and Business Economics for my first degree, and after a year in the workplace, I went on to gain a Masters in Finance and Investment. I started working in accounting jobs, while studying for my professional accounting exams. In 2008, I gave up Accounting to become a writer.

2) What are your influences as a writer? What influences your writing?

I'm influenced by many things. For example, the books I read, movies I watch, conversations I hear, music I listen to, etc. Anything can give me an idea for a story or a character.

3) What draws you to writing?

I express my thoughts better when I write them down. Growing up I always kept a journal, and writing was my therapy when I was going through the angst-filled teenage years. Writing helps me to sort through my thoughts and emotions.

4) Do you ever experience writer's block?

I do experience periods of writer's block. When that happens, I read other books, listen to music and jot ideas in my notepad for later.

5) Which do you prefer, writing with a typewriter, computer, cell phone or old fashioned pen and paper?

Nowadays, I do most of my writing on my laptop. I still carry around my notebook for those days that I'm out and I want to quickly write down something before I forget.

6) Did you see yourself becoming a writer as a child?

No I certainly didn't. When I was growing up, reading and writing were my hobbies, but I never thought I could write for a living. I didn't know anybody who was a full-time writer and it wasn't one of the options we were given in secondary school. I ended up doing commercial subjects and choosing to study Economics and Accounting at university.

7) What's the best perk of being a writer?

Not having to commute to work.

8) Tell us about your new book, 'Nothing Comes Close'

Nothing Comes Close is the story of two characters, Lola and Wole, and how their relationship developed in spite of the challenges they had to face. It's a story of love,

friendship, betrayal, secrets, honesty, regrets and, hopefully, a happy ending. Lola is a confident career girl. She is feisty and intelligent; she has her flaws, but she knows what she wants and she stands for what she believes in. She often sees things in black and white, and she is not afraid to speak her mind. Wole is mysterious and unpredictable, but he's also loyal and he's got a sense of duty and justice. Together, they make for a very interesting couple.

9) What were the challenges you encountered whilst writing and publishing the book?

Writing the novel was a huge learning experience. I'm a new writer so I still have a lot to learn. The main challenge was the process of going through several drafts and rewrites, but it was necessary to make the prose better.

10) Which character(s) from your book can you relate with the most and why?

I'll go with Lola. I like her attitude. She's not afraid to say what's on her mind, but she's also got a vulnerable side. I also like the fact that she found the courage to follow her heart towards the end of the book.

11) Why did you choose 'Nothing Comes Close' as your book's title?

The title comes from something Wole said. He was admitting that nothing comes close to having the love of the lady in his life. It is significant because he regretted letting that love get away from him.

12) Is 'Nothing Comes Close' your first publication?

I previously published part of a series with seven other writers, but Nothing Comes Close is my first full length novel.

13) What was your experience getting publishers for your book?

From my experience, I knew there were not many publishers willing to take a chance on new writers like me. I had met a few publishers who found my work interesting, but they always said that it wasn't commercially viable because it was regarded as 'ethnic fiction'. But, I believe that I have to tell my stories and there are readers who want to read about people like them in books. So, I did a lot of research and decided to take the chance and become a publisher myself. It seemed like a good idea to try and be proactive about getting my work out there, instead of waiting endlessly for whenever a publisher would notice me.

14) Why is your book 'Nothing Comes Close' relevant in this day and age?

I was having a conversation with a lady one day and she said that while she enjoys reading books published by African writers, she was fed up of reading about wars, poverty, rapes, murder and so on. She wanted African stories that were not about some bigger agenda. And I agreed with her. I think we need more stories that the average African can relate to, stories that focus more on the human beings and not on some perception of how people want to view Africans.

15) Do you see yourself as a 'genre specific' author?

No I don't. I mostly write short stories and flash fiction that don't fit into any genre. When we started writing the initial In My Dreams It Was Simpler series, we didn't define it as romance or anything. It was just fiction. I'm fascinated by people and relationships, so I started writing Lola and Wole's story because it was what I observed around me. I saw people struggling to make certain decisions when it came to their relationships, and I tried to capture that in fiction. Relationships are one area of life that every adult has to deal with – we're either searching for the right person to be with, or trying to make the best of our current status.

16) Does your book fall into any particular genre?

I suppose it would fall under the category of "women's fiction" which includes chick-lit and romance. But there's a bit of mystery and thriller elements in it as well, so it doesn't fit neatly into one box.

17) What was the last book you read?

I've just finished reading The Rice Mother by Rani Manicka and I'm still dreaming about the characters.

18) Who are your favourite authors and what books have spoken to you most?

Different books have spoken to me at different times in my life, including: Little Women by Louisa May Alcott, On Black Sister's Street by Chika Unigwe, The Help by Kathryn Stockett, Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Adichie, and The Life of Pi by Yann Martel.

19) What is next for you as a writer?

I'm working on my next book, and also a collection of flash fiction.

20) What are your words of advice for budding writers?

Read, read and read. Read many books in the genre you're interested in so they can give you ideas of what to do and what to avoid. Also read outside of your chosen genres. Then start writing your story and don't give up if it seems difficult. You can only get better by practicing often.