

A Silent Song and Other Stories Guide

A MAN OF AWESOME POWER By Naguib Mahfouz -Egypt

Synopsis

Tayyib al-Mahdi believed his time on earth had come to an end. He had a health insurance, adequate pension and owns an apartment at Nasr city. He is also a family man; together they have four married daughters.

Tayyib al-Mahdi spent most of his evenings with his wife watching TV, reading newspaper and listening to the radio channel devoted to the Qur'an. One day he had a dream (p 1) "from this moment onward and for so long as God wills, you shall have the power to tell something, Be!-and it will be. Do with it what you please" after the dream Tayyib al-Mahdi developed powers that were magical.

Tayyib al-Mahdi uses his newly acquired powers to bring transformation in his country. (P 2, 3) Tayyib al-Mahdi realizes that he cannot transform his country without a clear plan. He decides to obtain all necessary details and documents. With the needed information he comes up with a clear way to help each department. He is so determined to correct his country and eventually the world. (P 4) and once he is done correcting his country, he will turn with zeal to deal with the world."

Tayyib al-Mahdi sees a young beautiful woman, he is attracted to her and wants to have an amorous moment with her. 'he utterly forgot both his faith and his life.....surrendering to their fate (p.4)' he feels guilty after this ' he realized that he had erred.....the pain it caused him would not go away (p. 5). ' he realizes that his power/miracle is gone. He remains guilty for the rest of his life. (P 5) 'Pleading is pointless. Distress is useless. Regret has no effect. An awesome sadness will haunt Tayyib al-Mahdi.

ADD RELEVANCE OF TITLE

Thematic Concerns

1. Corruption

The theme of corruption in government department is clear depicted in the story. P 3.

Tayyib al-Mahdi intends to transform all the departments. 'he obtained guides to the departments of government.....each phase must be quieted, every deviation must be deterred.'

2. Sexual Immorality

Tayyib al-Mahdi is a married man and equally religious man. He gets entangled with a woman that he sees at the entrance of the tea garden. 'He saw a beautiful woman approachingswept by a surge of delight. P.4'

Tayyib Al-Mahdi found his passions aroused in a way that he had not known since he married Haniya...'he utterly forgot both his faith and his life.....surrendering to their fate'

3. Magic Power

Tayyib al-Mahdi has a dream that recurs severally. In the dream he sees an apparition who gives him powers to tell something and it be. He is excited about the new found powers that he one evening decides to try his powers. (P. 2) 'He decides to try his supposed new power discreetly.'

'Whoever is granted a power like mine, must use it only for good.' (P. 3, 4 and 5)

4. Poor governance

5. Hypocrisy

6. *Change*

7. *Disillusionment*

8. *Religion*

Characterization

a. Tayyib al-Mahdi

1. Religious

Tayyib is religious and practices his faith. (p. 1)

The author says Tayyib al-Mahdi believed that his mission in this world had come to an end. Deeply relaxed only minor aches and pains , he would mutter to himself in contentment, “A”

2. Hardworking and determined

He had an apartment that he bought as a result of working for so many years abroad.

3. Ambitious

4. Sexually Immoral

5. Vulnerable

6. Observant

7. Ill-tempered

Language and styles

1. Narration

2. Stream of Conscience/Soliloquy

3. Irony

4. Vivid Description

5. Allusion Kouran [Research on the internet about Mohammed](#)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Corruption is so rampant in our society. How true is this? Verify this using the story A Man of Awesome Power.
2. What goes round comes around. Prove the validity of this statement using the story A Man of Awesome Power.

3. Choices have consequences. With close reference to Tayyib show how the author proves this reality in the story Man of Awesome Power.
4. Poor governance is prone to ruin the society.

AN INCIDENT IN THE PARK BY MEJA MWANGI

Synopsis

The story is set in the month of August. It is dry and rains have disappeared for while. The story brings out the desperation of people living in a city. It highlights the plight of people trying to survive in harsh economic times. People are marred with poverty. For instance Meja Mwangi tells us about a hairy loafer wearing worn slippers, in addition the loafer is in a torn trouser, he is also malnourished from the explanation of his thin legs. Unemployment is also highlighted in this story in that people are considered idlers having nothing to do. P.8

‘The idler sitting on the bank sniggered and threw more rubbish into the water’

The ice cream seller is unable to make sales despite the fact that it's a dry season. The sitting man believes that the ice cream seller is insane. This is because the public is experiencing economic crises in that they cannot afford to buy the ice cream. This clearly depicts how majority of people struggle with their lives in times of harsh economic conditions. Due to illiteracy they believe that ice cream is for children

Illiteracy is also a key concern in this story. The idler sits on the board inscribe with the words DO NOT FEED FISH-BY ORDER. Being illiterate the idler goes forth feeding the fish, in fact, he greets his reflection. This is clear that the idler is illiterate and lacks knowledge on ordinary science. Illiteracy is displayed also on how the idler feels about how the fish feeds. According to him fish feeds on insects after they have drowned. The man continues feeding the fish and even feels and believes that a rainbow is a fish too.

The ruling regime is also ruthless to its people . It has not created an enabling environment for small businesses .the police officers are ruthless and inhuman. Traders operate in fear.pg10.

The city constables demand to see the ice cream man's licence

The city constables are corrupt ,inhuman and blood thirsty. They harass fruit vendors.The demand a license from the old man ,they also demand for identity card from him. Realising that he is missing both they threaten to take him home or to the judge .He tells them that he only has ten shillings. The city constables disagree among themselves whether to take the ten shillings or to take the man to the ruthless judge. Even after he tells them that he has a wife and children the constables do not consider.

The seller pleads with them but they refuse to let him go, he decides to leave the two baskets to them and run away cursing them as he runs away. The constables are merciless in that they do not care about the state of the fruit seller who is in desperate condition with a torn coat, he opts to leave the coat and run for his life. The constable shoot after the man on the run. They shout and the man is arrested as he waits to cross the highway. The hawker is then lynched by the mob. This is after the constables shout that the referring to a hawker as a thief. The constables do not rescue the man instead they only look around furtively for someone to blame. They

later withdraw conveniently across the highway into the city as if no life has been lost. According to the constables ‘a thief is a thief’ meaning they don’t value life. This shows that the city’s administration is injustice to people.

Relevance of Title

The title *Incident In The Park* is relevant to the story in that Meja Mwangi looks at the city as a park full of animals. It is a city where a rule of the jungle applies. The writer looks at a society without the rule of law. Impunity prevails just like in the park where animals live. The leaders do not care about the welfare of the people they lead. The leaders are ruthless. The writer says that if one lay facing east, one looked up straight into the frowning face of the parliament and city hall clocks. This depicts the arrogance of leaders.

Movement in the city is related to animals in the park. Some people rush for the meat roasting places down River Road, others joined the queues at the numerous fish and chips joints where they dutifully swallow soggy fried chips with watered-down ketchup. The writer tells us that within a few seconds the thousand or so strong swarm had been swallowed up by the yawning concrete jungle. This is to mean that no one cares for the other, it's all about every man for themselves.

When a hawker tries to escape from the hands of ruthless city constables, who are merciless, arrogant and ruthless, they shout alerting the public that he is a thief. He stumbles, falling into the ditch by the side of the highway. The public stones the hawker to death. The public behaves like animals in the jungle, killing one another, this is the rule of the jungle where the strong survive and the weak do not. The constables on realizing the truth, for their defence they use a term ‘a thief is a thief’.

After the man has been lynched, thereafter the park was once more calm and peaceful just like animals that kill each other and carry on with their activities.

Comments **Break into parts that are often discussed; stylistic, thematic, character, and more.**

Characterisation

Ice cream man

1. Determined

He walks around alerting people to buy the ice cream. He has done it always despite the fact that there is no one willing to buy

2. Hard working **ADD THIS**

He is always walking around tirelessly looking for customers

3. Scrupulous

4. vulnerable

City Constables

1. Callous, Ruthless and Cruel

They harass people and steal from them. They are abusing their powers.

2. Corrupt

They demand everything from the hawker since he has no license and identification card. They harass the fruit-seller until he decides to give them the two baskets and ten shillings.

5. Negligent

The old man

He works hard to ensure that he feeds his wife and children.

Thematic Concerns

1. Poverty and Struggle for Survival

Poverty is a major concern in an *Incident in the Park*. Meja Mwangi clearly displays this theme. City people are sailing in mass poverty. The ice cream man's bell rings lonely and unwelcome like a lost leper's warning bell. This clearly shows that the seller is not making sales to better his life since people do not buy (p.70)

There is a hairy loafer wearing worn slippers sitting on a board inscribed with the words DO NOT FEED FISH-BY ORDER. We are told he rolled up his torn trouser-legs which are described as thin hairy. This shows that accessing food for body growth is a challenge.

We are told that the a few me lay half-wake hiding from the tormenting sun and a shaggy, thin man is said to have sat down under a shrub, scratching numbers and letters on his black dry skin, mumbling to himself(P.7). This is a sign of a poverty stricken society. The man is said to have bony hands. This clearly illustrates that the man lacks good meals.

The fruit seller who is an old man is said to be in a torn coat (p11.)

2. Poor governance

The parliament building and the city hall clocks is said to be having frowning face. This clearly shows that the city leaders do not consider the well-being of people. Majority of people are languishing in poverty for instance small traders, people are killed carelessly and the leaders consider impunity as a right.

The city is dirty. This shows that the city council is not making any move in protecting the environment. We are told that the lake has dirty water.

The leaders have also failed to curb corruption. Small traders are oppressed by the city constables. They take everything from a fruit seller who has not made sales for a day.

Leaders priorities themselves

3. Impunity and Injustice

In an *Incident In The Park*, impunity prevails. People are killed and no legal action is taken. A good example is a hawker who is branded as a thief by the constables and killed by the mob. The matter is taken lightly. The constable claims that a thief is a thief, yet he was not a thief.

The fruit vendor is simply betrayed by the constables impune nature.

Language use and Styles

1. Vivid description

The writer opens the story with a vivid description. The writer says that the dried bits of grass stuck forlornly out of the numerous cracks like pleading tongues out of hell screaming for a drop of water,

P.6.7 and 8

2. Dialogue

A loafer carries out a discussion with the newcomer. They discuss about nature. The loafer tries to find out matters concerning nature

P8,9,10,11,12

3. Apostrophe

A loafer addresses his own reflection in water. He asks how fish get their food, and gets the answer that insects drown .

He frowns at his reflection.

4. *Humour*

The writer uses humour to convey his message to the reader. The loafer says 'Did you know fish is like people?' p8. The loafer asks how fish make children p.9n.

On the hawker fears being castrated p11.

QUESTIONS

1.Urbanisation comes with its challenges. Discuss this statement referring to an *Incident In The Park* by Meja Mwangi.

3.Highlight the effects of bad governance as depicted by Meja Mwangi.

4.What are the effects of poverty. Discuss

5. Impunity is a major challenge in developing countries .discus

6.Justice delayed is justice denied

A SILENT SONG

BY LEONARD KIBERA –KENYA

Synopsis

The story talks about a young man called Mbane who is critically sick and at the verge of death. Mbane spend most of his youth at the streets of Nairobi as a beggar. (Page 18) ‘..But the street had come to mean his life....’

Mbane is so much accustomed to the streets that he feels uncomfortable at his brother’s hut. He is not used to sleeping on a bed and having conversation with people. Mbane is only familiar with the ways of the street. In the streets he encounters both generous and mean people. Mbane talks about the gay people that often drops coins in his hat page 18 ‘...for it was the gay people who mostly answered his plea.’

Through the narrator’s eye, we come in tandem with the nightlife in the town. Mbane tells us that ‘...Voices would sing, bottles would crack and men would curse’..... ‘It was also the turn of pimps and whores galore to smile their way into the good men’s pocket....’

Herein the story, we come to terms with Mbane who has completely given up on life. This is so because of the tough life at the streets that eventually leads to his ailment. ‘...often as he sat there on the pavement, he wished for his journeys end’ He develops a silent song in his mind. This silent song is a happy one, it gave him hope ‘...it gave him hope and he sang his own happy song, silently to himself, secretly.’

