

# **BETRAYAL IN THE CITY BY FRANCIS IMBUGA**

## **THE AUTHOR**

Francis David Imbuga (1947- November, 2013) was one of the greatest literary giants. For three decades, he taught at Kenyatta University where he was the Director of quality Assurance, Chairman of the Department of Literature and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Francis Imbuga studied at Alliance High School in the 1960's where he wrote and acted a play which won the National Beat Actor's Award.

Professor Imbuga published several plays including *Betrayal in the City* 1976, *The Successor* 1979, *Man of Kafira* 1984, *Aminata* 1988, and *The Return of Mgofu* 2011. He has also authored two novels, *Shrine of Tears*, 1993 and *Miracle of Remera* 2005.

In his works he addresses the problems of independent and post-colonial African states, family relations, tradition, religion, and change among other issues affecting our society today.

Imbuga passed on in the year 2013.

## **THE TITLE**

The title, *Betrayal in the City*, fits the events of the play as this is what the people of Kafira have to live with daily.

*Betrayal in the City* reflects the political, cultural and personal betrayal witnessed in the fictitious state of Kafira. Boss the head of state works alongside other strong cronies and sycophants like Mulili, Tumbo, Kabito, and Nicodemo to let down their citizens through ;abuse of power, negligence of duty, senseless killings, and inefficiency to create a nation of hopelessness, corruption and disregard to the local citizens hence betrayal in the nation of Kafira.

The government is run by scandalous and corrupt leaders and under whose leadership the hopes of independence for the people of Kafira are dashed.

*Betrayal in the City* is characterized by all sorts of ills in society, namely: murder, misrule, tribalism, Nepotism, corruption, highhandedness, inefficiency, incompetence and a general atmosphere of rebellion and defiance.

As the title suggests, betrayal breeds suspicion and intolerance and this creates a highly unstable environment for decent and safe living. One cannot safely determine who to trust with information hence the general feeling of betrayal among the people.

## **THE SETTING**

*Betrayal in the City* was first published in 1976 at a time when African states had attained their independence and were undergoing serious problems in adjusting to self-rule.

The play set in the fictional country of Kafira, ruled by Boss, who surrounds himself with kinsmen like Mulili and the sharing-the-pie government officials, Tumbo, Kabito and

Nicodemo.

Betrayal in the city is a perfect example of many failed states in the third world, and especially in Africa.

## SYNOPSIS

Betrayal in the City is a political play. The writer examines the problems of independence and freedom in post-colonial states in Africa. The play talks about military regimes that were common on the African continent after independence. Many of such regimes were later overthrown by coup de tats. Francis Imbuga's major concern is betrayal at two levels, both at a personal and government level. *Betrayal in the City* shows a decay in morals, greed for power. Doga and Nina lament as they mourn their dead son, Adika and wishes to perform a ritual for their dead son. This effort is hampered by express directions from the government brought by Mulili and J ere claiming that the ritual should not go on in the interest of peace; but Doga and Nina are adamant. Their only remaining son, J usper, is imprisoned. This shows us what is happening in Kafira - the corruption, injustice and oppression of the people. Critics of the government are not tolerated. J ere and Mosese are henceforth put into pris on over false charges.

They both suffer the pain of the government's betrayal. Government officials make use of any opportunity to make money through unfair means. Tumbo for instance declares J usper the winner of the play writing competition and awards him the winner's prize money. One third of the six hundred pounds to----- finance the play writing competition is given to J usper and his girlfriend, Regina; and the remaining two thirds to put records straight emphasizing that everything is being done in strict confidence. Despite all this J usper vows to revenge someday even if it means going it alone since he knows that a University student is not a very welcome person in Kafira and is looked at as a nuisance. Government officials first think of what they are going to benefit before deliberating on matters of state. What first preoccupies their mind is how much they are going to gain. Being a relative to Boss gives Mulili a chance to despise his colleagues in service. Mulili falsely accuses Kabito knowing that Boss will believe what he says since he has been made to be his eyes and ears on the ground as he puts it. He is also favoured by Boss in many ways. The semi-illiterate Mulili sometimes completely misunderstands and distorts what is said to him and yet threatens to act basing on the strength of that misunderstanding.

Boss' trust of those who advise him especially Mulili makes him give unbearable directives to silence those presumably against his government including the simple old couple who were innocent. Boss also tries to take advantage of Regina forcefully. Such scandals speak unfavourably of the Head of State. Nicodemo and Tumbo discuss the state of affairs and how people are being killed: "We have no choice. Like caged animals,

we move, but only inside the cage. It has become infectious-the desire to eliminate others...” This clearly implies that there are serious consequences of criticizing the government’s plans. The play within the play, Betrayal in the City, brings about the desired change that everybody has been waiting for. The rehearsal for the play intended to entertain the visiting Head of state becomes a real confrontation arrived at effortlessly by Jusper, Mosese, and Jere; taking everyone by surprise.

## **ACT SUMMARIES**

### **ACT ONE**

#### **SCENE ONE**

**The scene is at grave surrounded by dry thorny branches.**

It is early morning. Doga and Nina are next to the grave of their late son, Adika who was murdered. Doga suspects that their son’s murderer still lives among them. His suspicion arises from the smell of petrol at the site and the fact that the grave has a crack, an indication that the murderer’s intention was to burn Adika’s body to rid himself of Adika’s ghost hunting him in future. Their only, living son, Jusper, was to guard the grave but this morning he cannot be traced. Nina is fearful for her son, who, according to them is not of sound mind. Her fears are heightened when she is made to notice that there seems to have been a struggle at the grave.

Doga wants to cover up the crack on the grave so that the shaving ceremony planned to take place later in the day goes on but Nina will hear none of this. After much persuasion from the husband, she gives in and goes for soil to cover up the crack. thirds to put records straight emphasizing that everything is being done in strict confidence. Despite all this Jusper vows to revenge someday even if it means going it alone since he knows that a University student is not a very welcome person in Kafira and is looked at as a nuisance. Government officials first think of what they are going to benefit before deliberating on matters of state. What first preoccupies their mind is how much they are going to gain. Being a relative to Boss gives Mulili a chance to despise his colleagues in service. Mulili falsely accuses Kabito knowing that Boss will believe what he says since he has been made to be his eyes and ears on the ground as he puts it. He is also favoured by Boss in many ways. The semi-illiterate Mulili sometimes completely misunderstands and distorts what is said to him and yet threatens to act basing on the strength of that misunderstanding. Boss’ trust of those who advise him especially Mulili makes him give unbearable directives to silence those presumably against his government including the simple old couple who were innocent. Boss also tries to take advantage of Regina forcefully. Such scandals speak unfavourably of the Head of State. Nicodemo and Tumbo discuss the state of affairs and how people are being killed: “We have no choice. Like caged animals, we move, but only inside the cage. It has become

infectious-the desire to eliminate others...” This clearly implies that there are serious consequences of criticizing the government’s plans. The play within the play, Betrayal in the City, brings about the desired change that everybody has been waiting for. The rehearsal for the play intended to entertain the visiting Head of state becomes a real confrontation arrived at effortlessly by Jusper, Mosese, and Jere; taking everyone by surprise. From Doga’s speech, we hear that Adika was shot four times during a demonstration by Kafira University students who were protesting that most of the Kafira university lectures are expatriates. During Adika’s burial, his brother, Jusper, was taken away by government agents for being a ‘threat’ to peace-loving people and after returning three months later, he is never the same.

Jusper enters, dressed in a red gown. He is obviously disturbed by his brother’s death. He is seen addressing his dead brother. Nina comes back with soil and finds Jusper at the grave. Doga is hiding behind the bush. She tells Jusper to go and remove the red gown as the shaving ceremony was about to start. Jusper tells his mother that he cannot put on a clean shirt after the murder and proceeds to show his parents the crack (river) where he threw the person he murdered but all this time, they think he is mad. Nina even, innocently and ignorantly, tells him to go and confess the act! Jusper has killed Chagaga, the person who is suspected to have killed Adika, and thrown his body in the river but Doga and Nina think he is mad.

The couple’s prayerful mood is interrupted by Jere and Mulili who inform them that the ceremony has been cancelled to their utter disappointment. They also inform the couple that Jusper has killed Chagaga and confessed the crime. The two order the couple to leave the grave as it no longer belongs to them. Jere tries to persuade Mulili to allow Doga and Nina to conduct the ceremony but Mulili will hear none of this despite the fact that Jere had helped hide Mulili’s secret when he allowed Mustafa an inmate to escape. Mulili is boss’s (head of state) cousin and since he has been promised a reward for being loyal to Boss, he does not wish to disappoint boss. Mulili even threatens Jere that should he allow the ceremony to take place, he (Mulili) will not keep quiet. Before they leave the stage, they are involved in a violent confrontation where Jere shoots at Mulili who dives off stage.

### **REVISION QUESTIONS FOR THE SCENE SCENE ONE**

1. Where is this scene set
2. What are the two characters Doga and Nina doing at the grave and whose grave is it.
3. What is so strange about the grave’s condition that morning?
4. Where was Jusper when the grave was being meddled with?
5. What are we told about Jusper’s condition and why is it so?

6. Who killed Adika and what is his relationship with the sub chief
7. What led to the death of Adika and how was he killed
8. According to J usper what is the difference between the sun J upiter and J usper and what does it represent
9. J usper tells Nina that he is going to address the rally, which rally is he talking about and what does he want to tell them.
10. Why does Mulili and J ere come to the grave side and what is their mission
11. Mulili speaks poor / non-standard English , what does this tell us about him
12. What does Mulili and J ere reveal to Doga and Nina about J usper
13. Why does J ere support the old couple's continuing with the ceremony
14. Mulili had allowed Mustafa to escape, what does this tell us about justice in Kafira.
15. Identify at least two character traits of Mulili, Doga, Nina, J ere and J usper from this scene.
16. Identify the aspects of style used in this scene: identify the proverbs, instances of irony, use of cross purpose, monologue, and puns among others.
17. What are some of the themes brought out in this scene?
18. Identify the instances of Betrayal brought out in this scene

## **SCENE TWO**

### **ACTION TAKES PLACE IN A PRISON CELL**

J ere is pushed by an askari into a cell where he finds Mosese. Askari is fed up with J ere's inquisitive nature. He tells him that he is mad and that his inquisitive nature will not be entertained in prison and that it would make his life unbearable in prison. J ere is later informed that all inmates have to go through rehabilitation in order to be re-integrated in the society. He does not have any mental illness that would make him need any rehabilitation therefore he sarcastically tells askari that he is truly grateful and that he didn't know they took such pains. It is apparent that Mosese has decided to remain silent because silence can as well be a weapon but should he be so, the prisons authorities will demand an explanation as to what is he keeping quiet about. It is not surprising that the prison authorities don't entertain prisoners asking questions.

