

# NERO

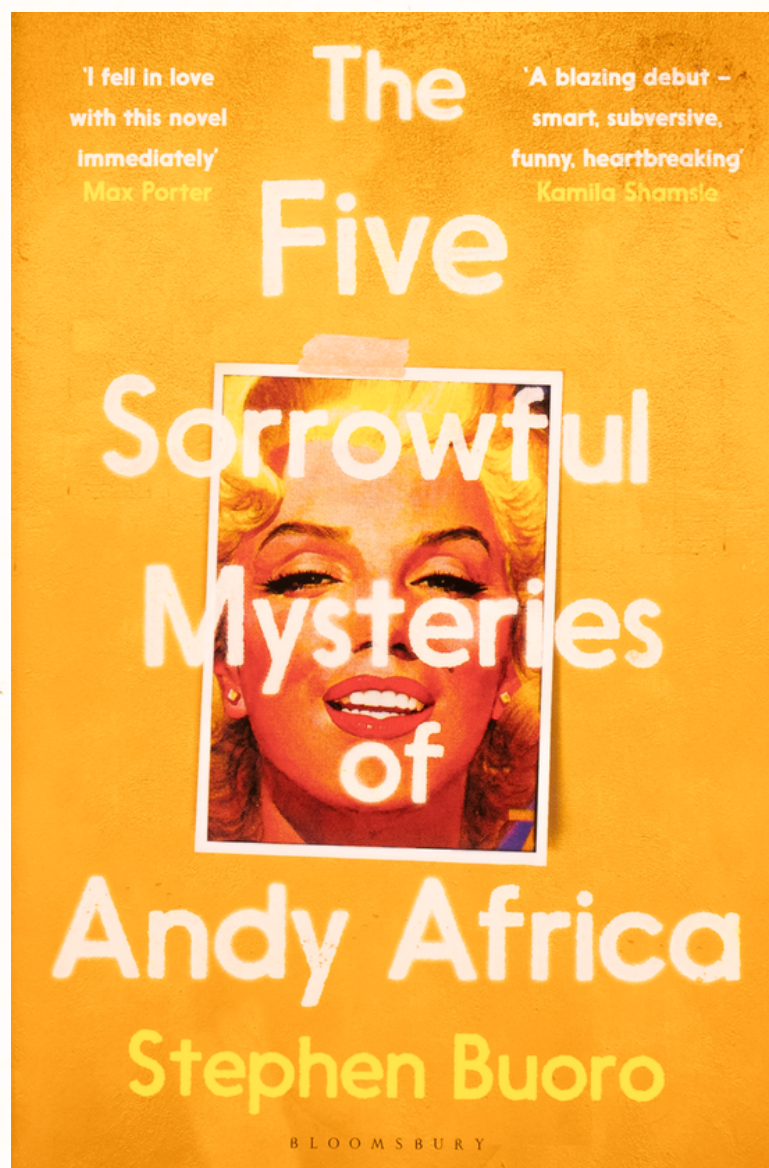
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## BOOK AWARDS

### Reading Guides

#### Debut Fiction Shortlist

#### *The Five Sorrowful Mysteries of Andy Africa* by Stephen Buoro



**Stephen Buoro** was born in Nigeria in 1993. He has an MA in Creative Writing from the University of East Anglia as well as a first-class degree in Mathematics, and is a recipient of the Booker Prize Foundation Scholarship. He was awarded second place in the 2020 Deborah Rogers Foundation Writers Award and is currently studying for a fully-funded PhD in Creative & Critical Writing at UEA. Stephen Buoro now lives in Norwich.

*'This is extraordinary, driven by a gloriously eccentric central character. It is utterly compelling, not shy about posing difficult questions for the reader; just don't expect it to provide any neat answers.'* - **Debut Fiction judges, 2023 Nero Book Awards**

*'The x of the equation is that there's a blonde here in Kontagora, a platinum blonde if I'll believe Isaiah. A Marilyn Monroe who has never had mosquitoes sing in her ears and suck her blood, leaving red swellings as they fly away. A Princess Diana who has never woken up at midnight with hunger. A Taylor Swift who has never experienced a blackout.'*

Nicknamed Andy Africa by his friends, 'the droogs', fifteen-year-old Andrew Azizia lives in Kontagora, a small Nigerian town. His Catholic community are minorities in Nigeria's Muslim north but girls, not religion, are Andy's main preoccupation – specifically white ones, the blonder the better. That and unravelling the mystery of who his father is, a subject on which his mother is frustratingly tight-lipped. When the European parish priest's niece comes to visit, Andy falls madly in love, just as a stranger appears, claiming to be Andy's father and, equally alarmingly, an angry mob decides it's time to rid the town of its Christians once and for all.

Eccentric, surreal and very funny, Stephen Buoro takes readers down unexpected paths, weaving together pop culture references, teenage obsessions and the religious fervour embedded into

every facet of contemporary Nigerian society. Buoro's satirical novel takes a superficially cheery approach to serious subjects such as the legacy of Colonialism and the oppressive threat of violence, while the hero of his novel calls to mind Adrian Mole, another teen protagonist whose ponderings are unintentionally comical.

At its heart a story of self-discovery, readers will fall for the hero of *The Five Sorrowful Mysteries of Andy Africa*, willing him on as he searches for an identity and a future.

#### Discussion Points:

- Why do you think Andy's mum refuses to tell him who his father is?
- Andy makes no secret of his fetishisation of Eileen, but do you think that she also fetishises him?
- What points about the relationship between Africa and the West do you think Stephen Buoro is trying to share with readers through this novel?