His brother Ezekiel who is a preacher who is so much keen on ensuring that Mbane accepts Christ in his life before he dies. ‘..I want Christ to save you....do you know where sinners go when they die, do you know where those who are saved go? P. 20’

Relevance of the title

The title of the story is relevant. The narrator takes us through the life of Mbane who lives in the streets. We understand that he loves his own company. Most of the time he engages in small talks with himself. Mbane prefers to sit and observe, rather than people disturbing his peace. ‘...much as he wished to be left alone. All his life he had been speaking to himself in his thoughts....’Mbane develops a sweet

song that gives him a lot of hope in the face of diversity. 'It gave him hope and he sang his own happy song, silently to himself, secretly.'

Characters and Personalities

Mbane

1. Pessimistic

He felt that he could never marry like his brother. He could only yearn. He saw no reason as to why he should believe in God-p.g 19

2. Resigned

He didn't care about time or how old he is.

3. Ignorant

He did not understand why whores and pimps were considered so bad after all

-He did not know how old he is only that his brother had once told him that he was 144 years, so he must be older

4. Optimistic

In the end, he was convinced that far, far away, beyond the pangs of darkness lay light

5. Alienated

He felt that he did not belong, nothing matters to him. Everything was vanity

Sarah

1. Caring/concerned

Gives Mbane medicine, raises his head slowly and tenderly and puts the cup in his mouth so as to give him medicine

2. Empathetic

Encourages Mbane by telling him that he will be all right soon

3. Religious

She tells Mbane that God will be good to him

Ezekiel

He is a preacher- He wants to know if Mbane, his brother, believed in God

1. Optimistic

He hopes that his brother will accept Jesus Christ

2. Kind, caring, and concerned

He takes his brother from the streets

3. Inquisitive

He asks his brother Mbane several questions including whether he knew God, if he knew where sinners go to when they die

4. Temperamental

When he tells his Mbane that he is worse than Judas, we see him suppress his anger.

5. Religious

His brother Ezekiel who is a preacher who is so much keen on ensuring that Mbane accepts Christ in his life before he dies. ‘..I want Christ to save you....do you know where sinners go when they die, do you know where those who are saved go? P. 20’

Thematic Concerns

1.Suffering

In the story *A Silent Song* the readers get a gest of suffering as is evident through an encounter with Mbane who is suffering from unknown ailment. His suffering is eating in him, he is in a state of despondency ‘...the pain in his spine and stomach rapidly gathered violence...it vanished with the same savage fury of its onslaught...he slumped his youth in horror under the weight of closing death (p.17).’

It is evident that Mbane is in excruciating pain and at the verge of death. He secretly longs to die so that his soul is free from suffering. ‘ He wished for his journeys end....he wished that his soul were free (P.20).’

Mbane has no shelter or a house while at the street, he suffers the cold night’s

‘.to yield the street to hostile cold...to surrender his vulnerability to sleep and, occasionally, the basest of thieves (p. 18).’

2. *Immorality*

In the streets, there is Prostitution and alcoholism.

During the nightfall pimp houses and bars thrive. The narrator tells us ‘...it was also the turn of pimps and whores galore to smile their way into the good men’s pockets after a hard days rest P.18.’

3. *Religion*

The story brings out instances of religion. The narrators mother was religious ‘....he remembered their religious mother ‘she encourages them to be religious.

His brother Ezekiel is a preacher ‘....his brother a preacher....I rescued you from that barbaric city so that so that you can see the light of God.’

1. *Change*

Life in the rural areas is slow and calm. Life in the urban areas is fast, people move in quick steps, they are always in a hurry. Theft is the order of the day

2. Conflict

conflict Within an individual is seen when Mbane had been speaking to himself in his thoughts for a long time on the streets.

7. Death

-Mbane's religious mother had died

-Mbane also dies at the end of the story

8. Desperation, Pessimism

-Mbane tackled the world around him with a lot of pessimism

9. Alienation

-Mbane kept feeling alienated from his people, his society and his environment

10. Hypocrisy and sycophancy **ADD**

Stylistic Devices

Language and Style

1. Flashback

In Page 19 '...he remembered their religious mother...' Here we get to meet Mbane's mother who was a Christian and long dead

2. Vivid description

The narrator's pain is clearly brought out. '...he crawled weakly on his knees and elbows.....sharp pangs from his naval tore into his bodycold sweat ...let go

his chin and hit his forehead.’ Through this, the readers are able to create mental pictures of the narrator and understand his agony.

The nightlife of the town is perfectly painted through vivid description. (Page 18)
‘.. the night would burst alive with drums beating strange rhythms that tempted him...voices would sing ,bottles would crack and men would crack..’

3. Metaphor

God is white cleanliness. .. eternal light (p.19)

4. Hyperbole

Mbane says, it sometimes surprised him that the big vehicle which emptied the dustbin had never swept him away. This means that just like the rubbish that was thrown in the streets, he was not worthy (p.19).

5. Song

Mbane sung his own happy song, silently to himself, secretly (pg. 20).

6. Humor

It is humorous how Mbane describes how he wondered that the big vehicle which emptied dustbin in the streets never swept him away

7. Foreshadowing

Mbane wished for his journey’s end. That his soul were free, flowing everywhere and not incarcerated in a body which smelt of sweat unwashed except rain and which he could but feel (p.20). This comes to pass at the end of the story when Ezekiel and Sarah confirm that Mbane had already gone.

8. Dialogue

There is a dialogue between Mbane and his brother Ezekiel (p.20). At first, Ezekiel kept asking Mbane many questions which he did not answer, but later on Mbane responds that he knows there was once a man called Jesus

QUESTIONS

1. Does religion cater for the needs of all individuals in the society? Using the story *A Silent Song* write an essay on this.
2. In times of adversity one is prone to easily give up. Verify this using the story *A Silent Song* by Leonard Kibera.
3. The realities of life in the rural are different from those in the urban. Using the story *A Silent Song* show the truth in this statement.

NINEMA BY VRENIKA PATHER

This is a 4-page story written by a South African author, Vrenika Pather. The narration is in present tense with bits of past tense and it is told in the third person **omniscient point of view**. The heroine who takes the center stage of all events therein is Ninema, a hardworking, practical, composed, optimistic, principled, focused, cautious, admirable, and firm girl that tends and sells herbs in the Indian market. She is beautiful as a result of her thin seductive perfect body, high firm breasts, high cheekbones and her focus that attracts a lot of people, including men and women. She perfects in her trade and knows much that surrounds her and her business.

She treats customers as clients and avoids any possible close relations with any, including Mr Chran, the lawyer from the Brahim caste regardless of him seeming infatuated with her. She knows how to handle Mrs Singh, an old rich lady who baggles a lot about prices of her herbs. She also given attention to the old Dr Seedat whenever he comes to buy heard. Ninema perseveres the challenges of her trade and hopes that she will reach her dreams one day, hence complaints from some people do not bother her. She accounts for her herbs at the end of each day

and has mastered counting her money too. She leaves the market while other women are still cleaning up only to be mishandled by a strange man. She beats him up to his embarrassment as the other women hawkers jeer and cheer . She bids them farewell and goes home. Finally, while at home she still holds to her future where she hopes for a comfortable house and life.

Relevance of the Title

Ninema is directly takes from the main character in the story.

It also relates to the plot in which Ninema's character , business, focus, and assertiveness emerge.

The title too related too themes of admiration, hardwork, and determination, and optimism, Ninema shows.

The title is stylistic because the vivid description in the story focuses on Ninema.

Characters and personalities

Ninema

1. Orderly and organized

Once she reaches the market, Ninema takes off her chumpals and places them neatly on the side of her stall. She sets up her stall, then arranges the herbs appetizingly. It is hot and she sweats while she works, her sari slings to her firm skin. The other lady hawkers, setting up their stalls , chat with her amiably as they work.

In the evening she also arranges her herbs very fast and leaves while other women are still cleaning up their stalls.

2. Hardworking, resilient, focused and Determined

She is focused on selling her herbs every day and making enough money hence she has a garden were she rears her herbs.

She is determined about satisfying her customers and makes sure she has a stock for what they need.

She is focused on owning a house and garden where she will plant more herbs.

Ninema is always in her garden as early as our O'clock in the morning to harvest her herbs (p.13).

Even though Ninema finds it tough and she accepts her lot in life and wills to make it at the end of it all.

The author indicates that everyone who knows Ninema knows that she is facing challenges and winning.

She focuses on business and even when her customers like Chinran seem infatuated with her she treats them with respect.

Ninema does not lower her prices no matter what and she understands how to haggle with her customers, hence she runs her business with an iron fist (p.15.)

3. Optimistic and hopeful

Ninema hopes often that she will save money and acquire a bigger house than what she has for now(P.15).

When she looks at her diminishing stock, Ninema is hopeful that she will have enough to satisfy all her customers (p.15)

When Dr Seedat comes by Ninema's stall and talks to her she is optimistic that she will remain healthy (p.15).

Even as she reaches home in the evening, Ninema owning her house, large garden, and kitchen.

4. Inimitable and Unique

Compared to other women, Ninema was her own person. She was neither chatty nor ready to bring down prices of her herbs.

Ninema beats up the woman who pinches her nipple and shames him for his choice to molest her.

5. Admirable

Many men admire her as she sways to the market.

Chinran loves visiting Ninema's store because, "the mere sight of Ninema made his day. "

Mrs Singh, the rich old woman keeps buying Ninema's herbs and makes prolonged bargains to allow her interact with Ninema for a long time.

9. Enterprising and entrepreneurial

Ninema has mastered the art of trade that she makes it in her herb business.

Other women wonder how she makes it in selling her herbs regardless of her high prices.

10. Assertive

Men who often stare at Ninema while she goes to the market often look away and are embarrassed when she faces them with her piercing, black eye.

She beats up a man who pinches her nipple.

Key Aspects or Concerns

1. Love and Admiration

The women admire Ninema's high cheekbones

Chinran appears to be a customer to Ninema but he is infatuated with him . The author indicates that "the mere sight of Ninema made his day. " Besides, the thought of having a prying , jealous wife who could take over the purchases and deprive him a chance to see Ninema often , makes him hot under the collar.

Mrs Singh the rich old woman always buys from her and she has prolonged bargains to allow her interact with Ninema for as long as possible.

Dr Seedat is another much-loved character in the story. Even Ninema takes her time to discuss with him her mother's ailments.

2. Hard work, Resilience, and determination

Ninema has such focus and perseverance in her work that she never gives up in her business.

She reaps her herbs from her garden at four O'clock in the morning (p.13).

She has healthy crops including green finger, dhanian, mint, which she sells at the Indian market and earns a living from it.

The author says life is tough and so is Ninema who accepts her lot in life but she does not resign.

Everyone who knows Ninema knows that she is facing challenges and winning.

Even though Chinran seems to be infatuated with Ninema she treats him like any other loyal customer; with respect and appreciation.

She does not encourage his infatuations with her.

Ninema masters how to handle loyal customers like Mrs Singh who kept haggling over prices of herbs. (p.15)

She is said to run her business with an iron fist (p.15.)

She also thinks that she should sow more seeds to keep up with the demand.(p.15)

3. Hope and optimism

As she looks at her diminishing stock, she hopes that she will have enough to satisfy all her customers. Ninema hopes that with the money she is saving, she will buy a house of her own.(p.15)

Dr Seedat hopes that Ninema will remain healthy and not go to him for treatment of cold or flu. Ninema too hopes she will remain healthy (p.15).

The final paragraph of the story shows the hope of Ninema owning her house, large garden, and kitchen.

4. Inheritance

It is revealed in the story that the art of selling herbs that Ninema now has was a trade she learned from her mother and father and they passed down the wisdom of generations of family trading. (p. 14)

5. Hierarchy and Classism

The society from which Ninema is set has classes of people, particularly cast systems.

Ninema knows her wealthy customers including Mrs Singh.

When women think Mr Chinran the lawyer is in love with her because she keeps buying her herbs she thinks to herself ‘how could a rich lawyer from a Brahmin caste be interested in a poor girl from a low caste’

6. Sexual Immorality.

A strange man blocks Ninema’s way when she is walking to her home, extends his arm, pinches her erect nipple hard and laughs out aloud

He also tells her if she liked what that action, she should follow him

The man uses a vulgar tone.

7. Assault and Female assertiveness

When a man pinches Ninema’s nipple, she follows him , beats him on the back on the head with her sandal and hits him all over his face and torso.

Ninema looks at meaning a way that embarrasses them.

Ninema treats her customers as such and not as people to exhibit their desire and infatuation including rich ones like Mr Chinran.

8. Shame and humiliation

The man who mishandles Ninema is astounded after she beats her and he covers his face with his hands.