Askari informs Mosese that J usper has been released from jail but has nothing to go back to since his parents were found dead in their hut. When J ere and Mosese are left alone, J ere informs Mosese of the events of the previous night where he and his cellmate decided to play Pilate and J esus. According to J ere, Pilate had humiliated J esus by stripping him and caning him on the buttocks. J ere's co-actor cried out after

receiving the canes, alerting the prison authorities who moved J ere to the cell where Mosese was after stripping him and caning him. The two cellmates (J ere and Mosese) take time to know each other.

Mosese tells J ere how he ended up in prison. He had attended Adika's funeral where he saw firsthand the oppression by the political elite. He couldn't keep quiet, so after telling the politicians his mind, he was arrested and charged with trumped up charges of possessing drugs. He changes his name because the person who implicated him with the drugs shared a name with him. We learn of the regime's way of silencing dissenting voices, through the experiences of inmates.

Mosese has been informed by askari to cooperate in the performance of a play organized for a visiting head of state and in return he might be among the six hundred prisoners who are to be released. He doesn't want to do this as acting in the play means kneeling in front of boss and pleading for mercy yet he is not guilty. Prisoners are also denied food and only the ones who show signs of cooperating with prison authorities are allowed privileges. This is evident when askari brings a mug of tea.

The citizens of Kafira had been waiting for the 'kingdom' for years and at last they were told it had come. According to Mosese, it was an illusion. He wonders how many people had seen the kingdom and what colour it is. Mosese is disillusioned. He says they have killed their past and were busy killing the future. He laments about the oppressive nature of boss' regime. For instance, soldiers had beaten up Regina and had forced her to give false evidence against her brother, Mosese. Mosese violently wriggles and as if in a trance rises and addresses the imaginary audience. His words portray his confused state of mind. On one hand he is faced with the choice of participating in the play, a sacrificial act that will lead to the release of 600 prisoners or on the other hand hold on to his principles and reject the request to participate in the play.

## **REVISION QUESTIONS FOR THE SCENE**

### **SCENE TWO**

1. Where do the events of this scene take place
2. Why do you think J ere has been brought into the cell
3. How would you describe the treatment by the askari on J ere
4. J ere says that "the outside of this cell may well be the inside of another" what does this tell about the situation in Kafira
5. Link Pilate's situation to J ere like he puts it on page 23
6. Why does Mosese keep staring at the wall even when J ere and the askari are talking
7. Give the reasons why Mosese is in prison

8. Mosese says words have lost meaning to him and asks for the meaning of Africanisation what does this tell about the people's situation in the country
9. To what level has the askari learnt and why is he doing such a job
10. Why is Jusper being released and what has just happened to his parents?
11. Why did Jere carry a bible to the cells and how does it bring him trouble
12. Apart from being a police officer, which are the other two professions that Jere was in before?
13. Which is item number three in the development plan and what is ironical about it?
14. Mosese says he saw betrayal in Regina's eyes why is this so
15. Why is the foreign dignitary visiting and why are the prisoners supposed to perform a play for him
16. The askari talks of selective breeding and says you need a tall relative to get anything in the country what does this tell about Kafira
17. Mosese says "it was better while we waited. Now we have nothing to look forward to..." what were they waiting for that they don't have and why has he lost hope?
18. Mosese sleeps and talks and in his dream. What does this tell about him and what message do we get from his conversation with an imaginary person.

### **SCENE THREE**

Jusper stealthily enters Regina's room without her notice and scares her. He is in his red academic gown and this heightens Regina's anger at him. She requests him to rest but he says he can't rest because the death of his whole family is in his mind. Apart from Adika, Nina and Doga were murdered in exchange for Jusper's release. He says that he will get his revenge someday. Jusper was among the university students who protested on the streets and as they did this, people shouted abusive words at them in addition to telling that they were wasting time with the protests, it is also apparent that the government will not allow Adika's photograph to be printed in the newspapers.

Regina would be happy if Jusper was to keep off from trouble with the authorities. She tells him that she has only him and Mosese left in the world and if anything went wrong, they would all be wiped out. Jusper insists that they have to talk of the masses that have no voices. Regina tells Jusper of the scheduled visits to Kafira by a certain head of state. If this is to happen, then, there will be three days holiday for all in addition to the prisoners being released to mark the occasion. She has a letter from Tumbo, who is boss' right-hand man. In it, boss has promised to facilitate the release of Mosese. This does not go down well with Jusper who can read mischief in the act but who nevertheless promises to beat him at his own game.

Tumbo, a fat, overconfident man, enters the house. He notices through J usper's dressing that he is among the university students who were being known for rioting. Tumbo is already familiar with J usper's name which was signed against a student's prayer that was all about asking God to help them drop their Christian names. Tumbo warns him that if the prayer by any chances suggested changing names, J usper would be behind bars. J usper sarcastically wonders why this would be the case yet since change of names was item number three in the new development plan. Furthermore, boss himself has substituted his Christian name to something that no one could pronounce. Tumbo defends boss by saying that a leader requires a mysterious name that the common tongues will bleed trying to pronounce. This is pointer to Tumbo's sycophantic nature.

Tumbo revisits the issue of the visit by a certain head of state to Kafira. He learns from Regina that J usper writes plays and since they require a one-act play for the entertainment, he concludes that J usper can write one for the occasion. Tumbo says that he would have written one himself, but being a socialist, he thought of extending the opportunity to others to show who has let advisers rule Kafira while pretending to be tough, he is hated by his own guards who will not talk about it. The worst of his advisers is his cousin Mulili who has been rewarded with a large farm for his "services to the nation" Boss is said to be of short temper and has a weakness for women.

When J usper is back from buying drinks, the three talked about the idea of writing a play for the entertainment of the visiting head of state, Tumbo would be glad if J usper wrote the intended play that would highlight the achievements the country has made. Money has been set aside for a play-writing competition, now that he knows what play ought to be organized. He declares J usper the winner of that competition and informs him that he and his sister would be given a third of the money that was to finance the competition and that J usper would be given his prize money once the results of the competition are made public. J usper is to write the play and ensure that the words 'progress and 'achievements' appear on every other page. After Tumbo and Regina leave, J usper reminds the audience what he holds, 'the fruits of independence. We get them second hand.' (pg 53)

## **REVISION QUESTIONS FOR THE SCENE**

### **SCENE THREE**

1. Where is this scene set?
2. Why does J usper imitate the ricocheting of guns as he enters?
3. Why is Regina uneasy about J usper's dressing in the red gown?



4. What does the red gown symbolise
5. For what does J usper criticize Regina and even the beggars in the streets
6. For what does J usper criticize the media
7. According to J usper why was Adika killed and why is Mosese and J ere in prison
8. Why is Regina critical about people voicing their concerns against the government
9. What do we deduce/learn from J usper and Reginas conversation about the intended visit by the foreign head of state
10. Why does J usper pretend to be Regina's cousin when Tumbo calls in?
11. J usper asks Regina "are you sure this is not a trick-some sort of a trap?" why is J usper critical about Tumbo's helping her and what do you think the trap is?
12. Whats wrong with Christian names and why does J usper criticize them p39
13. Why does Tumbo call the university students red guards?
14. J usper is said to have written an interesting prayer, what was it about?
15. Tumbo says a leader should have a mysterious name that the common people will bleed trying to pronounce. What does this tell about the kind of leaders in Kafira
16. When asked about his university days Tumbo mumble, rumbles and stutters almost confusing himself, what do we deduce from this behavior
17. Tumbo says that education doesn't matter and that there are opportunities only that they do not come on a silver platter. What does this reveal about Kafira
18. Regina reveals to Tumbo that J usper can write plays; why is Tumbo happy about this and says that there is a good potato in it. What does ths mean
19. How much money has been allocated for the play and how much will J usper remain with. What happens to the remaining amount
20. What aspects does Tumbo insist that shoud be covered in the play
21. Why does Tumbo want Regina to visit Boss and what is the visit about
22. Why have many publishers rejected J usper's works? What does this say about them
23. How does Tumbo plan to cover up not having conducted a play writing competition
24. Identify the main themes brought out in this scene
25. Identify the aspects of style in this scene
26. What do we learn about the character traits of J usper, Regina and Tumbo from this scene
27. Identify the elements of betrayal in this scene

## **ACT TWO:**

### **SCENE ONE**

The scene begins with two members of a committee formed to plan for the entertainment of a visiting head of state are conversing. In their conversation, one of them, Kabito is bitter because he has lost a tender despite having spent a whole night 'being nice' to people in order to get it. They feel that Mulili does not qualify to be in the committee but they can't raise the issue with Boss, as Mulili is his cousin. Nicodemo is also uncomfortable sitting with the prisoners on the dais during the visit by the head of state. He is particularly uncomfortable with Mosese's release since he is the one that had planted an illegal drug on him that led to his arrest and incarceration! Tumbo joins the pair and reminds them of the need to please the visitor as it is through that that the voice of their negotiator will continue to be heard. They are not comfortable starting any formalities until they are told the size of the potato they will get. On being told that the potato will be determined by the number of days they work, they suggest ways to ensure that they have a maximum number of days; meeting every day until the visitor arrives and meeting after the visit for the purpose of review.

Mulili comes to the meeting later and apologizes for being late. He says that he has gone to make a follow-up on his tender which had been cancelled and after boss made threats to the university which had given the tender, Mulili gets the tender back. The committee members make recommendations on what should be included in the program, one of them being that school children as well as all adults' line up the road to welcome the visitor. This is despite the fact that it is third term and most of the children are sitting for their exams. They even recommend that the day be made a holiday to ensure their recommendations are implemented. Tumbo disagrees with the suggestion that the head of state visits upcountry to see the projects he supported. Kabito and Mulili disagree on the issue of forcing the drama department of the university to act in the play. Mulili accuses Kabito of calling him primary kid and when Kabito refuses to apologize, Tumbo recommends a one hour break for the members to let off steam. Nicodemo had suggested a three hours break! As the scene ends, Mulili swears at Kabito and issues a chilling threat to him.

## **REVISION QUESTIONS FOR THE SCENE**

### **SCENE ONE**

1. Kabito is the first to arrive and sleeps in one of the chairs , what does this symbolize?
2. where does this scene take place
3. Why is kabito asleep and why is he in foul mood
4. Why was Mulili given the tender
5. Why is Nicodemo against the use of prisoners to entertain the guests?
6. Why is mulili part of this committee
7. According to Tumbo what is the role of the committee
8. From the set up of the committee explain the theme of cronism

9. From the discussion on their payment, what do we learn about the members of this committee
10. Mulili says he used Boss to get the tender at the university, what does this tell about leadership in Kafira
11. Why are the university students not willing to participate in the entertainment program
12. What brings about the conflict between Mulili and Kabito
13. Why does the committee go for a break and for how long is the break
14. Identify the aspects of style evident in this scene
15. Identify the themes in this scene
16. Identify and illustrate the character traits of Tumbo, Nicodemo, Mulili and Kabito from this scene
17. Identify the elements of betrayal from this scene.

## **SCENE TWO**

During the one hour break, Mulili rushes to boss to inform him about Kabito's 'ill deeds.' He finds boss pulling grey strands of hair from his head. He maligns Kabito to boss by telling him that Kabito is a green snake in the grass, has coloured boss' name in blood in front of the committee, came to the meeting drunk, was shouting to everybody that boss has denied him the milk tender, says that boss has ruined Kafira's economy by hiding millions in a foreign country and that boss had tried to get Regina by force. This irks boss who accuses Kabito of sowing seeds of discord among the people. He orders Mulili to do what must be done; to silence Kabito. Mulili is only too glad to do it. In fact, he tells him it is a small matter having silenced the old couple (Nina and Doga)

## **REVISION QUESTIONS FOR THE SCENE**

### **SCENE TWO**

1. Where is this scene set
2. Why does Boss boast about his grey hair
3. Why has Mulili come to see Boss
4. What five allegations does Mulili present against Kabito
5. From Mulili's allegation what ills on leadership do we learn about Boss
6. Who is Mercedes and what makes her rude to Boss
7. What does Boss decide should be done against Kabito
8. Mulili says "that be small. You remember that old couple...?" what did Mulili do to the old couple, on whose instructions and for what reason?
9. Identify the themes evident in this scene?
10. Identify the aspects of style evident in this scene

11. What are the character traits of Mulili and Kabito from this scene?
12. Identify the elements of betrayal in this scene

### **SCENE THREE**

News about boss' attempt to rape Regina has reached J usper who now feels he can't go on with the play as he had earlier on promised Tumbo. The latter warns J usper that this would be deemed as sabotage, hence would be too dangerous. He is warned that if he makes any mistake, he could end his university studies even after he has already lost one year. J usper leaves but he doesn't promise boss that he is going to hide the truth. When Tumbo and Nicodemo meet to continue with the meeting after the 'break' they are aware of Kabito's murder but they dare not say anything. Tumbo says they are aware of Kabito's murder but they dare not say anything. Tumbo says they are like caged animals who move but only inside the cage. They pretend not to know anything about the death when Mulili enters. He pretends to be shocked and saddened by Kabito's death which he says was as result of Kabito being under the influence of alcohol.

Nicodemo wonders how one can get drunk in the space of one hour and Mulili foolishly says that people said that his breath smelled of spirits. When presses further by Nicodemo who wonders about the mention of breath yet Kabito was dead, Mulili retorts that he didn't say breath but his body smelled whiskies. He goes ahead to say that boss wept when he heard of the death and has already declared one road to be called Kabito road. Nicodemo suggests that they should call off the meeting and wonders whether the day would be counted. Despite the solemnness of the occasion, the members of the committee seem to be more pre-occupied with concerns of seeking avenues of making money. This is a pointer to their greed and materialistic nature

### **REVISION QUESTIONS FOR THE SCENE**

#### **SCENE THREE**

1. Where is this scene set
2. What had happened to Regina, why was it necessary for Regina to meet Boss and what transpired after that
3. Why is Boss's wife locked up after the incident
4. Why does J usper want to pull out of the programme
5. What does J usper stand to lose if he withdraws from the directing of the play
6. Why does Tumbo caution J usper against standing for truth and justice
7. What has happened to Kabito during the break

8. What is the cause of Kabito's death according to Mulili
9. What do you gather from Mulili's incoherent and apparent confused explanation of Kabito's death
10. Explain Tumbo's assertion that "like caged animals , we move, but only inside the cage"
11. Why is the meeting called off
12. How do the other committee members express their respect for the dead Kabito
13. Nicodemo asks whether they will be paid for that day, what does that tell us about his character
14. Identify the themes evident in this scene
15. Identify the aspects of style used in this scene
16. Identify the character traits of J usper, Tumbo, Mulili and Nicodemo from this scene
17. Identify the elements of betrayal from this scene

## **SCENE FOUR**

### **THE REHEARSAL**

The stage is set for the final rehearsal of the play meant to entertain the visiting head of state. Tumbo wants everything to go on well as he fears to disappoint boss who is already in a foul mood. Boss, has, as a result of his bad temper, locked up his wife in the palace cell. J usper informs Tumbo that all will go on well and that Mosese was cooperative during the previous night's rehearsal. J usper says that he is in the play because he realized that the problems of Kafira cannot be solved by isolation. According to him, if the play succeeds, he will have demonstrated that determination is greater in worth than numbers. Tumbo would prefer that boss doesn't know that the play is written by J usper who hopes that the release of a few prisoners, after the success of the play, will change Kafira. J usper is able to see the hypocrisy of the ruling elite. The release of a few prisoners is meant to improve the image of Kafira to the eyes of the world. This according to him is only the truth.

Boss joins them in the preparation of the rehearsal and J usper tells him the play is about an army cadet who is promoted to the rank of captain within six months of enrolment. During the pass-out parade he shoots his colleague accidentally because he doesn't know how to handle a gun. It is later realised that he is not a relative of the army commander as it had been thought.

As the rehearsal starts, Boss volunteers to read the part of the chief of staff since the prisoner who had been allocated the role could not be present as he had stomach troubles. He also orders askari to untie the hands of J ere and Mosese so that they can join the rehearsal, Mosese (the junior soldier) argues with J ere (the captain) over which

gun is shorter than the other; a. 32 or a 28. They go to their chief of staff (boss) to help unravel the mystery. He tells them to each take a gun and show it to him. The guns are now in the hands of J ere and Mosese! Their plan has succeeded. On realizing that he has been tricked, boss shouts to the guards but J ere tells him he has no guards. J usper thinks that boss is dead and is about to go and design a coffin but is stopped by Mosese who tell boss to see what he had done to J usper. Because of fear, Mulili betrays boss. He says that boss ought to be killed because he has taken everything in his hands, has spoiled Kafira's economy, and has ruled for too long and killed Kabito. Boss cannot stand the betrayal so he tells J ere to shoot him.

J ere tells boss that their interest is not to see human blood but to provide a mirror for Kafira to reflect the real faces of Kafira's front men. He says that they must also learn to sacrifice themselves for a better future. Mosese says that their achievement is largely because of the inefficiency of Tumbo. J ere gives boss the gun that he can shoot him (J ere) but boss declines. J usper then takes the gun and shoots Mulili dead. He says that he did it for Kafira. Before the play ends, the ghosts of Doga and Nina enter the stage. Mulili's death seems to have appeased Doga and Nina.

## **REVISION QUESTIONS FOR THE SCENE**

### **SCENE FOUR**

1. where is this scene set
2. why is Boss's wife locked up?
3. what is the level of preparedness for the presentation of the play
4. Tumbo doesn't know what the play is even about, what does this tell us about him
5. why was J usper thown out of his position as student leader why does Tumbo suggest that they keep the fact that J usper is the writer of the play a secret
6. J usper says that he doesn't want the prisoners to come from the prison into another prison, what does this tell us about the society of Kafira
7. What warning does Boss give to J usper for the university students
8. Why is Boss scomful of the university students
9. What did Boss do as a reaction to the students protest on employment of expatriates
10. According to J usper's explanation to Boss what is the play the prisoners are going to present about?
11. J usper's play within a play exposes the character traits of several characters. Identify and explain them
12. Why does Boss offer himself for the position of chief of staff and what happened to the one supposed to take that role
13. Why are the prisoners given real guns and what does this tell us about the state officials
14. Give a synopsis of the play the prisoners enact
15. how do the prisoners manage to take over the government

16. Why does Mulili try to escape
17. How does Mulili betray Boss and what allegations does he present against Boss
18. Why is Boss spared and Mulili killed
19. After killing Mulili, J usper says” I did it for Kafira, I did it for all of you people “what is the meaning of this statement
20. What is the significance of the reappearance of Doga and Nina and their freezing as they point at Mulili’s body at the end of the play.
21. Identify the stylistic devices used in this scene
22. Identify the elements of betrayal in this scene

## **THEMES**

### **BETRAYAL**

Betrayal is the act of being disloyal or being deceitful towards someone. Its about going against the trust that someone has on another.

The head of state in Kafira (Boss) has betrayed the people’s trust in him. He is supposed to protect the country’s sovereignty by creating job opportunities for his subjects, but instead he has facilitated the influx of expatriate personnel into the country. When the university students protest he deliberately sends in an order for three hundred more expatriate personnel. Under his rule , sycophancy, cronyism, corruption, nepotism, and persecution of perceived opponents have become the order of the day. He orders the killing of Kabito. He is also responsible for the death of Doga and Nina as well as the arrest of Mosese, Askari says ‘.....we calculated that two mature strokes would ease the tension. It worked perfectly. This is where the research stations come in,’ (pg 19)

Appointments are not based on merit. According to Tumbo, membership of the entertainment committee is based on the appointees unflinching loyalty to Boss who buys loyalty by handsomely rewarding individuals. For instance, Mulili is rewarded with acres of land and grade cattle.

Another incident of betrayal is when Kabito, a fellow member of the entertainment committee is betrayed to Boss by Mulili. Mulili comes up with fictitious reasons for getting rid of Kabito. The allegations are outrageous to say the least. He says that Kabito has complained that Boss has robbed him of the milk tender, he has ruined the economy, he hides millions in foreign countries, and that he tried to get Regina by force. In fact, Mulili should be the “green snake on the grass’ that her refers to. By having Kabito killed, he betrays both men.

Mulili betrays his colleague, J ere who gets arrested because he opposed the farmer’s brutality towards Doga and Nina, A part from his name-calling and callous nature; he gets J ere into trouble when all he wanted to do was to assist the old couple.

Boss betrays the trust Regina has for him. Regina honours her meeting with Boss since she believes he is the only one who can secure the release of her brother Mosese. Unfortunately, Boss forcefully tries to get her and she is forced to escape by jumping out of a ten foot high window.