Other men who stare at Ninema while she goes to the market often look away and are embarrassed when she faces them with her piercing, black eye.

Stylistic Devices

1. Hyperbole

The author exaggerates the ability of Ninema to drive embarrassment in men who stare at her as she heads to the market

There is overstatement of how she arranges her stall

She arranges the herbs appetisingly (p. 14)

It is overstated how fast Ninema is in calculations

She can add faster than you could say the word 'herb' (p.14)

2. Vivid description

There is extensive and in-depth description of people, events, or ideas in this story. This helps to enhance emphasis on certain people, personalities or situations. Besides, it gives a static effect in which the audiences pay attention to certain people, features or events in the story.

The author describes Ninema in details allowing the audience to create a mental picture of how she actually looks like in the text.

The author says :

He thin, chiffon start drapes effortlessly around her perfect body, as if kept in place by her high , firm breasts. Long, tones arms and a cinched waist cause men to stop and stare. They turn away in embarrassment when she faces them with her piercing, black eyes. The women admire her high cheekbones(P.13).

The author goes further to describe how she works in the market:

Once at the market, the young woman takes off her chumpals and places them neatly on the side of her stall. She sets up her stall, then arranges the herbs appetizingly. It is hot and she sweats while she works, her sari slings to her firm skin. The other lady hawkers, setting up their stalls , chat with her amiably as they work(P.14).

There are details of Ninema's acts as her business day ends.

She sighs, counts remaining bunches of herbs, the profits of the day , folds-up her chair before tying them in a handkerchief and stringing around her waist.

When Ninema arrives home she cleans her face... ADD THIS

3. *Idiom*

Green fingers to mean art of producing plants more

Questions

1. It takes courage to assert oneself in a society where certain individuals have despotic mannerisms. Discuss basing on the story *Ninema*.
2. Ninema is indeed a face of change in the story *Ninema*.
3. Determination and hardwork are the root to hope and success in life. Do you agree? Write an essay by referring closely to the story *Ninema*.
4. It is not people but individual who determines the course of life they will have. Referring to Ninema in *Ninema* show the validity of this statement.
5. Good decisions results in good harvests. Write an essay that shows how this statement applies to the story *Ninema*.

IVORY BANGLES BY ERIC NG'MARYO

This is a tragic story a-page written by a Tanzanian, Eric Ng'maryo . The story is written in third-person perspective. It commences as soon as the main character, Chief returns to his house from the seer's home. The seer predicts the future of Chief after cross-examining the liver of a goat her has slaughtered. The pebbles foretell the death of the Chief's wife after which the seer advises him to beat her and send her to her parents to avert the misfortune. On arriving at home, he the wife unstraps his sandals, bathes him, and rubs him with sharp-smelling unguent then serves him mashed green bananas, meat, vegetables, herbs, roasted sweet potatoes. He soon reflects on is life and the choice he made when in past an ageing Chief advised him to marry another wife. Chief reveals the sad predictions by the seer but the wife disregards reminding him that the seer has said he would cast a

spell on her because she rejected his hand in marriage. A day after, Chief goes about his business and his wife goes to the market . She learns that there is a herd of elephants roaming around. The wife plans to prepare a meal and leave for her late parent's home. She would then complain that her husband has beaten her without a reason then she would expect reconciliation between her and her husband's clan. After purchasing important items on the market, she goes back home, prepares a meal, then engages in digging the farm. She compares her humble, friendly husband with her violent son who keeps beating his wife. She is killed by an elephant.

Relevance of the Title

Ivory bangles

Is a title that emerges in what the protagonist, Chief's wife wears. She always wore many ivory bangles the Chief had carved for her.

Stylistically, the ivory bangles offer a vivid description of the beauty of the Chief's wife and help us know how other people perceived her.

Thematically, the place of woman and love is insinuated in the ivory bangles women have to wear as a gift from their husbands.

The setting too relates with ivory bangles as elephants come to the plain and hunters kill them then take the ivory to make bangles.

Characters and their personalities

Old Chief

Conservative

Believes a chief needs to have more than one wife

Chief

1. Unique and Irreplaceable

He rejects marrying another wife even when the ageing Chief tells him to do so.

He has never beaten his wife to old age.

2. Loving and friendly

He refers to his old wife as girl.

He makes beautiful bangles for the wife after having the first son as an act of love.

He shares the seer's revelations with the wife.

3. Superstitious and delusory

He visits the seer to check on his future.

He kills a goat to enhance cross-examination of his future life.

He believes the seer must be predicting correctly about his future.

Chief's Wife

1. Humble , polite, respectful, and courteous

She addresses her husband respectfully.

She respects her daughter in law , Lever

Devoted, Loving, and compassionate

She addresses her husband with respect.

She takes her husband behind the house , unstraps his shoes, and bathes him.

She cooks for her husband the best meal and serves him then wishes him long life.

She prepares a meal for the husband regardless of hearing him talk of the ritual beating he should conduct.

2. Hardworking and organized

She plans her duties and finishes them in time.

She is responsible about her shores.

She goes to the market, buys groceries, prepares a meal and ensures her grandson is sleeping.

She weeds the farm with her daughter in law.

She goes back to work before an elephant tramples her.

3. Vulnerable and Susceptible

Even when she hears the announcement on the market that elephants are roaming in the plains, she still goes to the farm at wrong hours and meets her death.

4. Resistant and Schemer

She plans to cry and go to her brother's home then report that her husband has beaten her without any reason so that her people and her husband's reconcile.

Stylistic Devices

1. Irony

It is ironical that regardless of the Chief's wife being gentle, loving, and devoted to serving him, the seer predicts that Chief must beat her to appease the spirit of jealous that may cost her death.

It is ironical that the Chief's wife is aware of the danger of roaming out as a result of the herd of elephants that are astray, yet she still goes to hoe her farm from where the elephant stumbles on her.

It is ironical that the Chief's son, Kibanda, beats his wife often, yet his father is such a loving husband who has never beaten his mother.

2. Vivid Description

The author gives a detailed description of how the Chief's wife cleans him when he arrives home after visiting the seer.(p. 22)

The description of the Chief's wife is explicit about her. He is said to move on, her bangles clanking softly, a loved woman emblazoned with ivory.(P.24)

She heard cries. They came from scouts who were perched on top of trees, observing the elephants and warning people of the elephants' movement. (P.24)

It was a dark house and it was madly trumpeting. She was lifted bodily. At this, she was a dark house and was madly trumpeting. She was lifted bodily(P.25).

3. Dialogue

The Chief and wife hold a discussion immediately he comes from the seer. The chief makes her aware that there are tragic news and that the grandchild is safe, sound and asleep (P.22).

The Chief appreciates the art of cooking shown by his wife and in exchange the wife wishes him a long life.

The old Chief advises the young Chief to get himself another wife as a reward for bravery and he laughs about it then wonders about the nature of her potsherpot. The old Chief encourages him that his pot is unbreakable(P.23).

The Chief informs the wife that he went to the seer and the seer predicted her death unless he beats her. The wife suspects that the seer might have made it up because he wanted her for a wife and that in case she rejected she he would cast a spell on her.(p. 23-4)

4. Foregrounding

The seer predicts that the Chief's wife would die and indeed at the end of the book she dies when the elephant stamps her.

5. Stream of Conscience

The Chief's wife thinks about how she will go home, cook for her man, go to her brother's place, weep, and complain of having been beaten by her husband regardless of having not done anything.(p.24)

The Chief's wife thinks to herself while digging in the farm that she would do some hoeing in the weedy grove, then squeeze her eyes and go to her brother's house. (P.25)

She thinks about the weed-infested place, how she weeded with Leveru, the daughter-in-law and how her son had been beating the daughter-in-law. She loudly reflects on the grandchild, Kibanda who is crying and blames him for playing with people who do not like him.

Key Concerns in the story

1. Superstition

In this society people have a seer whom they consult. The Chief goes to consult the seer and she slaughters a goat that they use to examine the future. The seer uses pebbles too to depict what is coming.

The Chief's wife reveals that the seer threatened to cast a spell on her if she did not marry him.

2. The Place of a woman

There are certain duties a woman must carry out in her home.

For example, the Chief's wife unstraps the sandals of her husband, she leads him behind the house and bathes him, rubs him.

The wife too prepares a meal and serves the husband

On the next day, The Chief's wife [plans on how she will cook for her husband and grandchild before leaving to her brother's home.

3. Male chauvinism

The society believes that a man should marry many wives . The ageing Chief tells the young Chief to get another wife.

The seer threatened the Chief's wife that if she did not marry him , he would cast a spell on her.

The society believes that a man must beat his wife and if he does not the spirit of jealousy demands that he does so even in old age as is the case for the Chief.

4. Abuse and Gender Violence

The society believes that they must beat a wife . The seer insinuates that the spirits are jealous of a happy wife (The Chief's) and want him to contact a ritual beating(P.23-4).

The Chief's wife reports that her son, Kidanda, beats the wife to a fingernail's distance to their grave.(P.25)

The Chief is somewhat convinced that he had to act in line with what the seer had done.

5. *Resistance*

The Chief does not see sense in the insistence by the marrying of another wife as suggested by the ageing Chief.

The wife the Chief resists the beating she is supposed to receive from the Chief and suggests that the seer must have played foul.

The wife plans to pretend that she was beaten and go to her brother's home after which her husband's people and her people will reconcile.

Questions

1. Love and kindness is a mother of peace. Using the story *Ivory Bangles* write an essay to show the reality of this.
2. Wife beating is an outdated culture. Do you agree? Relating events in the story *Ivory bangles*, write an essay on this.
3. Sometimes, death can be denounced but when one delays, they are prone to encounter it . Using events in *Ivory Bangles*, relate events surrounding it.
4. Wishes are horses are beggars cannot ride. Show how this statement is applicable to the story *Ivory Bangles*.

THE SINS OF THE FATHERS

by Charles Mungoshi

Synopsis

This is a story written by Charles Mungoshi a Zimbabwean. The narrator narrates in the third perspective through a flashback of events that lead to the desire of Rondo Rwafa longing to shoot his father, the former ex-minister. Currently, Rondo and the wife have been mourning the death of their two daughters who dies in a grisly road accident with their grandfather, Basil Mzamane. Mzamane goes

through a series of thoughts including thinking the father-in-law was entertaining his granddaughters when the accident happened. He thinks they might have died happily. He knows he has been sitting in one sofa near the fireplace for the past week, in pity only to be consoled by his workmate, Gaston who made him go buy items for the mourners. Seeing mourners, Rondo knows each has their goal. He even reads the voices they bear and their view that the accident had not been natural. The father touches him and assures him that he will be glad that the accident happened now and not later. He also reassures him not to listen to what people say. The father goes to the house and he meditates on what his wife has always told him. He feels even as a journalist he lacks respect amongst his colleagues because he often relied on his father. Selina, the wife comes by and encourages him to go and sleep. She comments on a great mother that Rondo has and even when he asks her opinion about the father, she is elusive. She informs him that she will be attending her father's burial and requests him not to go. Rondo remembers that his father has once broken his guitar and even being the only child did not stop him from disregarding his son. His wife was close to his mother, yet his father was quite indifferent about her. The father had regarded him a treacherous son for marrying a muNdevere. Rondo even believes the father is right about him because he seemed too diminished. He is sorry that his father never addressed him with any respect and that most of his workmates laughed at him too.

He recalls that some of his friends had mentioned that his father was a different kind of person. His doubt had been confirmed by the accident that seemed to connect to the happenings in the birthday party. He recalls that his father-in-law had come after his father invites him and Selina is suspicious about this. During the visit, Rondo's father insists they go for duck-shooting at Mr Quayle's place in Ruwa. On their way, a truck loaded with youths had emerged. They almost attacked Mrs Quayle with their lethal weapons only for Mzamane, Selina's father to intervene. Rondo's father mysteriously disappears from the scene and Mzamane helps the woman after which she invites him to her home. It seems Rondo's father was eyeing Quayle's land and when he heard Mzamane indicating of an imminent visit to Quayle's home he is angered. Even though they return home, during the party, Rwafa receives a request from the guests and they want him to tell them something about the liberation struggle. He speaks about his enemies and seems to attack Mzamane's family indirectly; he

declares that he will want his family to have pure blood that is not mixed with the state, class, and family enemies. Visitors leave in confusion and when Mzamane leaves the day after with Rondo's daughters they encounter a tragic accident. Recalling all these makes Rondo furious as he recalls how the father had beaten him mercilessly for having eaten the neighbor's Ripe mangoes. The story ends as Rondo's father sends them away from his room and he shoots himself.