Mosese thinks that it would be an act of betrayal for Regina to plead for his release. Pleading to Boss for mercy would mean that he is guilty yet he is not. According to Mosese acting is tantamount to betraying their cause. He further argues that they are out to cause change in Kafira and even silence to him is a weapon.

## **REVENGE**

Many characters are seen to be involved in various actions against each other in an attempt to avenge wrongs done against them

J usper avenges the death of his brother Adika by killing Chagaga the sub chief's brother the man who had apparently killed Adika by shooting him four times. J ere tells J usper's parents that "people had seen him drag the body to the river..." pg 12

J ere pleads with Mulili to allow the old couple continue with the ceremony. Mulili vehemently refuses and even imitates a priest's burial liturgy an action that infuriates J ere who chases him away and even threatens to shoot him. Mulili threatens him that he shall pay for his actions and true to his words J ere is put behind bars.

After killing Chagaga and being put behind bars, J usper's parents are found dead an indication that someone had further avenged the killing of Chagaga. J usper further says, "I will revenge someday..." pg 33 to which we see him killing Mulli at the end of the play who must have been involved in the killings. During the meeting by the committee organizing for the entertainment for the visiting dignitary, there is a quarrel and bitter exchange over an apparent misunderstanding between Kabito and Mulili. Mulli reports Kabito to Boss with many false allegations and this leads to the killing of Kabito. At the end of the play J usper is seen shooting Mulili dead. This is because Mulili is a symbol of the ills that have affected the state of Kafira. In fact J usper says on p74 that "I did it for Kafira"

## **THE ROLE OF THE ELITES**

The elites in any society should be actively involved in emancipating their societies from downfall especially occasioned by poor leadership. The same happens in the state of Kafira through various characters.

The university students led by Adika are seen demonstrating against the influx of expatriates in the country. This is because this has been the leading cause of unemployment. This however leads to the death of Adika but it's important to notice that they had expressed their misgivings against the government.



Through Mosese we also find that the elites are almost giving up on the government and even turning their backs to the going ons in the state. This is seen in Mosese's words when asked why he is showing his back to J ere and the askari to which he answers I have no front. However we see him speaking out his mind against the oppression I the state which leads to his imprisonment on trumped up charges.

Mosese in his trance/dream agrees to participate in the play together with J ere another elite. It is evident that it is through their role in the play that they manage to bring order to the state of Kafira by ousting and killing the evil element in government in Mulili. J usper an elite is actively involved in ousting the oppressive regime it is he who writes the controversial play through which they overthrow the government. It is him still who shoots Mulili the evil element and hence hope for Kafira as he says at the end of the play that, "I did it for Kafira. I did it for all of you people." Pg 74

## **CORRUPTION**

The government officials are corrupt through and through. The head of state (boss) puts Mulili, a cousin of jis, in a senior government position so that he can inform him on every intricate detail in the government. The man is illiterate and a non-performer who is determined to amass wealth for himself. He is inconsiderate and will do anything to earn acres of farmland and cattle.

Boss is corrupt. He practices nepotism and gives high government positions to unqualified relatives who work as his spies. He also employs many expatriates in public universities at the expense of the local citizens. Boss has amassed so much wealth from the state through corrupt deals and kept millions in foreign bank accounts. Tumbo also fails to conduct a play writing competition and instead chooses J usper and pays him only a third of the money. He pockets the rest claiming that it is for settling records straight. He does not read through the written play and out of his inefficiency, it turns out to be an avenue for the prisoners to eliminate Mulili and expose Boss. He also intends to extend the entertainment committee's session in order to earn more sitting allowance.

J usper is a frustrated student who, like all the rest, has no hope of finding a job in Kafira since most of them go to expatriates. He tells Tumbo that during the holiday he would sit in the house and vegetate since the state regards the youth as neither children nor adults but fence sitters. Boss' intention is to use the expatriate as an opportunity to gain more foreign aid.

There is tribalism and nepotism within the government. While offering Mosese tea in the cell Askari says, 'Here, tea with milk yet you don't even belong to my tribe. You need a tall relative to get anything these days' (pg 27) only those with relatives working in the government can survive in this state.

While the entertainment committee meets Nicodemo tries to find out about what they will make out of it. He asks....."what size of potato per hour?" He is also interested in finding out how many days they would use. "How many working days....." Kabito suggest that they should meet every day until the visiting head of state arrives and even after the visit. Government officials are corrupt. Each is thinking of how to amass wealth.

Mulili is granted the milk tender because he is boss' cousin. It is not given to those that qualified. Kabito is corrupt. He spends the whole night trying to bribe the tendering committee yet he lost the tender. He says '.....I spent the whole of last night being nice to people." (pg 51)

To get money in this state in this state one doesn't have to be educated, One must have brains to this of unscrupulous ways of getting money. Tumbo tells J usper on pg 50 '.....you need a different kind of this."

### **LACK OF TRUTH AND J USTICE**

There is an inherent fear of speaking the truth a-in the entire play thus leading to miscarriage of J ustice. Those who have spoken the truth have not lived to see their tomorrow but have been brutally exterminated like vermin.

A case in point is Adika, a student leader who is shot dead to silence the students who are protesting about the influx of expatriate personnel into the country. A Young man's life is so brutally brought to an abrupt end because he chooses to pursue the truth in order to attain justice for the greater good of Kafira state.

The student's lecturer decides to speak the truth during the burial by telling the politicians off when they decide to place restrictions on the mourners. But because speaking one's mind is not a crime, they plant a drug, one kilogram of opium in his car and get him imprisoned, This is a serious case of intolerance and miscarriage of justice. Doga and Nina are murdered in their own hut because they dared challenge one of Boss; closest advisers, Mulili, who is also his relative. They intended to carry out a simple shaving ceremony by the graveside of their murdered son but Mulili declared it a government property. When they seem not to notice his authority, he has them murdered just to prove who holds sway in this country.

When Adika's murderer, Chagaga he visits the grave to burn the body with petrol, he least expects J usper to be guarding it. In the struggle that ensues, he gets killed and his body is dumped in the river by J usper, A court of law should have ordered for a medical examination to determine the mental health of the young man prior to the killing. However, because Chagaga happens to be the sub-chief's brother, J usper is locked up in prison.

Mulili cannot tolerate an argument, even a logical one from Kabito with whom he holds a

grudge. He misreports him to Boss who orders his death. There is no way a truthful person like Kabito would survive in these circumstances.

Boss' own wife, Mercedes, is locked up in a cell for protesting against her husband's moral standing. He even blames Kabito for inciting the woman to defy him.

### **MISUSE OF POWER/BAD GOVERNANCE AND MISRULE**

The ruling elite in Kafira is perpetuating cronyism, nepotism, corruption and intimidation of opponents in order to cling to power. Mulili yields a lot of influence due to the fact that he is Boss' cousin. Kabito refers to him as an army-drop out and a second rate farmer. Ordinary people cannot carry out their normal ceremonies without government interference. Doga and Nina, two innocent and bereaved citizens cannot carry out a simple ceremony for their dead son. The government sends two soldiers, Jere and Mulili to bar them from doing so. They are even murdered as a result.

Individuals are forced to take law into their hands since justice favours those connected to those in power. Jusper kills Chagaga in order to avenge the killing of his brother Adika. Chagaga happens to be the sub-chief's brother. Mulili says "All small murders get arrested." Like Jusper faces the full brunt of the law while big murderers like Mulili get away scot free due to political patronage.

The fact that Boss relies on the likes of Mulili, Tumbo, Kabito and Nicodemo to render good and sustainable opinion and advice to the government tells the extent of the rot in this system. Mulili is barely coherent and there are lots of inconsistencies in his utterances. He is a liar and a cheat, a fraud who any right thinking leader should distance himself from. Tumbo,

Kabito and Nicodemo only think about their daily allowances and are determined to meet as long as it takes in order to reap as much.

Tumbo's remark at the end of the play puts what ails the state in plain terms, "I am truly sorry, but I am not entirely to blame, I was trained, but given the wrong job..." (pg 74)

This remark points an accusing finger at the appointing authority. The likes of Mulili should not be in government.

Mulili uses his relationship with Boss to secure tenders and amass wealth. He manages to reverse the termination of his tender by soliciting assistance from Boss. Nicodemo says that Mulili bullied his way into securing the university tender (pg 51) Appointments to government positions are based on one's closeness to Boss. Tumbo tells members of the entertainment committee, "I trust gentlemen that you know why you sit on this committee. You were nominated for one reason: Your unflinching support for our government" (pg 52-53) It is evident that Mulili, Tumbo, Kabito and Nicodemo are Boss' sycophants.

Mulili's unflinching support for Boss is rewarded with farm land and grade cattle. Tumbo is mandated to organize a play writing competition but instead declares J usper the winner of proposed play writing competition one third would go to J usper and Regina and the other two thirds will be used to put the records straight.

## **FEAR/SUSPICION**

Fear is the unpleasant feeling caused by the possibility of danger or evil. Actions or inaction by several characters on the play are motivated by fear. The people of Kafira live in great fear. They lack freedom of expression. They cannot understand why the likes of J usper, Adika, and Moses talk too much and put themselves in unnecessary trouble.

Beggars feel that the protestors are wasting time.

Regina warns J usper against talking too much. She does not want him to end up dead like Adika or in prison like Mosese. J usper's red academic gown is a source of constant fear for Regina. Tumbo too gets scared of the students' red gowns and he calls them the red guards.

Askari warns J ere and Mosese that silence is all they need to stay out of trouble.

Suspicion is created when prisoners either remain silent or talk too much.

No publisher is willing to publish J usper's play since his plays has exposed the truth too much. They can only be published if he can hide or cover the truth. J usper says that nobody wants things put in black and white. You need a little grey and blue here and there. (pg 47)

Tumbo confesses that J usper has a point when he says that you can't clothe truth in lies, but adds that they know better than to shout about it. They know the truth but can't dare shout about it.

Tumbo is fearful of boss. He does not wish to disappoint. He says that Boss is in a foul mood. He wants the play to go on as scheduled. He also wouldn't want Boss to know that the writer of the play to be acted is J usper.

Boss' advisers hate him but they do not want to talk beyond whispers. Tumbo says that until people like Mulili are out, it is dangerous to do things differently from what is expected in Kafira.

Regina fears going to see Boss to plead for Mosese's release because she is afraid of him. She fears that something will go wrong if he see her.