The Title

The Sins of the Fathers

Characterwise, Rondo is a killer, greedy man who is egocentric, dictatorial, overdomeneering, mean, and cruel . He conducts a lot of cruelties , evil schemes, and tries to make his son a replica of himself. He feels the son has let him down hence when he organizes for Rondo's daughters as accident the son feels he must die. Indeed, he kills himself.

Thematically, aspects of parenting, cruelty, and fate clearly bring out the title as sins that the father conducts. The rivalry between Mzamane and Rwafa is for the past events, hence they are sins of the fathers that affect Selina and Rondo or is it the wrong decision of Rondo marrying Selina and how it affects the daughters?

Stylistically, there is an irony in the tile as the father dies for his own sins writing his story.

The plot is developed behind Rwafa, Mzamane and their children , the climax and conflict too revolve around actions and reactions of these characters.

Characters and their personalities

Basil Mzamane

1. Selfless

He rescues Mrs Quayle, a stranger when the vexed youth raise weapons on her.

He shows the need to tolerate other people and learn from them.

When Mzamane invites him to his home, he visits even though he knows they are enemies.

2. Jovial and charismatic

Even in death, Rondo imagines that he dies while singing to his daughters.(p.27)

He is able to manage the enraged armed boys into not attacking Mrs Quayle , hence he diverts misfortune. He says, “Let us all remember we are all human. This lady probably needs our help. Even so, if there is something you had planned to do, I don’t want to be a witness to it, because I am not part of your plans. I am stranger to this part of the country. Is this how you treat visitors in your homes?” The men lower their clubs and get back to the trucks.

When he learns that Rwafa is attacking him in a speech, he walks around as if admiring the plants in Rondo’s garden.

3. Vulnerable and Susceptible

He knows the danger he creates when he seems greater in the presence of Rwafa, but he often tends to either talk about land and how reconciliation between whites and the local societies create a suitable environment.

He also talks about the kinds of people and what makes them good or bad in the presence of Rwafa who does not like such topics.

He even mentions that Mrs Quayle has invited him for tea to her home and asks whether Rwafa knows her, yet he already suspects folly business.

He goes with Rwafa for a tour to Ruwa though he has little knowledge of what is there.

Rwafa

1. Cruel, callous, and brutal

He calls his son traitor just because he notices the misfortune of Mrs Quayle.

Though the accident Mzamane and his granddaughters encounter is questionable and is so much linked to him, he simply tells his son that he will be glad about what happened and he has to know nothing lives forever.

When he is furious about Mzamane it does not end until he ‘organizes an accident’ for him.

In Rondo’s childhood he beats and drags him for a long time after he steals oranges.

He eyes Quayle’s farm in Ruwa and wishes his wife tragedy, hence when youths pursue her he disappears and he feels disappointed that she Selina was rescued.

2. Temperamental and Hot/Quick-tempered

He easily calls his son a traitor and asks whether she is his mother for having mentioned Quayle and indicated that he normally visits her.

He stops Mzamane from talking about good or bad people and the lessons we learn from that because he does not want his son to believe in that ideology.

He is angered when about Mzamane and talks about liberation by specifically insisting that his blood would not carry the blood of enemies(p.40).

3. Pretentious and unforgiving

When he learns who Rondo is marrying he avoids attending the wedding, fails to cover the bills and leaves town on claims of attending to ‘State Business.(p.35)’

He welcomes Mzamane to the party and even makes sure that he has arrives at Rondo then he plans on a journey that would have endangered them.

He makes a speech that is directed to addressing Mzamane as an enemy whom he will not tolerate in his family especially letting his family carry that blood.

He is suspected to have organized the accident of Selina’s father and his granddaughters.

4. Elusive and Mysterious

He mysteriously disappears from the pajero when the youths seem to want to either attack Quale's wife or their own vehicle.

Rondo did not know his father fully and even his friends were suspicious about who he was and that he was connected to the street accidents that keep occurring(p33).

The author informs us that Rondo recollects that his father leaves early in the morning and returns late in the evening or a week later.

Gaston relates the Second Street accidents to Rondo's father.

Rondo

1. Generous and Sociable.

He gives some of his friends some money when they are in need (p.32).

Rondo had a lot of friends who are always around him including Gaston (P.33).

During the loss of his daughters his friends stream around him and sometimes make him go for shopping.

Rondo relates with Quayle and even learns that his relationships with Rwafa goes long before when they worked together in a bookshop.

2. Reserved and Naive

When Mrs Quayle is almost being attacks by the enraged youths, Rondo fails to help only to think later that he should have done something(p.39).

Mzamane suspects that the truck trailing them as he drives to Mutare road in Ruwa is strange , however, Rondo does not think there is anything weird about it(p.36).

Even after learning from Mr Quayle that they had been working together in a bookshops in years before, he does not bother to find out anything about it from his father(P.35).

When Rondo's workmates tell him that he does not know his father and ask him whether he wonders about the Second Street accidents, Rondo does not know and does not think it matters.(P.33)

When Gaston makes Rondo see mystery about his father, the author shows that he is not used to living his life from deductive and logical thinking(P.33).

Even though Rondo is a newsperson, he has no interest or idea about where his father goes early in the morning and what he does before returning in the evenings(P.33).

Stylistic Devices

1. Direct Speech

Rwafa talks about liberation and closely refers to betrayals, enemies of the state, clan, and family who had looted, stolen cattle, snatched babies, and blocked development. He also indicated his prowess and achievements and how he would not allow his pure blood to be diluted by the enemies(P39-40).

2. Dialogue

Rondo's father talks to Mzamane while convincing him to attend the duck-shooting event at Mr Quayle's place in Ruwa.

Rwafa talks to Rondo after he has spent various days by the fireplace to soothe him into believing the death of his daughters and father-in-law is something to forget about because nothing lives forever(p.28).

Rondo, Mzamane and Rwafa have a conversation in which the son tries to explain the misfortune of Mrs Quayle. Rondo's father is enraged and when Mzamane explains about people and specifically of a White farmer who reconciles with the Pazho people, Rwafa is annoyed and calls him a traitor.

Rondo shares with Selina how strange the death of her father is (P.30).

There is a conversation between the youths who are enraged and Mzamane or Rondo when they are on the Main Mutare road(p.37).

Selina talks to Rondo and asks him to take a rest and also have her meal after many days of mourning. She also informs him she is accompanying her father's body to Bulawayo, but Rondo should not accompany her(P.30).

3. Flashback

The story starts when Rondo and Selina are holding guns ready to shoot Rwafa before it takes us back to how the accident happened and the possible relation it has with the dislike Rwafa had with Mzamane.

Rondo flashbacks on what friends have been telling him about his father and the possibility that he is demonic.

Rondo flashbacks a smacking he receives from his father when he steals Ripe mangoes from the neighbor and how the father pleads with the father to let him be.

He also flashbacks on the birthday party, the visitation to duck-shooting with his father and father-in-law, and encounter with the youths and Mrs Quayle.

Rondo flashbacks on the speech the father-in-law gives during the birthday party and the exit of visitors after his father is angered.

4. Irony.

It is ironical that though Mzamane and Rwafa are enemies, their children intermarry.

It is ironical that though Rondo's mother loves and admires Selina, his father hates her and does not really want them to live together. Even after they have daughters, he still feels they cannot stay together.

It is ironical that Rondo's father has one son, yet he does not really seem close to him and often looks at him as a traitor and a failure even though he was a news person.

It is ironical that after the death of Rondo's daughters and father-in-law in a questionable accident, Rwafa tells the son that he should not be stuck in mourning because nothing stays forever and that he will be glad that this happened, yet he should be mourning with him for the loss.

It is ironical that Rwafa invites Mzamane for the birthday then he quickly whisks him to a duck-shooting at Quayle , yet later the events of the day show there was a fishy deal because the enraged youth trail them, they want to attack Mrs Quayle and Rwafa himself disappears from the pajero mysteriously. He also shows rage when Rondo talks about Mrs Quayle yet he is a supposed friend to his husband and should possibly be happy to save her.

5. Contrast and Juxtaposition.

Mzamane and Rwafa are opposites of each other both characterwise and ideologically. Whereas Mzamane is jovial and humorous, Rwafa is elusive and emotional. Rwafa is egocentric and cruel, where Mzamane is selfless, kind, and concerned.

Rondo is the opposite of his father too. He is kind, humane and hence he is sorry for the loss of Selina's father and his children when the father is unkind, inhuman, and unfeeling for the death of both his grandchildren and Selina's father. He also feels for Mrs Quayle when she encounters a tragedy unlike the father who is less concerned.

There is a great difference between Rondo who was innocent, naïve, and lacking interest in understanding who his father is and the Rondo who loses his daughters, is bitter , aware of who the father is and interested in killing him.

6. Vivid description

The author shows that Basil Mzamane laughed with an uproar (P.35)

When the pajero drives towards Ruwa, they find an open truck with youth who sing Chimurenga songs and wave ugly clubs .(P.35)

Soon they roll down to the stream with very little water in its bed and cross a narrow concrete-and-stone bridge into the scrub on the low hill.(P.36)

Mrs Quayle looks at the men in the pajero and truck and they look back at her. There are few painful moments, with neither side seeming to know what to do with the other. She brings down the hood of her jeep with a loud bang, moves quickly to the open door of her jeep, reaches out in and pulls a rifle. The youths in the truck jump out and advance towards her(P.36).

The author gives a detailed description of Rwafa after he sees Rondo with a gun.

His eyes open wider still and a great flood of sadness washes through him. He looks wearily into the face of his one and only son and searches all over his face for a foothold of manhood, for a handhold of hope(P.41).

Rondo watches how his father places the gun he gives him on the floor, reaches inside his jacket and takes his own service pistol then tells then to shut the door and in few minutes a soft muffled plop comes from the room.(P.41)

Key Concerns and Aspects

1. Parenting

Mr Rwafa finds the son eating the neighbor's mangoes and thrashes him then drags him even when the owner has already beaten her until the mother asks whether they want to kill her son(P.40).

Mr Rwafa roughs up his son until he lacks confidence in himself. The author indicates that He was prepared to destroy his son in his endeavour to have- a duplicate? An heir? Mr Rwafa, as Minister of Security seemed to have pursued his duties that he had not been able to distinguish between his work and family.(P32.)

Rondo's mother was caught in between the sensitivities of her husband's job and the sensitivity of her son's nature. In a way each of them lived locked in their cages.

Mw Rwafa easily calls his son names like traitor, he also addresses him disrespectfully that even Selina notices that it is only his mother who sees him as a whole (P.32).

Rondo becomes diminished and thinks may be his father is right. He also develops a stammer because he is afraid of addressing his father anything. He does not even know a lot about the father. When his daughters die and people tell him it is one of the Street accidents, he quickly plans to kill the father.

2. Awakening

Rondo reveals that he has never wanted to believe what people say about his father. Even his workmates laugh at him for being in his father's shadow, but he disregards it until his son and father-in-law die in a questionable accident after he quarreled with his father (P33).

The author says "Recent events were driving Rondo's thoughts down avenues he was not accustomed to. More than mere recent events were making Rondo see something else in events that he had always taken for granted." (P.33)

Rondo also says Selina also tells him that he is always in the father's shadow and that he can do well in her pants. He hardly believes her until the accident happens.

3. Animosity , Violence, Fate and Cruelty

Rwafa believes the enemies around him should not be spared and when he welcomes Selina's father to his home he organizes for his death.

He also does not see the sense in his granddaughters of mixed blood, hence he ensures they perish with their grandfather.

Gaston makes Rondo see who actually his father is and his funny visitations, he then hands over a loaded gun to him so that he can use it when he wants.(P.33)

In the end, there is the death of Mzamane, Rondo's 2 daughters, and Rondo's father.

The accidents on the streets are also fatal in the story.

4. Betrayal and treachery

Rwafa thinks his son betrays him by marrying a daughter of the his enemies and is indifferent about her(P.32).

Rwafa betrays his son when he organizes an accident in which Rondo's father-in-law and two daughters perish. He seems not to care the hurt Selina and Rondo will have.

Rwafa takes Mzamane to duck-shooting and disappears when he sees a truck full of youths pursuing either them or Mrs Quayle.

Even though Rwafa contacts duck-shooting with Quayle, he does not care to help Mrs Quayle when they find her stuck on the road and when Rondo mentions her he is furious about it.