Regina fears for J uspers safety. She pleads with him to stop clashing with the authorities. She tells him, "J usper, no good will come out of this struggle. Like you I only have two close friends left in this world. You and my brother, but my brother is inside. If anything should go wrong, we'll be wiped out." (pg 34)

Mulili is threatened by J usper and Mosese at the end of the play to a point of denying having any close relationship with Boss. He is fearful that he might be killed but sure enough he is shot dead. Earlier he had intended to sneak out purportedly to go for a call of nature. The head of state is shocked by the turn of events and fears that all evils will be exposed by the prisoners. He begs to be killed. He would rather face death than the consequences of his deeds.

When Nicodemo suggests that Kabito should report the issue of losing his tender, Kabito remarks that reporting Mulili to Boss is tantamount to digging one's own grave. When Kabito questions Mulili's presence on the committee, Tumbo says that Kabito should know better than that and in any case, the question was not in the agenda. Tumbo and Nicodemo know that Mulili is responsible for Kabito's death but they cannot dare say anything. "Like caged animals, we move, but only inside the cage." (pg 62)

## **HYPOCRISY**

Hypocrisy refers to pretence that one has qualities, beliefs or feelings that they do not really have. Prisoners are taking part in the play to entertain the visiting head of state to show national unity. The government is trying to show the impression that prisoners are actively involved in nation building. This may have not been the case earlier since Nicodemo says they are now being treated as if they do not belong to this world. The main reason for Boss' decision to have the prisoners take part in the play is to portray the country in positive light to ensure foreign investment. A successful visit will make it possible for the role of the negotiators to be heard.

Mulili pretends to be shocked by the news that Kabito is dead. He informs Tumbo and Nicodemo that Kabito has been involved in a fatal accident during the one hour break. He pretends to be saddened by the news. He claims that the accident was caused by the victim driving under the influence of alcohol. He further claims that Boss was in tears when he heard of Kabito's death and that he had declared that a road be named after Kabito. (pg 63)

By criticizing the excesses of Boss, Tumbo is being hypocritical since he is a beneficiary of Boss and his government. Tumbo seems to be making an attempt to distance himself from Boss when he says, "Things will change; Boss is not at all bad at heart. His main problem is that he gets scared off too easily." (pg 44) As a result of his loyalty he is made the chairman of the committee mandated to organize for the entertainment of a visiting head of state. He also owns apartments courtesy of Boss.

Tumbo pretends to be doing Regina a favour by introducing her to Boss yet he knows his (Boss) ridiculous weakness for women. When she gets into trouble and jumps out of a ten-foot high window, he belatedly says he will apologize to her. He pretends to be

sorry for Regina while all along he had known what Boss was up to.

Tumbo claims to be a socialist at heart and says he could have written the play for the entertainment of the visiting Head of State himself but decides to extend this opportunity to someone else. "Tumbo, you have not done badly, why don't you lead the pack of them....show them light, eat and let eat." (pg 44)

Boss claims to understand truth and justice, while in fact, he least does. He alleges that the rioting students and the dissenting lecturers have no idea what truth and justice are all about. This hypocrisy is self-serving in the sense that he intends to suppress their freedom of expression to create an opportunity to gain from foreign governments.

Mulili misreports Kabito to Boss for allegedly maligning Boss' reputation yet his real intention is to have Kabito punished for opposing him during the meeting. When Boss gives him the go – ahead to eliminate Kabito which he does, he later acts shocked and saddened by his death.

Askari pretends to be doing J ere a favour by putting him on rehabilitation after only two days and tells him that the government was giving his future some consideration even though he was contributing to the national headache.

## **HOPELESSNESS/DISILLUSIONMENT**

To be disillusioned is to be disappointed when you realize that something is not as good as you had expected to a point of completing losing hope and giving up.

The masses in Kafira are disillusioned by the state of affairs in their country. Mosese says that they had waited for the kingdom for years, then it was said it had come but it was all an illusion. He wonders how many people had set eyes on that kingdom and what colour it is. According to Mosese it was better while they waited for the Kingdom because then they had hope, now they have nothing to look forward to. He feels that they have killed the past and are busy killing the future. He says in the past, they had celebrations once a year and they had a reason to celebrate, but now there is nothing to celebrate about. People are busy shedding blood everywhere. (pg 27-28)

The masses have resigned to their fate after realizing the futility of fighting the government. As the students protest in the streets, people shout at them and beggars tell them they are wasting their time. (pg 33) Regina feels that J usper and those others protesting against the government are easting time and that no good will come out of their struggle with the government. She feels that they are fighting stones. (pg 34)

Doga and Nina have lost hope in life after their son; Adika is shot dead during the university riots. Their son J usper seems to have lost his mind after his brother's death

and is currently considered as good as 'dead.' Nina concludes that the authorities have robbed them all they had and blinded them.

After Kabito's murder, Tumbo and Nicodemo realize that their tenures as government officials hang in the balance. Tumbo says, "We have no choice, like caged animals, we move but only inside the cage." (pg 62) He says the elimination of citizens has become so rampant that one is not sure of seeing the next day.

Jere argues with Askari over the issue of freedom. He tells him that the outside of his cell may be well the inside of another, which implies there is no freedom in Kafira and even those who think they are free are not.

Jusper bemoans the fact that Regina too has been affected by the street disease, that is giving up. It is even pointed out that the beggars in the streets laugh at the university students because they believe that they could achieve nothing for Kafira.

### **OPPRESSION/SOCIAL INJUSTICE**

The leadership of Kafira is dictatorial. It is oppressive. The government in a bid to perpetuate its continued stay in power has resulted in silencing its critics. The educated elite in particular pay the heaviest price for being at the fore front of criticizing the excess of Boss' regime.

Assassinations, arrests, imprisonments and torture of prisoners are the order of the day. Boss must always have his way and will eliminate anyone who appears to be a stumbling block to his schemes. He does not entertain any freedom of expression of whatever kind. For example, the academic staff members should not weep in public for whatever reason, and if they do, they end up in prison like Mosese.

Freedom of expression is curtailed. Jere says "the outside of this cell may be the inside of another" (pg 21) Prisoners are not allowed to ask questions. It only makes one's life more unbearable.

When one asks questions he is subjected to beating as in the case of Jere. Prisoners are denied food only those who co-operate with authorities enjoy certain privileges. Jere is denied tea when Mosese is presented with a cup of tea.

During Adika's funeral Mosese says of the orders from the government. 'The funeral would not take more than ten minutes, the coffin could not be carried by students and weeping in public was illegal for the academic staff.' When Mosese protested against this high handedness, he is arrested and imprisoned on trumped up charges of possessing illegal drugs. Prisoners are denied food and only those who co-operate with prison authorities.

In a bid to secure conviction for Mosese, his sister (Regina) is subjected to beating by soldiers as people watch, forcing her to give evidence against him. As a result the beating she loses hearing in one ear.

Doga and Niana lose their lives after protesting the government's decision to prevent them from conducting the shaving ceremony for their late son Adika.

Tumbo and Nicodemo know that Mulili killed Kabito but they cannot say anything about it. 'Like caged animals we move, but inside the cage' (pg 62)

Boss' regime has established research stations meant to rehabilitate perceived opponents of the state before they are re-integrated into the society. Askari tells J ere, 'You see we have research stations dotted all over the countryside.' (pg 17)

Boss tells J usper that when he goes back to the University he should tell the leaders that it is his (Boss') duty to decide on the magnitude of Kaira's africanization programme and that they have no right to chant about it. When the students demonstrate against the influx of expatriate personnel, Boss warns that the result will always be the same, deaths and imprisonment.

J ere protests the mistreatment of Nina and Doga by the government. He successfully tries to convince Mulili to allow them to conduct the shaving ceremony for their son Adika. An altercation ensues between him and Mulili when he insists that the ceremony will go on as planned resulting in his arrest and imprisonment.

J usper's unstable state of mind can be attributed to the physical as well as psychological suffering he has undergone. He has been arrested twice, first during the burial of his brother Adika and seconds the murder of Chagaga who killed his brother. Doga says "then they came and took him away....when they brought him back after three months he was no longer the son we knew (pg 4-5) The death of his brother took a heavy toll on him and he could not come to terms with it.

Prisoners must perform a play that must entertain the visiting head of state in order to earn amnesty.

## **CHARACTER, CHARACTERIZATION AND ROLES OF CHARACTERS**

### **J ERE**

He is an ex-soldier and now a prisoner. He was a colleague of Mulili. He taught religious knowledge for three years before he was drafted into the army. He can be described as;

#### **Reasonable**

J ere is reasonable as he listens to Doga and Nina and understands their predicament. He even tells them that Mulili does not belong with them and does not know their ways when Nina threatens to curse them by stripping naked and Mulili makes fun of her. He pleads with Doga to understand that he and Mulili are simply obeying orders when they say that the ceremony cannot go on. He says, 'old man, if I had the power, I would let you go on. I would even take part in the ceremony. I knew Adika well.

#### **Patriotic**

He aspires for a prosperous Kafira and advocates for unity among all citizens. He tells



Boss, “No, your excellency, we shall not shoot you. Kafira needs each one of us, you included.” (pg 73)

### **Friendly/Sociable/Understanding**

He hits it off with the other prisoner with whom he enacts the episode of Pilate and Jesus from the Bible.

He easily makes friends with Mosese in prison. They quickly find that they have a lot to talk about because they are like minded as far as the administration of Kafira is concerned.

He empathizes with the old couple and wishes to allow them to carry out their shaving ceremony.

### **Secretive/cautious**

He does not let out the secret that Mulili allowed Mustafa to escape across the border. When Mosese tells him about the circumstances that brought him to prison, the events of Adika’s funeral, Jere does not let Mosese know that he knows Jusper

### **Daring**

He is unperturbed by the threats directed to him by Askari. When Askari tells him, “....I have killed a man once in this very cell, he replies, congratulations! How did you manage?” (pg 30)

### **Intelligent/Cunning/clever/tactful**

He and Mosese clearly carry out a palace coup to expose the villains like Mulili in the government.

He says they have no intentions of getting rid of Boss because they want the act to be ‘A mirror that will reflect the real faces of Kafira’s front men.’

He compares the prison department with Meteorological Department which confuses the public by giving contradictory information.

### **Philosophical**

After observing Mosese’s reverie, Jere aptly summarizes the state of the society thus, “When the madness of an entire nation disturbs a solitary mind, it is not enough to say the man is mad.”

Mosese’s behavior is a result of what the authority has put its citizen through—that is, oppression to the point of madness.

### **Roles**

i) He plays a significant role in the development of the plot of the story.