Rwafa himself invites Mzamane in his home and when people ask him to talk about liberation, all he does is to talk about enemies, his prowess and how he cannot tolerate the blood of enemies to mix with his own family's.

5. *Egocentrism and Selfishness*

Rwafa disregards the choice Rondo makes when it comes to a wedding, hence he dissociates himself from it and hates the sight of Selina. Even though such a relationship has no direct effect on him he says he must keep his family's blood pure.

Rwafa is a selfish man who cares about himself and not about others. He talks about his enemies and states that he will not allow his pure blood to mix with that of an enemy, of children snatchers cattle thieves, and looters (p.39). It makes Mzamane uncomfortable and he wanders around as if admiring the plants in Rondo's garden.

Regardless of his son pleading with him after he realizes he has made a mistake by stealing the neighbour's Ripe mangoes, Rwafa thrashes him and drags him mercilessly(P.41).

When Rondo loses two daughters, he simply tells him that his grief will pass away and he will be glad that this happened (p.29).

Questions

1. *The Sins of the Fathers* reminds us that It is not enough to provide wealth or money to our children, blessing and supporting their choices is also necessary. Write an essay to show the truth in this statement.
2. Current generations suffer because of unforgiving parents. Relate this statement to the story *The Sins of the Fathers*.

3. Selfishness can only hurt others around us. Using the story *The Sins of the Fathers* write an essay to prove the truth in this statement
4. Let bygones be bygones. Write an essay to prove the truth of this statement in relation to the story *The Sins of the Fathers*.
5. Hunting enemies, creates more enemies. Do you agree? Write a composition by relating to *The Sins of the Fathers*
6. Narcissists are the worst people to be around us. Do you agree? Using the story *The Sins of the Fathers* show how true this statement is.
7. We can seek peace and reconciliation but we cannot force it for its results could be tragic. Using the story *The Sins of the Fathers* show the validity of this statement.
8. *The Sins of the Fathers* shows how true the saying, What goes round comes around is. Prove this reality by writing an essay to that effect.
9. Love and hatred are two opposites that cannot sit together. Justify the truth in this statement using the story *The Sins of the Fathers* show

TALKING MONEY

By Stanley Gazemba ~ Kenya

Background

Stanley Gazemba is a writer and journalist based in Nairobi. He is a recipient of the Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature and the author of several novels, including works of childrens' literature, a critically acclaimed recent short story collection, literary criticism and music journalism. He is also a contributor to the recently published crime fiction collection Nairobi Noir. I ran into him at The Go down Art Centre in Nairobi a year ago when he was working at a project at a recording studio in the centre, and got in touch with him recently to discuss the state of Kenyan publishing and the less than encouraging situation most Kenyan writers face today.

Synopsis

Talking money is an exciting story focusing on contemporary issues that ordinary Kenyans endure on a day to day basis like poverty, greed, materialism, illiteracy, family strife, superstitions and beliefs. Mukidanyi the main character, is presented

with a mouthwatering deal to sell of his land to a shadowy wealthy individual by the name Galo. This move to sell a portion of his land is met with opposition from his siblings Ngoseywe and Agoya. With the futile attempts to stop him from selling his land, they leave Mukidanyi's home disappointed.

Later in the evening his wife tries to dissuade him from selling the land but the attempts hit a rock bottom and leads to Mukidanyi whipping his wife Rokina.

Mukidanyi proceeds to sell a part of the land to Galo, who pays him on the spot with a briefcase of cash, a cool half a million, which Mukidanyi does not count due to his illiteracy, the business is closed without any haggling which Mukidanyi is so accustomed to from his salesmanship with which he wins his daily bread.

Later in the evening Mukidanyi secures the briefcase which contains the cash to the bed which he shares with his wife, however, he has lots of troubles getting some sleep because he fears for the money which he is supposed to take to Mbale Post Office for safe keeping.

As soon as he his eyelids succumb to sleep is when he is awakened by strange voices which emanate from under the bed, where, supposedly he is keeping the briefcase, they are children voices, in a conversation about how they find their new home warm and cosy. Ronika too, hears the voices which prompts her to act swiftly by asking Mukidanyi to get rid of the briefcase. Respite them being awake the voices still continue with their conversation about their new hosts; Mukidanyi.

Mukidanyi is forcibly ejected out of the house by his wife who wants him to get rid of the nuisance which he has brought to their peaceful home. In so doing, along the way, Mukidanyi is accosted with ghastly and bizarre creatures of the night which taunt and gibe him, he is on his way to Galo's home to return the money.

He manages to return the money to Galo after several raps on the gate, without caring to explain to Galo why he is doing so. He is swallowed into darkness as he quickly runs away from Galo's home and get as far as he could.

Setting

The story is set in rural western, Kenya. Current Vihiga County to be precise.

The author has a fine touch on the description of the village setting and even captures the aspect of abject poverty the western Kenya folk are in. Mukidanyi occasionally visits Kakamega town for collection of his bonus earnings from tea farming, and does most of his businesses in Mbale town.

Relevance of the Title ADD

Themes

1. *Poverty*

From the onset of the text, we realize that Mukidanyi and the siblings are involved in an argument over the selling of a portion of his land to the affluent Galo. It is an emerging trend in western Kenya where the locals sell their land little by little until when they are left landless.

Ngoseywe, Agoya and Ronika try at every chance to dissuade Mukidanyi from selling the land, but money, he needs so much due to the sorry state of poverty he is in.

Mukidanyi is living in poverty, we learn this through the way he dresses for special occasions, in particular, the day he is transacting the land deal with Galo. He adorns his Kitenge shirt which he reserves at the bottom of a clothes' trunk for only special events, such as this which he is selling his land to Galo.

The furniture that Mukidanyi possesses, such as the wooden bed is termite infested. This is an indicator of poverty, since termites infests a semi-permanent house.

The house which he stays in, has been roofed with a *jamvi* ceiling, which is synonymous with the poor in the society. In addition it is also stained with soot, a clear sign of usage of firewood as a source of fuel, on a daily basis.

2. *Family Strife*

Any conflicts that occur within a family between husbands and wives, parents and children, between siblings, or with extended families (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.)

Mukidanyi is an epitome of individuals cobwebbed in deep family wrangles, the main reason being, the excessive need to control or misuse family funds and resources. A verbal battle between the siblings is witnessed in the process of trying to prevent Mukidanyi from selling the land to Galo. Including the wife Ronika does not see it prudent to sell the land, but the hardheadedness of Mukidanyi prevents him from seeing any sense whatsoever.

Mukidanyi hurls insults to his siblings because they try to hammer sense into his skull. The siblings leave after their attempts hit a dead end.

Ronika gets involved in the feud when she tries to tell him not to sell to Galo, since no one in the area ever does any business with him, however, being adamant, beats his wife with a hippopotamus hide in the night because she tries to intervene in his affairs.

3. Violence

This is a behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something.

Mukidanyi is a violent person. He is violent due to his temperamental nature. Mukidanyi at first, after the bitter exchange with his siblings regarding the sale of the land, smashes the water pot against the wall.

In addition he reacts violently by thrashing his wife with a hippo-hide whip which he hides on the *jamvi* ceiling in his house. This is something which he is probably accustomed to since he is a wife beater. His wife is heard wailing in the night as a result of the beatings she endures.

4. Superstition

Superstition is belief or practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust in magic or chance, or a false conception of causation or an irrational abject attitude of mind toward the supernatural, nature, or God resulting from superstition.

This particular story is shrouded in numerous superstitions which twist and turn the events of the story. Ngoseywe, Mukidanyi's elder brother, is a superstitious individual who utters remarks which are in a way meant to curse his brother Mukidanyi. He asserts that one day, he will need them, which is an indication that he has beliefs which make it certain to him that something bad will happen to Mukidanyi.

Mukidanyi and the wife are awakened by the mysterious conversation which unspecified and unseen children hold under the bed, inside the briefcase which contains the cash, paid to him by Galo for the parcel of land. The scary voices are agitated by the way Ronika and Mukidanyi are raising their voices in trying to find the solution of their present problem.

The briefcase gets heavier by the minute as Mukidanyi is on his way to Galo's home to return the money. The long march to Galo's place seems endless, since he is met with obstacles which come in form of mysterious creatures of the night, others with tentacles too. How to explain such phenomenon is not possible thus making the theme of superstition to be deeply embedded in the story.

5. Illiteracy and ignorance

Illiteracy is the inability to read and write and ignorance is the lack of knowledge and information.

Mukidanyi being at the epicenter of ignorance, becomes our typical example on how one can suffer due to illiteracy and ignorance.

Mukidanyi is illiterate because, he is a truant in school when he is still young, despite the efforts of his father, Kizungu, to keep him in school. He escapes through the window with friends, who, together roast stolen maize from unsuspecting farmers and play a game of *simbi* in the marshes. Due to such actions,

he drops out of school totally and becomes a cattle trader. Everything else is green to him.

This illiteracy makes him suffer so much. The first instance is when he is supposed to append his signature on the agreement which, binds the selling and buying of the land between Galo and Mukidanyi. Galo's legal representative, provides ink, with which he imprints his fingerprint on the binding document to ascertain that Mukidanyi has received his payment for the land.

Mukidanyi, is also unable to count such lump sum money due to illiteracy, his business dealings have never amounted to accumulation of such an amount. Ignorance however makes him prefer not to counter check the money and ensure that the stated amount, is really the actual amount, therefore, makes him an ignorant individual.

6. Oppression and Deceit

Oppression is prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or exercise of authority while deceit is the action or practice of deceiving someone by concealing or misrepresenting the truth

Galo, the rich in the society use their tools and resources to manipulate, oppress and deceive the likes of Mukidanyi in the society.

The likes of Galo amerce wealth through dubious and mysterious means since the source of his wealth is unspecified.

Galo sinks his claws on Mukidanyi's flesh by duping him into selling his land to him and later Mukidanyi realizes that he has made a grave error.

He returns the money, but however, he does not ask for the document he signed with his thumbprint be destroyed. It is most likely that he will never get his land back.

Language and Style

1. *Use of local dialect*

Page 50 “Today your head has swollen like that of a child-heavy toad in the ploughed field, hasn’t it, *ndugu*...”

“*Jinga sana!*”...

“*karibu sana!* You have kept me waiting longer than we agreed, *Bwana* Galo...”

2. *Suspense*

The story is very suspenseful at particular parts for example, the 3 siblings are arguing about something which we don’t know but later we are informed it was a confrontation resulting from the attempt by Galo to sell a parcel of land.

Page 53, suspense is employed when strange voices are heard from under the bed which Mukidanya is sleeping on with his wife. They do not attempt to open the briefcase so as to establish what is really in the case. This leaves the reader in suspense because they do not know what is really in the briefcase.

3. *Flashback*

Mukidanya’s early life is revealed, through a flashback. We get to experience his early life as a truant young boy who drops out of school and later becomes a cattle trader.

He enjoys his meagre earnings by buying a piece of meat and enjoying the rest of the little cash he has at a local booze joint.

4. *Irony*

It is very ironical that, the thing which Mukidanya desires the most, that is money and wealth turns out to be his worst nightmare. Instead of embracing his lifelong desire, he returns out of fear of the safety of his life.

5. Foreshadowing

Ngoseywe, the eldest of the three brothers, after the heated argument which has led to Mukidanyi insulting them for trying to advise him, clearly tells Mukidanya that one way or another, he will need their help in the future. Because he is going to learn his lesson the hard way and certainly, it really comes to pass.

Page 50 "...well, you will need us some day,"...

Characters and Characterisation

Mukidanyi

I. Ignorant

Mukidanyi does not count the money in the briefcase but decides to take Galo's word for it. He ought to have counter checked the money to ensure that he is not cheated in the deal.

II. Hard Headed

Mukidanyi does not take any advice from anyone. He goes to the extent of insulting his siblings because they try to advise him on matters concerning his land.

He does the same to his wife by beating her in the night because she tries to talk him out of selling the land. His hard headedness cannot come into terms with any sound reason.

III. Violent

He resolves to be violent on any chance he gets, he is violent towards his wife by thrashing her with the hippo hide whip which he keeps in the *jamvi* ceiling. He does so because his wife tries to talk him out of selling their land.

After the heated argument with his siblings, he violently breaks the water pot by smashing it against the wall.