- ii) He enhances the character of other characters in the play. For instance, through him, the Askari is portrayed as brutal and intimidating.
- iii) Several themes have been brought out using him, for instance the themes of self-sacrifice and oppression.
- iv) He is used by the writer to highlight several stylistic devices such as play within a play, suspense and biblical allusion.

## **J USPER WENDO**

He is a philosophy student at the university. He is the son of Doga and Nina. His brother Adika was shot dead during a demonstration held by the university students. He can be described as;

### **Arrogant/disrespectful**

J usper talks arrogantly to people who do not make sense to him. He talks back at Tumbo regardless of his powerful office. He openly shows his disrespect by talking negatively about the evils of the government. At some point, Tumbo thinks he is drunk.

### **Vengeful/vindictive**

He kills Chagaga, the sub-chief's brother who also killed Adika, his brother. He shoots Mulili for having caused all the pain and suffering in the society. He is over-excited that they have successfully carried out the coup.

He vows to avenge the killing of his brother Adika. He tells Regina, "I will get my revenge someday, even if it means doing it alone." (pg 33)

### **Sarcastic**

When asked by Tumbo what achievement he is going to highlight in the play meant for entertaining the visiting head of state, he says, "the number of expatriate professionals had steadily increased over the year, signifying the full extent of our potential progress..." (pg

On the issue of name changing, he says, "but there is nothing wrong with that. Changing names is item number three in the new development plan, isn't it? In fact, Boss himself gave us a fine example when he substituted his Christian name with something none of us can pronounce." (pg 40)

After being told by Tumbo that he has won the nonexistent play writing competition, he remarks that out of ten plays submitted, his came first and that the other entries have of course been returned to their authors. (pg 49)

### **Open/Outspoken/candid**

J usper speaks his mind when he finds his parents at the graveside; he openly confesses having killed someone. Nina thinks he is drunk and only to find out later that he actually killed Chagaga.

When asked by Tumbo how much beer he drinks he retorts that it is as much as he (Tumbo) drank off the pocket money he got during his university days.

He talks to the president candidly as he gives him a summary of his play. He is not afraid to reveal to him that he has written the play.

### **Intelligent/creative**

J usper is a university student. He is also a playwright who depicts the society so clearly that publishers dread publishing his work. He is able to trick the president to provide real guns so that he can find a chance to avenge the deaths of his parents and brother. He also succeeds in tricking Tumbo and taking advantage of inefficiency. He writes an ingenious play that deceives Tumbo completely.

### **Stubborn**

J usper refuses to remove his red gown despite his girlfriend's nagging. She says it makes him appear dangerous. Students are always treated suspiciously whenever they put them on but he is ready to face the consequences. He is unapologetic to Tumbo for wearing it.

### **Roles**

- i) Major events in the play revolve around him
- ii) His experiences expose the Boss' regime.
- iii) His brother Adika is brutally murdered during a student's demonstration. He is arrested when he revenges his brother's killing and is released in exchange for his parent's murder.
- iv) His unstable state of mind points to an individual who has undergone both physical and emotional trauma.
- v) He highlights the themes of suffering, disillusionment, betrayal and self-sacrifice. The writer has used J usper to highlight aspects of style such as play within a play, allusion and satire.

### **MULILI**

Mulili is an ex-soldier and now a farmer. He is cousin to Boss and is a member of the visitor's entertainment committee.

**Unfeeling/inhuman/Callous**

He makes fun of Doga and Nina's sorrow due to the loss of their son and forbids them to carry out the shaving ceremony at the graveside. Even when Nina threatens to strip naked in protest, a traditional curse, Mulili asks, "....How many naked body I have seen and I am still Mulili with my two eyes, natural?" (pg 9)

He is insensitive to Doga's feelings that Doga finally tells him, ".....may you die the way Adika did." (pg 10)

He has Doga, Nina and Kabito killed in cold-blood.

He declares that there is no reason why Boss should not be killed.

**Disrespectful**

He shows disrespect for the elder couple (Doga and Nina) when he dares Nina to go ahead and strip after she had threatened to do so. He says he has seen many naked bodies and he is still Mulili with two eyes, natural. (pg 9)

**Vengeful/Vindictive**

He bears a grudge against Kabito because he feels belittled by Kabito whom he alleges has called him a primary school kid. As if that is not enough, he goes ahead to tell lies about Kabito to Boss leading to his elimination.

He threatens J ere for failing to enforce the instructions they had to prevent Doga and Nina from carrying out their late son's shaving ceremony. This act lands J ere in prison

**Corrupt**

Being Boss' cousin he is promised many acres of land and grade cattle. He will therefore do anything to ensure he gets this.

When the tender for the supply of milk to the university is awarded to somebody else (Kabito), Mulili reports to Boss who revokes it and gives it to him. Mulili goes on to have Kabito killed after lying to Boss that Kabito had maligned his name. He allows a fugitive, Mustafa, to escape across the border.

**Comical/funny**

His ungrammatical English makes him a funny character provoking laughter in the reader every time he speaks. For example, in reference to Doga's statement that an innocent man is in prison because of Adika, Mulili says, 'That no matter, he go against law and order, tell us new thing or make clear out of here. You are trespasser.' (pg 10) When Nina says that they do not want to be shown letter because their hope has been killed, Mulili tells them, "Your people full of primitive; instead going to find how the other is, they comes and gets stick with dead one." (pg 10)

He mixes up simple sayings. For example, when he comes late for the meeting of the entertainment committee that is preparing for the head of state, he tells the other,

“Gentlemen, I am very sorrowful, but I always say, better never than late’ (pg 54) When telling Boss about Kabito, he says, ‘The one, he be a green grass in the snake.’ (pg 59) He quickly changes things he had said to suit himself. For instance, he reports that Kabito died in an accident because he was driving while under the influence of alcohol. Nicodemo asks, “His breath did you say?” He retreats, “who said breath I said his body smelled whiskies?” (pg 63)

### **Short tempered/temperamental**

Mulili falls out with people on many occasions because of his short temper. For example, when Doga pleads with him to let him carry on with the shaving ceremony, he loses his temper.

Nina gets angry with him and threatens to strip naked, but he is not moved.

Doga curses him to die like Adika but he responds, “.....you tell him me I am a man with action not words, come on tell.....” (pg 10)

Mulili abuses Kabito a goat when the latter refuses to apologise to him (pg 57)

### **Sycophant/fanatical**

He does all he can to please the authority (Boss). For example, he does not agree with J ere to let Doga and Nina perform the shaving ceremony for their late son even when J ere feels they can allow the couple to do it under supervision.

He is very proud of having undeservingly won the milk tender. This is because he is Boss’ cousin. He is impressed by the way he got the tender. “What happen to Mr. Mulili tender supply for milk?.....You knows, who is speaking! I it’s me, Boss himself and no bloody vice-deputy.” (pg 54)

He does everything to impress Boss and make him think he is loyal. He even suggests that people should go on holiday during the visit by the foreign head of state, so that everyone can line up along the road to receive him. This is against logic because, according to Kabito, this is the final term and most school children will be sitting their exams and cannot afford to line up along the road.

He was a soldier and now a farmer but still insist on being part of the authority. For example, he has the audacity to criticize university lecturers for allegedly going against policy. He also says that university students should co-operate with the government because, “We pays for their fees, we pays for their luxury, we give them all necessary, who are they?” (pg 56)

When he goes for the rehearsal, he tells Boss, “Yes, your excellent. I say myself: go and be with cousin as he sees the final one.” (pg 69)

### **Roles**

Mulili symbolizes the excesses of Boss;-

He is portrayed as cruel, greedy, vengeful and dictatorial. Tumbo says of him, 'the most of the advisers is that of his, Mulili.' (pg 44)

Through him the character of Jere is brought out a principled when the latter amidst Mulili's objections insists that Adika's shaving ceremony will proceed as scheduled.

He enhances the themes of misuse of power, corruption and self-preservation. The writer has effectively employed use of humour through Mulili.

### **TUMBO**

Tumbo is a government official and a confidant of Boss, the Head of state. He is Regina's landlord and chairman of the committee charged with the responsibility of organizing entertainment for the visiting of head of state. Despite his limited education, he has managed to acquire wealth and enjoys immense influence owing to his close association to the Boss.

### **Hypocritical/insincere**

He is a beneficiary of Boss' government yet given an opportunity he criticizes his regime and those working for it. About Mulili he says, 'That is why he retired from the army. Until people like him are out, it is dangerous to seem to do things differently in Kafira.' (pg 44-45)

### **Corrupt**

He says that he would not have acquired the blocks of buildings he has if he had 'depended o empty talk' like the university students who he feels talk too much. He says, 'you were born alone and when you die, you will die alone....' This implies that he has used fraudulent means to acquire property.

He pretends to be a socialist when he offers J usper the chance to write the play to entertain the visiting head of state. He says, 'You see, the whole program has cost the government some quarter of a million shillings. In fact, I had a mind of writing the play myself, but I thought better of it.....eat and let eat.' (pg 44)

He says a sum of money has been allocated for a play-writing competition but he does not organise the competition. Instead he gives the opportunity to J usper, of the six hundred pounds meant to finance the competition, he gives one third to J usper and Regina and says the rest 'will be used to put records straight' (pg 49)

### **Sycophantic**

He has secured his place in the entertainment committee by virtue of his unflinching support for the government. He tells the other committee members, "I trust, gentlemen, that you know why you are in this committee. You were nominated for one reason, your unflinching support of our government (pg 52-53)

### **Cowardly**

He does not live up to what he believes in. He strongly believes that until people like Mulili are out of the government, 'It is dangerous to seem to do things differently in Kafira.' (Pg 44-45)

He convinces Regina to go and see Boss even though he knows well Boss' weakness for women. When Regina is hesitant, he tells her, 'We can't afford to make him angry at this stage.' (pg 46)

When Kabito is eliminated and J usper insists on standing for truth and justice even if it will cost him another year at the university, Tumbo tells him. 'if you knew what has happened to one of us at the committee, I am sure you would postpone your eagerness to stand by truth and justice.' (pg 62)

### **Ignorant/ inefficient/ careless**

He does not know who Soyinka is. He thinks he is a prime minister of a certain country he purports to have forgotten. He even insists he is a politician.

He does not realize that the achievement J usper says will be highlighted in the play is meant to portray the government that Tumbo serves in bad light.

Mosese says that it is out of his inefficiency that they are able to carry out the palace coup.s

### **Gullible**

He played along to Mosese, J ere and J usper's plot to bring down Boss. Mosese says that it was largely through his inefficiency that they achieved their objective. (pg 74)

J usper is able to convince him that he is Regina's cousin.