Galo

I. Deceitful

Ronika warns Mukidanyi about doing business with Galo, since no one in their locality ever does any business with them. Probably he has used a trick up his sleeve so that he acquires Mukidanyi's land and retain his money in the briefcase. It so happens that Mukidanyi returns the money without asking for them to do away with the agreement he had signed.

GOD SEES THE TRUTH, BUT WAITS- LEO TOLTSTOY RUSSIA

About the author

Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, usually referred to in English as Leo Tolstoy, was a Russian writer who is regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time. He received nominations for the Nobel Prize in Literature every year from 1902 to 1906.

Title relevance

The title *God Sees the Truth, But Waits* is relevant to the story. It is evident that Aksionov never committed the murder. Everyone does not believe his innocence including his own wife.

It is only God who knows the truth and waits for the right time to let justice prevail.

Synopsis

In the town of Vladimir they lived a young merchant called Ivan Dmitritch Aksionov. He had two shops and a house. He had a wife and two little children. As a young man he drunk a lot but when he gets married he reduces his alcohol intake and drinks occasionally.

One summer, Aksionov travels to the Nizhny for a fair. Along the way he meets a merchant from Ryazan. The two merchants are familiar with each other. They check in an inn for the night. They share some tea and later on each goes to their room for the night. At night the merchant from Ryazan is murdered.

The next morning, Aksionov wakes up very early to continue with his journey to the fair. While he had stopped for his horses to feed and him to rest soldiers come up to him and he is arrested for the murder of the merchant from Ryazan. A knife that has blood is found in his luggage. He is tried and charged with murder. He is taken as a prisoner to Siberia with other convicts.

Aksionov stays in jail for twenty six years. While in prison he is the most trusted prisoner. He learns to make boots and earns a little money. He is so religious that the proceeds from the boots he sales he uses to buy THE LIVES OF ALL SAINTS. He keeps on praying daily to God. He is so liked in prison by the prison authorities because he is meek.

For the many years he stayed in the prison, Aksionov never got information about his family. After sometime a fresh gang of convicts is brought to Siberia. As custom each new convict introduces themselves. Aksionov meets Makar who is nick named semyonich. Aksionov later learns that Makar is the one that killed the merchant from Ryazan. Makar confesses to the prisons authority about his involvement in the murder of the merchant from Ryazan. By the time the orders for release of Aksionov are given he is already dead.

Thematic concerns

1. Justice /illegal prosecution

From the story *God sees the Truth, but Waits*, it is evident that Aksionov is denied justice. He is falsely accused of murdering the merchant from Ryazan. The police fail to carry out thorough investigation. He is innocently prosecuted and imprisoned at Siberia.

His petition to the Czar is not accepted, therefore he is denied justice and thus illegally prosecuted. They judge him basing on his past character other than evidence. (Page 71)

2. *Guilt*

After the arrest of Makar he is taken to Siberia along the other new convicts. During the introduction Aksionov finds out that they come from the same town of Vladimir. Later on Makar learns that Aksionov comes from the same town as him. Aksionov becomes aware that Makar is the one that killed the merchant from Ryazan. Eventually Makar confesses he is the one who killed the merchant from Ryazan (page 73) he asks for forgiveness from Aksionov and goes ahead to confess to the prison authorities. Makar is consumed with guilt and can no longer bare seeing Aksionov suffer in prison because of his deeds (P. 74)

3. *Family disintegration*

Aksionov is separated with his family that he so dearly loved. Once in Siberia he loses touch with his wife and little children. His family is integrated for twenty six years. (P. 71)

4. *Religion*

Aksionov is a religious man. He opts to pray daily to God (P.70). While in prison he learns to make boots, the money he gets from selling them he uses to buy THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS (P.71). When there was enough light in prison heon Sundays in the prison church.....

5. *Disillusionment*

Aksionov is so disappointed in the soldiers. He is falsely accused of murdering the merchant from Ryazan. His wife sends a petition to the czar but it is not

accepted. He gives up and decides to turn to God since, it is he who knows the truth. (Page 70) “and Aksionov wrote no more petitions; gave up all hope and only prayed to God.”

He is so disappointed for the lost twenty six years in prison that he does not see the need to leave the prison. (page74) ‘...where could I go to now? My wife is dead and my children have forgotten me. I have nowhere to go...’

‘...his heart grew light and the longing for home left him’

Language and styles

1. Dialogue

Pages 68 “ivan Dmitritch

Pages ‘where are you.....’

ADD MORE showing what each dialogue is about and the people involved

2. Premonition/foreshadow

P. 70)

Aksionov’s wife had a dream that foreshadowed his arrest and imprisonment. In page 68 she tell him “Ivan Dmitritch, do not start to-day; I have had a bad dream.....” page 69 “.....you took off your cap I saw that your hair was quite grey.”

3. Flashback

Aksionovs recalls about his family while at prison. “....he saw her as if she was present...(P. 72)” “...then he saw his children”

“....then he saw, in his mind, the place where he was flogged...”

Characters and characterisation

a. Aksiovon

1. Honest

Aksiovon is a truthful man. The police authorities liked him because of being meek and upright. “...you are a truthful old man; tell me the truth....(P.73)”

2.Hardworking

Aksiovon has two shops and a house of his own. (P. 68)

3.charismatic/lovable

Aksionov is liked by everyone in the prison. The prison authority likes him because he is honest. His fellow prisoners respected him. They fondly call him ‘the saint’ and grandfather. ‘.....the prison authorities liked Aksionov for his meekness and his fellow prisoners respected him.....(P. 71)’

b. Makar semyonich

1.Cruel/evil

He kills the merchant from Ryzanaz ‘....it was I who killed the merchant and hid the knife(P. 73)’

Makar knows who Aksionov is during the new convicts introduction but he pretends not to ‘...how old you’ve grown, gran’dad! (p.72)’

He intimidates Aksionov to an extent that he cannot tell the governor who dug the tunnel yet he knows it is Aksionov. (P. 73)

Dishonest FINISH

c. Soldiers

Unjust

They wrongly arrest Aksionov. They judge him basing on his reaction during the arrest. (Page 70) ‘But his voice was broken, his face pale and he trembled with fear as though he was guilty.’

d. Aksiokons wife

Loving

Aksionovs wife loves him so much that she fore warns him not to go to the Fair in Nizhny. ‘....Ivan Dmitritch, do not start today; i have had a bad.....(P.68)’

‘when she saw her husband in prison dress and in chains.....she fell down and did and did not come to her senses for a long time....(P.70)’

QUESTIONS

1. With clear illustrations support the assertion ‘justice delayed is justice denied.’
2. From the story discuss how the past catches up with the present.
3. Validate the truth of the following statement ‘what goes around comes around.’

BOYI

By Gloria Mwaniga

Background

Gloria Mwaniga Mwaniga is a novelist, short story writer, creative writing consultant, business writer and children's literature writer represented by Essie White of Storm Literary Agency. She is a recipient of the 2019 Miles Morland Writing Scholarship for her coming-of-age novel, *Where the Bougainvillea Blossoms*. For over ten years, Gloria has published book reviews, play reviews, interviews and literary articles with *The East African* and *The Nation* newspaper in Kenya. She has written over 15 children's books with Moran (E.A.) Publishers and Longhorn Publishers Plc. She has also proofread and edited the Kenyan CBC curriculum teaching and learning resources for Oxford University Press (East Africa.)

Gloria has studied writing at Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus Trust Writing Workshop, the Summer Literary Seminars and the Miles Morland Writing Workshop. Her works have been shortlisted for the Writivism Short Story Prize, the Goethe-Afroyoungadult writing competition, and the Miles Morland non-fiction prize.

Gloria worked as a high school teacher of Geography and Business studies for eight years. She also worked as the national coordinator of AMKA Space for Women's Creativity—a monthly writing workshop that critiques and publishes work by budding female writers. Gloria has been on the judging panel of the Afritondo Prize, the Collins Olesiro Prize and the 100words Africa flash fiction competition.

She is a graduate of the University of Nairobi.

Gloria spends her free time travelling, listening to music and reading and writing with teenagers and kids

BOYI BY GLORIA MWANIGA

The story begins when the narrator's father pushes his son Boyi to Matwa Kei so that they can hold onto him until he gets the 40,000 land protection tax. The mother to the narrator gets furious, tears the Kitenge scarf she had on and begins to shout. She had heard from the neighbors that once the Matwa Kei took your son, he would not return. The Matwa Kei was known for chopping off the heads of the families that did not give the land tax money, they carried off fresh heads and even hanged them on trees. Sometimes it was even alleged that they eat the bodies just like Idi Amin did. These Matwa Kei would slowly chop off the ears of the victims and also feed them with worms filled with earth.

All those who had aided the government exercise to divide the land which was distributed to strangers were targeted by the Matwa Kei. The narrator's father had lent a panga and Makonge ropes and that is why his son Boyi had to be taken, because the narrator's father had no money to pay for the land tax. Through flashback, we realize the narrator's mother cautiously began to block the sitting room door with sacks of maize and beans. Boyi and the sister laughed because they did not believe that the militia could attack them. This is the same day these Matwa Kei stormed their home.

The narrator's father gave them everything he owned, his savings which he had hidden in a metal box under the bed. His precious Sony transistor radio, his hunting gun and promised to sell his bull Mtambakaki the next day but the Matwa Kei could not take these, the more reason why the narrator's father surrendered his son.

Boyi's mother was terrified by her son's departure that she did not look up, not reply to greetings nor eat. She became emotional screaming over meals in the weeks that followed. She wanted her son's meals to be kept until when he returned. Being religious, she said that the God of Israel had shown her that her son had escaped the militia and he was on his way back home. Many visitors, a majority of who were neighbours showed concerns by visiting the family. They tried to give them hope that their son would return. However, with time, these neighbors stopped visiting.

The government decided to intervene hence launched the 'Operation Okoa Maisha'. 200 armed forces men had been dispatched in huge Lorries so as to come and flush out the militia. Early next morning, the narrator's father and her cousin Kimutai dug a shallow grave at the back of the house and buried a banana stem wrapped in a green cotton sheet. This was the tradition of the people which they followed to appease their dead and lost people. The narrator's mother refused to throw fresh soil on the grave. She did not want to participate in sending Boyi's spirit away because she was optimistic that he would return.

There was heavy and destructive downpour water gouged out deep channels and swept away twigs, leaves and top fertile soil from people's shambas. The mountain wind blew hard, snapping the tap roots of young maize crops and laying them on the ground. Tin roofs of houses were wrenched off. This is the time when jungle green army Lorries arrived. The inquisitive nature of children made them run through the light afternoon drizzle and stood by the roadside to watch the convoy.

They hoped that the Lorries would stick in the mud so that they could peek at the soldier's cobra skin belts. The men joined them and also did the women.

Boyi's mother recalls what her brother Boyi used to tell her about the Militia. He told her that they drunk magic potions from Orkoiyot so that they could be like Lwanda Magere of the Luo. Their bodies were embalmed in bloody cow dung to make them invisible. Through a flashback we are taken back to one December when farmers did not clear their land for the second planting season of the maize crop. The reason was: the militia stole young crops from the fields and goats from the pens, they cut up people and threw their dead bodies in the rivers, pit latrines and public wells. They went from house to house forcefully recruiting boys as young as ten. Those recruited into the militia had to go back home and kill a close relative, this was to make their hearts strong to kill others. The narrator dreamt that her brother Boyi came at night and cut her off into pieces for the same. People lived in fear because none of them understood the militia anymore. The latter had reached a point of taking the young girls to go and cook for them. The militia also raped their own blood relatives who ended up giving birth to transparent plastic babies. Education came to a stand still for all.

In January, Chesaina came to visit the narrator's home and gave them the news that Boyi was now a marked man because he was the right hand man of the Matwa Kei. Boyi's mother did not want to believe this. Later, thunder struck the Nandi flame tree that stood in front of the narrator's homestead. That was a bad omen. It foreshadowed what was to come. Early the next day Simoni brought a nation

newspaper that had bad news about the death of Boyi among the ragtag militia leaders; they were killed by the army forces.

The narrator's father crumpled to the floor after reading the newspaper. Soon after, neighbor's came to console them for the bereavement. Simoni explained how Boyi was captured in the sacred caves, hoisted to the aircraft without a parachute. The narrator's mother did not say a word. She just sat on her son's bed and let the tears roll down her face. The father of the narrator on the other hand took his Sony radio and the newspaper and threw them in the almost full pit latrine.

Setting

The short story "Boyi" is set in the Mt. Elgon region, previously Bungoma district. Gloria Mwaniga, gives the reader a description of the area in which the Matwa kei ravage and terrorize with the help of his outlawed militia. The rural setting with deep forests and uncharted caves up in the mountain, provide a good cover for the militia to operate. Due to their good knowledge of their locality, they elude the law for quite some time. Their operating bases are deep in the impregnable forests, where they emerge from and unleash their wrath on the defenseless residents of the Mt. Elgon region.

Characters and character traits

a. Narrator

1. Observant/critical

Through the narrators eye and thoughts. We learn about other characters such as Baba and Mama. She notices everything around her by keeping a keen eye on everyone. She notices visitors who come and leave their home to console Mama in times of pain.

2. Superstitious

She is superstitious when lightning strikes the Nandi flame tree. She instinctively knows that it's a bad omen. She knows that death is looming.

3. *Optimistic*

She is optimistic that one day Boyi is going to return home because Boyi is their source of happiness.

4. *Inquisitive*

She used to leave the kitchen door slightly open for the clink of tea(P.93)

5. *Keen/observant*

When the lightning struck the Nandi the Nandi tree, she knew it was a bad omen

b.Baba/Narrator's Father

1. *Helpful*

He is helpful towards the government representatives. Lends them a *panga* and a *makonge*.

2. *Superstitious*

He buries a banana stem with the help of his cousin. It is to ward off death and an acceptance that Boyi has died, so they are setting his soul free.

3. **Temperamental**

He threw his sony radio and the newspaper in the toilet when he heard that his son was among the cruel rebels (pg 97)

4. **Daring**

He gave out his son to the Matwa Kei yet he had heard of how the militia behaved

5. **Optimistic**

He hoped that his son would return after he paid the 40,000

c.Narrator's mother

1.Cautious

She started blocking the sitting room door with a sack of maize and beans (Pg 92)

2.Loving

She wanted the narrator to keep her son some food

d. Boyi

1.Loyal

He became the right hand man of Matwa Kei (pg 96)

e. Neighbors

1.Concerned

They came to condole with the Boyi family Pg. 93

Themes

1. Effects of war

a.Pain and suffering

Chopped the heads of whole families if one didn't give them money-Fresh heads hang on trees p. 92

b. Torture (pain and suffering)

Slow chopping of ears

Carried fresh heads like trophies and hanged them on trees and maybe even ate them like Idi Amin p. 92

Men had to give away their sons to the Matwa Kei against their wish because they couldn't pay 10,000 land protection and 30,000 betrayal tax-p 92

2. Moral decadence.

The militia raped their own blood relatives. (p. 95)

3. Poverty.

Boyi's father is not able to raise the 40000shillings for land protection tax.

4. Education

Mention of Chepkurkur primary (P. 92

5. Optimism.

Boyi's mother is optimistic that her son will return alive..... she tells her daughter not to finish tea for Boyi p.92.

6. Superstition

Mama is rumored to be tied down with Djinnis (they are superstitious powers which are equated to evil spirits), which prevent her from conceiving. She later

proves them wrong when she gives birth to Boyi who has a smooth skin as the back of a guava tree.

Baba and his cousin Kimutai, decide to bury a banana stem. The stem is a representation of Boyi's body. He believes that he warding off death by burying the stem. He is reconciling with the fact that Boyi is gone forever.

The military personnel who come to deal with the militia threat are wearing colognes which smell like pork. The villagers believe that, by the soldiers wearing pork colognes, they scare the spirits of the dead.

One of the soldiers is weaving up a story about Matwa Kei. He is narrating to others that Matwa Kei uses magic to defeat his enemies. He is more powerful than Idi Amin, the narrator drifts to imagination, picturing how, Matwa Kei, would be unharmed by *Sah-gent's* booming bullets.

Boyi used to fascinate his sister with the stories about how the militia would drink magic portions from *Orkoiyot*. The portions would make their bodies as strong as Lunda Magere's body.

The narrator notices bodily change. She has realized some 'stones' in her breast which normally symbolize the onset of adolescence. But she is told, that it is so, because she lays so much under the *musasa* tree.

The narrator is superstitious by believing that the ancestors, will forget about Boyi and fail to protect him due to Baba's refusal to talk about him.

The lightning strike which destroys the Nandi flame tree, right outside their house is viewed as a bad omen by the narrator. Mama comes out the house with a contrary opinion, she says that, the lightning strike has cleansed them of their bad luck and purged the looming presence of death in their home. The narrator later acknowledges that after the lightning strike, she instinctively knew that Boyi was no more.

7. Alienation and disconnection

Boyi revolves around alienation: familial, communal, psychological and national. In order to restore connections, it is imperative to know how the connection were severed first.

Boyi has been disconnected with his family, he is taken away as a child soldier. He joins Matwa Kei's militia. The soldiers are not allowed to return home because they are putting up in forests and have vast lands to cover and impose their rule. It is later discovered through Chesaina, Baba's longtime friend, that Boyi has been promoted to Matwa Kei's right hand man. This disheartens Mama because Boyi becomes a person of interest with the government. Boyi is forever disconnected with his family the day he is hoisted with a chopper and shoved to free fall, meeting his death.

The Ndorobos who are given land in Mt. Elgon, have communally been alienated. They are settled in lands strange to them. The community around them (sabaot) does not accept strangers among them. This leads to the mushrooming of SALADEF, which is meant to protect the Sabaot lands against the settlement of other communities in their ancestral lands.

Mama is disconnected with reality. Everyone including Baba know that Boyi will never come back, except for Mama. Mama still insists that they should leave some food for Boyi. She also feels that Baba should continually talk about Boyi so that the ancestors keep Boyi safe.

The villagers are disconnected with the SALADEF. They at first support them since they were protecting their lands against the settlement of the Ndorobos amongst them. But when they turn against their own people. Even the villagers are horrified by the atrocities committed by the SALADEF, end up withdrawing their tacit support from the group — “they forgot that they were to protect our land from being given to those... Ndorobos. Now, they even cut off our necks.”

When the narrator's family is robbed of their loved one, Boyi, they suffer psychological disconnection. They are not at peace, their minds are constantly worrying about Boyi and if he will ever return to them. Boyi's absence greatly

affects them and tortures them psychologically. Mama at times stares at the wall and declare that she is seeing a dazzling white dove which is an indicator of a troubled psyche.

National disconnection and alienation is realized in this story. The villagers have been alienated with the rest of the country. They are at war, unlike the rest of the country which is peaceful. The villagers decide to move to safer and peaceful places such as Bungoma, Chwele and even the neighbouring country, Uganda. They are therefore alienated nationally.

8. Optimism

The story, carries a great weight of optimism. The Narrator, Baba and Mama especially, are very optimistic that one day, they are going to see Boyi again. Mama reprimands the narrator for not leaving some food for Boyi. She knows Boyi will return ravaged with hunger. She is even angry at Baba for not talking about Boyi. He says that, the ancestors will forget about him and fail to protect him since he is not mentioned by his family.

The villagers are very optimistic that normalcy will return to their villages dome day. The presence of the military personnel in the area, sends a ray of hope in the villager's hearts. They are hopeful that the SALADEF will definitely be defeated by the military, so that they can resume their peaceful lives.

9. Betrayal

Boyi, the main character, is the first person who endures betrayal. Boyi is handed over to SALADEF by his father because the father fails to pay the land protection fees and the fine for assisting the government official in giving away their land. Boyi suffers betrayal from his father.

The SALADEF betray their own people. Initially, the militia defend their lands against other communities, this leads to them getting support from the villagers and residents around Mt. Elgon. Later on, they turn against their own people by imposing mandatory fines, demanding to be supplied with soldiers (like Boyi), cannibalism and mass killings. Such actions make the public withdraw their support and love for the SALADEF because they feel betrayed.

Matwa Kei betrays his own relatives by recruiting Boyi into his militia, which was illegal and the odds of Boyi's survival was very minimal.

10. Police Brutality

However much Matwa Kei and Boyi commit great atrocities, they had a right to be taken to a court of law to plead their case. When Boyi is taken by Matwa Kei, he does not have an option but to be a child soldier in the militia. It is not by choice that he becomes Matwa Kei's right hand man. The soldiers act as judge, jury and executioner by shoving Boyi from a flying chopper.

11. Fear

People lived in fear because either did not understand the militia

12. Tradition

When a person missing dies, a banana stem is wrapped in a green cotton sheet and buries at the back of the house(p.93)

13. Betrayal

The Matwa Kei were to protect the people's land from being given to the lazy strangers. Now they even cut off their own people's necks(P.95).

Stylistic Devices

1. Vivid Description

pg 91-of how the father gave off his son to the Matwa Kei and the reaction of the boys mother after this-The rain that came to destroy the twigs, plants, soil etc p. 92 describing the torture people went through in the eyes of Matwa Kei

2. Direct translation

Had his ears not caught the stories of the neighbor's sons who had been recruited by the militia. P.91

God tie a rope around my stomach. P.94

This is said by the narrator's mother

3. *Rhetoric questions*

Was he deaf p.81-Did he think a child was a mat p. 92

4. *Hyperbole*

The story bubbled like pots of boiling soup from mouth to mouth. P. 94-5.

5. *Flash back.*

Hoarding of items their daddy had declared illegal. e.g jawbreakers p. 96.

6. *Personification*

The men were swallowed by the darkness outside... P. 93 "Death, take this body(P.91),"

Baba muttered, "Take it and do not bother my home with your visits again." P. 94

The long rains came and fell with both hands. P. 97 Her voice was not bitter. It was not sad. It was flat. It cracked a little, little dried fire food when fire ate in.

7. *Flashback*

The narrator tell the readers how Boyi looked like when he was born through a flashback.

It is through flashback, that the readers are notified how Baba assisted the government officials with a *makonge* and a *panga*. This makes Baba and his family a target of the SALADEF. Mama barricades the door with sacks of maize and beans so that the militia wont access their house, Boyi tells the narrator that they should not be scared because Matwa Kei is their relative, so he will not hurt them.

8. *point of view*

The narration is from a first person point of view. The personal pronoun 'I' has been used deliberately to show that the narrator was among the villagers or witnessed the events on first hand basis.

9. *Simile*

Pg. 92. "Our very boys, who ate oaths to protect our ancestral land have turned on us like the hungry chameleon that eats its interstines."

...the soldiers' hippo leather boots which made their feet smooth like the buttocks of newborn babies?(P.94).

I woke up feeling like an anchorless red balloon was floating in my stomach.(P.95).

10.Irony

Boyi and the narrator do not believe that Matwa Kei could ever attack them because they were his kin, but end up devastating them.

When the government sends in troops to deal with the militia, the narrator and other villagers are so happy that they were going to be liberated against the shackles of Matwa Kei's militia. It is ironical that the soldiers are the ones who bring them sadness by killing Boyi brutally by throwing him off the helicopter.

11.DILEMA

Baba is faced with a dilemma. He has to either give the militia Boyi or they get killed. Baba chooses Boyi to trade Boyi and save himself, Mama and the narrator.

DECEMBER

BY FILEMON LIYAMBO

The story is about a girl named December and her brother September. December is the eldest by two years. The society they live in believe in tradition and cultural beliefs. Since December was born she was denied the rights to eating chicken with no valid reasons ,not because of allergy but because of reasons well known to their grandfather. P.85.

The story opens to us the issue on mental illness December is suffering from. Her father Silas Shikongo names the girls according to the months they were conceived. But he doesn't want anyone to ask him about this issue why he named them so. Shikongo is a famous name. When September tries to follow his sister in a psychiatric ward. He notes so many changes in the hospital, meaning that he had

been there before. He notices the bars on windows that have been reinforced. This is great change indeed.

December becomes wild at once. She shows some weird characters, that is having problems with her classmates, cat fights and name-calling, thereafter she is spotted walking naked through the streets, talking to herself. September fails to understand this for the fact that people do not go crazy at once. September is angered by his grandfather that insistence that his sister had been bewitched. Ezekiel, the grandfather feel that the problem runs in family since his brother Josef suffered the same. Ezekiel states that Josef started losing track of time in his teens. Ezekiel calls this mental illness idiotism. Ezekiel believes that she was bewitched because she was nearing success, that is finishing secondary school then joining a Teacher Training College to pursue her dream. According to Ezekiel, December's psychiatric disorders are due to other forces at work. When September asks the nurse to allow him see December Shikongo, unfortunately she is denied permission. The nurse says that December has no sister, since he is not listed in the file. September has not seen December for almost six months since he has been in UK for studies. September gifts his sister with a grey hoodie. December appears happy, he hands her chips. December shows gratitude pg 89. When September wants to leave December doesn't want him to go, the nurse assures him another chance the following day to pay him a visit. September agrees knowing that he was not going to make it since he knew that he was going to bury his grandfather Ezekiel the next day which was October. Ezekiel goes to grave without explaining to September why December was exempted from eating chicken.