### **Illiterate**

When J usper tells him that he drinks as much as he (Tumbo) drank off the pocket money he got during his university days, a visibly embarrassed Tumbo attempts to justify his limited education by claiming that though he qualified for university admission, he sold the scholarship since his family was poor (pg 41)

### **Roles**

Tumbo contributes significantly to the development of the plot of the play;

- i) Being Boss' confidant he comes out as a major beneficiary of Boss' regime.
- ii) Towards the end of the play, he confesses that he was trained but given the wrong job. This aspect portrays him as sycophantic.
- iii) It is through his inefficiency that the plot by Mosese, J usper and J ere to topple Boss

succeeds.

iv) Through him, we get to know J usper's character as daring and outspoken and Regina as trusting.

v) He also highlights the themes of fear, self-preservation and misuse of power.

vi) Through him several aspects of style have been effectively used by the writer. They include foreshadow, satire, play within a play and suspense.

## **BOSS**

He is the president of Kafira and cousin to Mulili. He plays the role of the chief of staff in the rehearsal. His wife is called Mercedes.

### **Authoritative/over-strict**

Boss leads the country with an iron fist. He wants everything to go his way and cannot stand anyone who appears to block his orders and decisions and he cannot brook dissent. He has signed the death warrants of very many innocent people including Kabito, Adika, Doga and Nina.

He warns J usper against students' protests during the rehearsal. He even brags of having given three hundred jobs to expatriates just to prove a point to the protesters.

### **Corrupt**

According to Mulili, Boss has acquired a lot of wealth and banked the money in foreign accounts. When Mulili tells him that Kabito was spreading such allegations he shouts, "who gave him that information, just how much does Kabito know about me?" (pg 59). This seems to confirm his corrupt nature. He orders that the tender awarded to Kabito be revoked and given to Mulili. Boss is also notorious for nepotism. He assigns powerful positions to his uneducated and inexperienced kinsmen in order to secure his interests. He also gives jobs to expatriates in return for foreign donations and funding. He demands that prisoners stage a play for the guest president in order to portray national unity and the involvement of prisoners in national matters. He does this to make an impression that would attract funding.

Through Mulili we get to learn that he has stashed huge amounts of money in foreign accounts which has brought down the economy of Kafira.

### **Temperamental/impatient/cruel/brutal**

Regina says that boss is reported to have a short temper. Tumbo says that Boss is known to make hasty decisions and stand by them. When instructing Mulili to get rid of Kabito, he impatiently orders Mulili out of the palace. Tumbo says that when Boss is angry he does not differentiate between a human being and a rat. He also refers to him as an animal.



**Proud/conceited**

He says that students do not understand what truth and justice is. He says that their protest against foreign expatriates led to the death of a student leader and the imprisonment of a lecturer.

To put them in their place, he brings in three hundred more expatriate personnel just to prove his point. He says that five of them are his own personal appointments.

**Immoral/ amorous**

He has a ridiculous weakness for women according to Tumbo. He also attempts to rape Regina who is forced to escape by jumping a ten foot high window.

**Incompetent/ inefficient**

He relies on hearsay and propaganda to run the affairs of the state. He admits that Kabito has been one of his loyal servants. He allows prisoners to handle fire arms during the rehearsal which they use to stage the palace coup.

**Vengeful/Vindictive**

He is averse to criticism. He orders the killing of Kabito since it is alleged that he (Kabito) raised serious allegations about his integrity. He tells J usper that since the university students questioned his appointment of expatriate personnel, just to put them in their place, he orders three hundred more expatriate personnel.

**Gullible**

He falls for Mosese, J ere, and J usper's trick and orders the guards to surrender their guns to be used as props.

**Suspicious**

He has deliberately put Mulili on the entertainment committee to report directly to him if something should seem to be going wrong. He suspects Tumbo of being behind Kabito's action to discredit him. 'Tumbo must have a hand in this' (pg 59)

**ROLES**

- i. Boss is the architect of the misrule in Kafira.
- ii. He has allowed his advisers such as Mulili to unleash terror to innocent civilians.
- iii. He is a central character since the events in the story centre around his misrule.

- iv. He brings out the character of Mulili as vindictive when Mulili convinces him on the need to eliminate Kabito. He also helps bring out the character of Tumbo as sycophantic.
- v. Though him several themes are highlighted such as misuse of power, betrayal, and social injustice.
- vi. He enhances several stylistic devices such as play within a play, suspense, satire and symbolism.

### **ASKARI**

He is a prison warder and is mandated to keep watch over Jere and Mosese.

#### **Cruel/intimidating**

Even though Jere was once a soldier like him, he threatens to teach him a lesson or two if Jere calls him his friend again. He also warns Jere that he has once killed a man in that very cell

#### **Hypocritical**

He tells Jere that they are giving consideration to his future 'despite his contribution to the national headache.' He pretends to be doing Jere a favour and says he should be filling in forms for his rehabilitation.

He says that experts have to be called in to give meaning to data collected in the various research centres that the government has put up and which show that rehabilitation of prisoners is invaluable. He goes ahead to say that this is not the type of work 'any of these local pretenders would handle.' (pg 17)

### **MOSESE**

He is a former university lecturer who is later imprisoned for criticizing the ruling elite.

#### **Friendly/sociable**

He easily makes friends with Jere in prison. He also shares his views with Jere. For example, when Jere tells him that he was a soldier before he came to face to face with reality, Mosese tells him that fire has always been there. (pg 22)

He explains to Jere the reason he had changed his name – an illegal drug was planted on him by a man bearing the same name as him (Nicodemus) leading to his imprisonment.

#### **Intelligent/observant**

He was a university lecturer. He is also able to see through the scheme that the authorities have. They intend to use prisoners to act a play to entertain a visiting Head of

state to symbolize national unity and therefore build confidence in the visitor to encourage him to invest more in Kafira.

Together with J ere and J usper, he intelligently carries out a palace coup.

### **Principled**

Initially, he refuses to participate in a play to be performed for the visiting head of state. “I will not bend so low.” (pg 26). ‘I cannot do it. Among my friends, that would be equivalent to kneeling in front of Boss and pleading for mercy.’ (pg 27)

His change of name was influenced by Boss decision to change his. He changed his name since the man who planted a drug on him to implicate him shared a name with him (Nicodemus) (pg 25)

### **Selfless**

Even though he is not related to Adika who is just one among his many students, he protests his killing and fights injustice but the reward for his effort was imprisonment.

### **Daring**

Together with J usper and J ere he agrees to take part in a potentially dangerous plot to bring down Boss through a play meant for entertaining the visiting head of state. The plan may not work hence they may be labelled traitors.

### **Sceptical/ Hopeless/ pessimistic**

After being sent to prison on trumped up charges, he loses faith in the freedom of Kafira. When told that the release of six hundred prisoners will depend on his participation in the play to entertain the visiting head of state, it only makes him feel like he is betraying what he believes in. He feels it would be like kneeling down ‘in front of Boss and pleading for mercy’ for something he has not done. (pg 28)

He does not believe in the Bible teachings that J ere seems to believe in. For example, he says, ‘That is why I don’t believe in such crap as the last shall be first, and blessed are the poor for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven!.....’ (pg 28)

When J ere tells him that things will change, he says, ‘.....that is why I prefer to wait and see. I will stay here and remain loyal to my principles. (pg 28)

### **Roles**

- i. Mosese helps highlight the plight of the educated elite in Kafira.
- ii. Boss’ regime seems to deliberately persecute university lectures like Mosese and university student’s whom he perceives as his most potent critics. Mosese is arrested and imprisoned for protesting the mistreatment of the family of his late student (Adika)

during the funeral, weeping in public is made illegal for the academic staff.

iii. Through him, the character of Askari is brought out as brutal and inhuman.

iv. He helps develop among other themes the themes of selflessness and misuse of power.

v. He also highlights play within a play, satire and suspense among other stylistic devices.

## **REGINA**

She is sister of Mosese and J usper Wendo's girlfriend. Her concern for her brother and boyfriend is responsible for her confrontational nature. She pleads with J usper as well as Mosese to co-operate with the authorities.

### **Fearful/cowardly**

She is so afraid of the laid down rules that she demands that J usper removes the red gown as it makes him appear dangerous. She fears that he might be killed for being a 'red guard'

She pleads with J usper not to talk of revenge for the death of his parents and brother. She says, 'J usper, you promised. You promised to be a good boy. Do you now talk of revenge?' (pg 33)

J usper tells her that she seems to have lost her fighting spirit like everyone else in the street.

### **Principled**

She refuses to succumb to Boss' compromising demands and escapes by jumping from a ten foot high window.

### **Trusting**

She believes that Tumbo will speak to Boss on her behalf. She is convinced that boss will replace the political prisoners to mark the visit of foreign head of state.

When J usper asks her, 'do you think he means it?' she responds, 'he does. He says he will be in charge of the whole thing himself. And don't forget he is Boss' right hand man.' (pg 37)

## **ROLES**

i. Regina highlights major problems affecting Kafira, which is a disillusioned citizenry.

ii. She berates her boyfriend J usper for being critical of Boss, According to her, nothing good will come out of J usper's continued antagonism towards the government. She is willing to allow the status quo to remain out of fear for the well-being of her loved ones.

iii. She pleads with J usper to stop his agitation, pointing out that J usper and her brother Mosese are the only people she has in this world, but Mosese was in and that left J usper to either build or destroy her. (pg 32)

iv. She brings the character of as traitorous. Out pd good will she agrees to meet him only for Boss to try to rape her.

v. She also brings put the portrayal of J usper as principled and selfless. Through her, the author successfully brings out the themes of betrayal, sexual immorality and misuse of power. The author's effective use of stylistic devices such as satire and humour can also be attributed to her.

### **DOGA**

He is Nina's husband and father to J usper and the later Adika.

#### **Suspicious**

Doga believes that the individual responsible for the death of their son Adika lives among them. His suspicion is raised by evidence on Adika's grave. (pg 1)

#### **Forthright/open/candid**

He tells his wife to calm down when she acts nervous about the violation of their late son's grave and says, 'What sort of a mother are you?

He also disagrees with his wife about informing the sub-chief about the crack on the grave. He can't imagine informing the sub-chief because it is his brother who killed his son.

He would rather cheat the ancestors than follow protocol of a wicked government.

He also curse Mulili when he proves adamant about allowing them to carry on with the shaving ceremony. He tells him, 'May you die the way Adika did.' (pg 10)

#### **Optimistic**

He believes that J usper is Okay where he is. J usper is alright where he is. '(pg 2)

#### **Perceptive**

He is able to identify J ere as Kaleka's son despite the later wearing a cap. (pg 9)

#### **Dishonest**

He is determined to cover up any evil on his son's grave by filling the crack on the grave with soil so that the shaving ceremony can go on.