CHARACTERISATION

DECEMBER

Loving and caring

Thematic Concerns

1. Mental health

Mental health is a concern in this story. December suffers from a psychiatric disorder. She becomes violent fighting classmates, at some point even walking naked. This is so serious even troubling her brother September. She is admitted in hospital for over six months due to the mental health she goes through. The hospital is well built, the windows are said to be reinforced with the use of bars. This is probably to ensure that patients with mental disorders do not escape. She is hospitalized for a long period of time not even having information about the family at home. September is unable to inform her about the death of her grandfather. She misses the burial ceremony

Josef is said to have lost track in his teens. Ezekiel calls this idiotism. It is possible to say that the mental illness runs in family. At some point Ezekiel believes that this is caused by some forces at work, may be witchcraft.

2. Education

September gets an opportunity to study in the UK. He comes back in the country only to find that his sister has been hospitalized.

We are told that December's afflictions started a few months before she was to finish secondary school and enroll at the Teacher Training College to pursue her dream.

3. Culture

December was denied eating chicken since childhood. September tries to find out the reasons behind this but in vain. Culture restricts girls from eating chicken. Ezekiel dies without telling September the reason why December was not allowed to eat chicken.

When Ezekiel dies September buries him near Shikongo's grave. This is a matter of African Culture and tradition. There is also a belief that children can inherit some weird traits if not well named. They also believe in witchcraft.

Styles

1. Local dialect.

Onda vulwa mo mu p.86,8788,89

2. Dialogue

The dialogue between the waitress and September pg84.

Dialogue between September and the guard at the hospital.

Dialogue between the nurse and September.

Dialogue between September and his sister December p. 89.

3. Flash back

Through a flashback Ezekiel tells us when December started suffering from mental illness. September's childhood characters are told through a flashback how he use to hide until when December accidentally cut him on the head and how he was treated. We are told about the Tshit that was used to stop him from bleeding. Where are told that it had been gifted to him by a British volunteer kindergarten teacher. This flashback gives us the state of the country that is still depending on westerners for its basic needs like education.

CHEQUE MATE

By Kevin Baldeosingh – Trinidad

Background

Kevin Baldeosingh (born 1963) is a [Trinidadian](#) newspaper [columnist](#), author and [Humanist](#), who has been involved in many controversial social issues, especially in respect to religious issues. He has worked with the Trinidad Express, Newsday and the Trinidad Guardian. In July 2017, after 25 years in the field, he ceased working as a journalist when his contract was not renewed by the Trinidad Guardian and he was not hired by any other media company. In twenty years as a professional writer he has written more than 2,000 newspaper articles, over 30

periodical articles and papers, 20-plus short stories, and three novels. In 2007, his one-act play, *The Comedian*, was one of the four winning plays in the National Drama Association playwriting contest. He was also one of 15 prize-winning finalists in a 2007 international essay competition, organized by US-based "TRACE International" (a non-profit organization that develops and promotes anti-bribery programs), on official corruption and how to prevent it.

Kevin has also co-authored a Caribbean history text for secondary school students, written books on media practice, parenting, as well as a collection of policy essays. He has also written the only modern history of Trinidad, which gives a social and economic picture of the island from 1901 to 2001. His articles have been published in the US and UK on Areo, FEE, Spiked, CapX, Mises Wire, and The Washington Examiner.

Synopsis

Cheque mate, is a fantastic short story which focuses on power games the elite play in developing countries at the expense of their fellow countrymen for their own benefit. The story captures critical issues such as greed, corruption, materialism, poor governance and poverty.

The story kicks off at a banking hall, where, Sukiya, the main character, is caught up in thoughts about whether to deposit a cheque from his boss: Randall, or not to.

She has been employed by Randall for over 15 years and she was promoted six years ago, now she is the company's corporate secretary. Her salary has increased tenfold. Sukiya is having this debate in her head, she is fearing for the safety of the cheque, what if it gets flagged by investigators? That the cashier would notice any suspicious activities in her account?

Sukiya has numerous accounts which have millions of money in them. Some accounts are offshore in the Cayman Island. She sends money there due to the laws in Cayman Island favour money laundering due to their opaque banking laws. This makes it a haven for money launderers to clean their money and have it wired to their accounts as clean money from legitimate business.

Sukiya, however is doubting whether Randall signed the 5 million dollar cheque deliberately or was it an error. She even thinks about flying to the Cayman Island and make use of the cheque if Randall has forgotten about it and make it hers. But in case of any discrepancy, Randall would easily notice in the books. She decides to deposit the rest of the cheques but not this particular of 5 million dollars.

Through her thoughts we get to know that she is an ambitious person who came from poverty and she has grown financially and career wise until she owns properties outside Trinidad, Sukiya lives in an affluent neighbourhood which the richest in the country live.

She schedules a meeting in the afternoon with Randall so that she could ask him about the cheque. But first, she passes by her house to change her designer outfit and slide into fresh ones. Upon reaching Randall's office, she flashes the cheque which Randall discloses that it belongs to her and knows about it, but it was meant to keep her mouth shut.

Randall had sold a methanol plant to the Chinese government, but undervalued its share values which was a fraud and was punishable by law. Sukiya was in charge of drawing the paperwork and was never keen on the details, she appended her signatures therefore implicating her in the deal.

Randall reveal that, their company (which was the richest, due to funding politicians who when got their positions would give the company lucrative tenders as kickbacks) is about to go under. If it collapsed it would mean that the government would investigate them.

Sukiya is shocked to hear that she has been implicated, she also notifies Randall that she noticed his signature was not consistent in the cheques except for one cheque. Randall is not surprised about this, he says that he would claim that someone forged his signature supposedly, Sukiya.

Little did Randall know that Sukiya was recording the conversation through her iPhone. Randall feels that he has completely implicated Sukiya and that he will go scot free. Sukiya plays a game on him, begs him to help her, Randall insists that Sukiya kneels in front of him. Sukiya plays the audio she has recorded in her phone, this is a game Sukiya has used to get herself out of danger, therefore gets herself a bargaining chip against Randall.

Themes

1. Materialism and greed

Sukiya, is very materialistic in nature. She values material possession. She compares her mode of dressing with the rest of the clients at the bank. She is wearing designer fittings like Burberry skirt, Dolce blouse and Manolo Blahnik pumps, which are very costly. Sukiya later gets to her apartment and she fancies wearing a royal blue Armani skirt suit, which is also high-end.

Sukiya has lots of off shore property such as the London flat which she pays mortgage to. She would even love to own a condominium in Miami, or rather she could buy a six-bedroom house with a pool and a gazebo.

To add on it, Sukiya owns a high end SUV, the Audi Q7. Which is very tinted to the maximum to avoid the prying eye of the public.

The suburb which Sukiya leaves in, is located in the wealthiest suburbs in the country. The wealthiest one percent in the country leave in this neighborhood. Her apartment is furnished with a queen-sized four-poster bed.

Sukiya loves having the most expensive stuff and disdains the cheap, her criticism towards the teller at the bank when she points out that she has ordinary glasses and ordinary cut diamond ring proves that she really values material possession.

Sukiya is very rich, however, she still wants to own more. She would love to have property in Miami and other off shore property, the five million dollar cheque makes her analyze her options. She wonders whether Randall had made a mistake and had forgotten about it, then, she would spoil herself with the cheque. She would bank it and spend it or ran away and never to be seen again. Sukiya is not satisfied because of greed.

2. Ignorance

The bank teller, who Sukiya comes in contact with is very ignorant. Sukiya points this out to us when she says, of course she could not be in a position to know how the rich do their business. In her ordinariness, she could not even figure out that Sukiya was committing a crime. The bank teller might have taken a life insurance policy with Sukiya's company and might not even know that, Sukiya is getting her money through dubious schemes and depositing it into her account.

Sukiya is ignorant not to know that Randall is blackmailing her, she has gotten into the habit of signing documents without reading them. Randall want to implicate her when their company goes bankrupt in the coming three months. She co-signs several documents and cheques without reading them and even lends her pen to Randall who knowingly alters his signature, in the event an investigation is carried out, the heat will be on Sukiya.

3. Corruption, ethics and morality

Randall has given Sukiya few banking tips which help her conceal her real income. This clearly indicates that they are involved in illegal activities which when carelessly handled can cause problems.

Sukiya does not want to deal with the bank manager, who might make a few educated guesses that she is committing fraud since her monthly salary is fifty thousand but has accumulated to seven million dollars within a period of six years in her savings account.

Sukiya has an account in the Cayman Islands which is a haven for money laundering. The place allows shell companies to clean up dirty money at a fee and sent back to owner as clean money. Sukiya, lacks morality because she fleeces the unsuspecting public through such schemes.

Politicians in the country are rooted in the company, the company funds them and their projects and in return they receive immunity against law suits. No media house can publish anything against the company since the company bribes their boards and editors.

Sukiya drives an extra tinted SUV which is a traffic violation but the police cannot dare stop her because they know it belongs to an affluent individual who cannot be prosecuted at a court of law, this reflects the level of corruption prevailing in the country.

Randall, sells a methanol plant to the Chinese government. He undervalues the plant and gets a lofty kickback from the Chinese government. He extends Sukiya a five million dollar cheque for drafting the legal documents, which seems an overpayment for it being a standard deal. By so doing, he knowingly commits an economic fraud. He defrauds the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

4. Betrayal and Power Play

Sukiya and Randall are engaged in a power play. The two play ‘a game of chess’ hence the name of the short story *Cheque mate*, which suggests through a pun, check mate, when a king of an opponent is rendered captured by the opponent. Randall tries to implicate Sukiya by allowing her to sign cheques and documents which could be used against her in a court of law while exonerating Randall. Sukiya doesn’t take the bait, rather, she decides not to deposit the cheque of five million dollars and asks Randall about it. This makes Randall spill the beans to Sukiya, unaware that Sukiya is recording the conversation. Randall in the process

of betraying Sukiya is check mated since Sukiya recorded the conversion which she can use to defend herself against Randall.

Aspect of style

1. Flash back

Through a flashback, we learn about Sukiya's past. She comes from a poor background. Raised by a father who was an accountant, who died of kidney complications earlier.

We also learn about Randall's father who owned the company before Randal Credo.

2. Dilemma

Sukiya is facing a moral dilemma. She is caught up between cashing the cheque or ask Randall about it. If she chooses to cash it on the basis that Randall has signed the cheque mistakenly she will definitely benefit, but Randall might notice instantly about something being off. Sukiya chooses to ask Randall about it.

3. Imagery

She wore spectacles with sensible black wire frames; her black hair was tied back in a sensible bun unstreaked by red or blonde highlights; even her stocky figure in her grey bank uniform looked sensible...(p.98)

She wore a wedding ring, but the diamond was small and standard cut(p.101). The skin on her face was very smooth, though she was not unusually pretty.

4. Dialogue

"Okay," she told the teller, "put those in my account. I go...(P.101)"

"Gimme the cheque(p.100),"

Characters and characterization

a. Sukiya chansing

1. Manipulative

After Sukiya notices that Randall was after implicating her for the company's transgressions, Sukiya, comes up with a method to mitigate any damages that might ruin her or even send her to jail. She records the conversation that she has with Randall. She makes sure that the conversation is sent to her email, for the sake of her safety. She captures Randall speaking about the methanol deal, which Randall has distanced himself over. At the end we see she turns things around to her favour when she asks Randall to kneel before her.

2. Cautious

Sukiya gives it a thought about the cheques she has in hand. She clearly knows and understands the implications of her account getting flagged for fraud. That is why at some point she debates whether to cash the cheques or not. Being cautious makes her realize Randall's schemes and moves and helps her to counter them.

3. Ambitious

Sukiya is a very ambitious individual, we see her rising in ranks from the lowest to the highest; the corporate secretary and Randall's private accountant.

Sukiya hails from poverty. She manages to change that status by becoming rich. She has several accounts stacked with cash. In addition, she has offshore accounts and offshore property in her name.

ADD RANDALL