#### **Stubborn/determined**

He is determined to have his late son's shaving ceremony go on despite the pleas from

his wife that people might boycott the ceremony if they knew about the crack in the grave.

**Grateful/ appreciative**

He is grateful to J ere for informing them about the whereabouts of J usper. As a form of gratitude he offers him a pocket bible. 'Kaleka's son, I have nothing to give you, (handing him a pocket bible) take this.' (pg 12)

**Rational/ realistic**

He tells his wife that they need not to cry since tears are for the young and their own wells are dry.

**Devoted/ religious**

His devotion is depicted by the song he sings with his wife and the prayer he says with her. Later on, he gives J ere a bible.

**NINA**

She is Doga's wife and mother to J usper and the late Adika.

**Motherly/ concerned**

She mourns the death of her son and wonders why people would kill him. She is heart broken by the people who come to interfere with his grave and she cannot stand it.

The death of her son sends her into mourning. She begs Mulili to allow them to allow them to carry on with the shaving ceremony.

She is concerned about the whereabouts of J usper when she finds that he is not guarding the grave.

**Emotional**

She weeps besides her son's grave

**Determined/ daring**

When Mulili refuses to allow her to carry out the shaving ceremony, she threatens to strip naked and cause him blindness.

**Honest**

She feels that the evil done to her son's grave should not be hidden. According to her, one cannot outwit their ancestors. She suggests to her husband that they report the evil to the sub-chief. 'It would be wrong for us to sit on this evil.' (pg 3)

### **Religious**

She tells her husband that they need to commit the day on God's hands. They sing and later she invokes a prayer.

### **Fearful**

She is concerned about her son J usper's safety when they fail to find him at Adika's grave. 'But where is he now? Doga, my heart fails me. (pg 2)

## **STYLE AND LANGUAGE**

### **SATIRE**

Satire is a form of writing where an individual or society is ridiculed or where the foolishness of an idea, practice or custom is shown. It's a form of criticism of vices through or by use of humour.

The writer portrays the evils of the society in a rather humorous way. From the beginning of the play, he depicts the government as insensitive to the needs of its own people. Adika is shot dead by the sub-chief's brother for leading a demonstration against the employment of many expatriates. Chagaga is jailed and later released because he shot Adika in 'self-defence' other than listen to the protest of the people and consider their demands; the government executes those who oppose its ideas.

Government officials such as Askari and Mulili are satirised for their cruelty. They have little regard for human life. Askari mistreats prisoners under his watch such as J ere. He repeatedly threatens J ere and even informs him that he has killed a man in the very cell J ere is in. Mulili has no qualms taking away human life.

Mulili and Boss have been satirized for being traitorous. Boss betrays the trust bestowed on him by his subjects. Instead of being a servant leader, he has become a tyrant. A peaceful demonstration by university students is violently dispersed leading to the death of a student; Adika. Instead of securing jobs for the citizens of his country he has resorted to importation of expatriates. His leadership is also characterized by intimidation, assassination and corruption. Mulili is a beneficiary of Boss' misrule. Ironically, when tables are turned on Boss by J ere, J usper and Mosese, he betrays Boss and blames him for the ills in Kafira as well as for killing Kabito. He urges J ere to Kill Boss.

Tumbo a government official's inefficiency is satirized. He uses his position to benefit himself. He claims that the reason he never got proper education is that his parents were poor and so he sold his scholarship. He fails in his duty to set up a writing competition, feigns ignorance that it took place and gives the opportunity to J usper who grabs it to turn against the president and his cronies. When he visits Regina, Tumbo sends J usper for beer claiming that it is tough being a government official. When we do not quite see what is tough in his line of duty.

Tumbo is happy when J usper highlights in the play the influx of expatriate is a sign of potential progress. Mulili is satirised for being insensitive to the rights of children. He suggests that during the head of state's visit, all children and adults should line up on the road to welcome the visitor despite the fact that it's the final term and most of the children will be sitting for exams.

## **IRONY**

### **SITUATIONAL IRONY**

After the death of Adika, J usper went wild singing songs of vengeance and as a result he is taken away by agents of the government to be cooled down. He was said to be dangerous to peace loving people. It is ironical that when he was brought back after three months, he has instead worsened and people said he was mad. (pg 4-5)

In prison, one is not allowed to talk too much. It doesn't pay to talk a lot. It is ironical that askari takes great exception to Mosese's silence and tries to force him to talk. Due to the fact that the prison authorities know Mosese as being talkative they will not allow him to keep quiet and demand that he explains what he is keeping quiet about.

It is ironical that though while in prison one is expected to show consistency of character and a marked improvement, one cannot afford to stick to one's principles otherwise he will never leave jail.

According to J ere, the character in the Pilate story (his fellow inmate) did not want to be Pilate and instead insisted on being J esus. The said character did not know that being J esus meant receiving canes and when J ere caned him, he wailed and J ere was subsequently punished (it was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth) (pg 23)

It is ironical that it will take a state visitor to have political prisoners released in Kafira. J ere tells askari that innocence can be an offence. This statement is given credence by the fact that J ere and Mosese are in prison, not because of committing an offence but standing for the truth.

Tumbo says that a sum of money has been allocated for a play-writing competition and adds that the democratic part of it is that anyone has to participate yet in actual sense, there is no competition. He goes ahead to pronounce J usper as the winner of the non-existence competition. News of J usper's win will be in the papers the following week.

It's ironical that Tumbo will not accept the suggestion that the visiting head of state visits the upcountry to see the progress in agriculture despite the fact that the head of state offered technicians for the said progress.

Kabito's attack on the government that Mulili and his likes choke Kafira is ironical since he is a major beneficiary of the system. His appointment to the entertainment



committee is reward for his loyalty to Boss. It is also ironical that by pointing out the truth, he is accused of sowing seeds of discord among the other people. According to Boss, grey hair symbolizes wisdom. It is therefore ironic that he is determined to remove all strands of grey hair, claiming that a leader should have grey hair. (pg 58)

## **DRAMATIC IRONY**

As J usper enters, Doga hides behind the bush. The audience as well as Nina is aware of Doga's whereabouts but J usper is not.

J usper asks Tumbo if he had come to see his (J usper's) cousin, The readers as well as J usper know that Regina is the girlfriend to J usper and not his cousin but Tumbo doesn't.

Mulili is not aware that Tumbo and Nicodemo are already aware of Kabito's death.

Tumbo tells Nicodemo, "Here he comes. Remember we know nothing." (enter Mulili) (pg 62)

Boss, Tumbo and Mulili are not aware of the plot by Mosese, J ere, and J usper to topple Boss who is duped into ordering the guards to surrender their guns to be used during the final rehearsal of the play. The readers on the other hand are aware of the plot by the three.

## **IMAGERY**

The writer has employed the use of figurative language in the play. Metaphors and similes have been used as follows;

### **I Similes**

"He was slaughtered like a goat." This shows how Adika was killed mercilessly. While referring to this co-actor in the Pilate story, J ere says of him. 'he wailed like a woman in a death home' (pg 23) This is a pointer of the cowardice of the individual.

While referring to the terror inflicted on the citizens by Boss and his henchmen, J usper tells Regina, they come quietly when you are least expecting and before you realize it, they have pounced on you like hungry leopards.' (pg 32)

J usper goes on to say, "I defended his remains like a man." (pg 34) This shows his determination and bravery in ensuring that his brother's grave was not desecrated.

### **II Metaphor**

Mulili tells J ere, "Big coward J ere, you a woman" (pg 10) The implication here is that J ere is a coward for sympathising with Nina and Doga.

J usper tells Regina, "Adika died for the truth.....he was killed for asking whether or not we were on the right train" (pg 34). J usper here is advertising that Adika died for

questioning how the country was being governed. Tumbo tells J usper that there is a good potato in the work they are about to do in reference to money.

Mulili refers to J ere as chicken hearted (pg 44)

## **ALLUSION**

Allusion refers to reference to something or someone else without the context of a given text.

The writer makes several allusions in reference to the Bible. When J ere canes his cell mate as they act out the part of J esus Christ and Pilate, he finds himself in trouble when the cell mate cries out. He is stripped naked and caned. He tells them it was a case of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. This is a verse in the Bible.

The above story is an allusion to the Biblical crucifixion of J esus. Many citizens of Kafira have been crucified innocently just like J esus and many others are the pilates that beat up Christ. Doga, Nina and Kabito are among those who die needless deaths. The pilates are exemplified by the likes of Boss and Mulili.

Mosese alludes to the biblical inheritance of the Kingdom of heaven in reference to their high expectations after independence. When they are told that their kingdom (independence) has come, it turns out to be an allusion.

Mosese also alluded to the bible when he says ‘.....the last shall be first and blessed are the poor for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.’ (pg 27) Mosese questions the validity of this bible verse by pointing out the disappointment of the masses. He is disillusioned that people had placed their hope in Boss’ regime, only to be disappointed by the turn of events.

Boss tells J usper that when he was acting, he used to be given bad roles. He would die for mistakes that were not his. J usper tells him, “I would say it’s sacrifice” A kind of death for a future. The sort of role Christ played’ (pg 66)

While referring to this mother, Mosese tells J ere, “once every year she slaughtered a cock to mark the birth of Christ” (pg 28) Christmas is alluded here.

## **SYMBOLISM**

After Adika’s burial following his killing Nina says that his death has made them blind and left them in blindness. This words ‘blind’ and blindness symbolize the state of hopelessness or disillusionment of Doga and Nina.

Reference is made to the word ‘potato’. Nicodemo asks Kabito “did you get the potato?” Potato refers to the university tender. Kabito insists on knowing their terms of service and Nicodemo proceeds to ask the size of potato per hour they are entitled to (pg 53) This is in reference to allowance due to them. ‘Potato’ symbolizes corruption that is rampant in Kafira.

Boss orders an Askari to untie the hands of Mosese and J ere (pg 70).

12. Why does Boss offer himself for the position of chief of staff and what happened to the one supposed to take that role

13. Why are the prisoners given real guns and what does this tell us about the state officials

14. Give a synopsis of the play the prisoners enact

15. how do the prisoners manage to take over the government

16. Why does Mulili try to escape

17. How does Mulili betray Boss and what allegations does he present against Boss

18. Why is Boss spared and Mulili killed

19. After killing Mulili, J usper says "I did it for Kafira, I did it for all of you people "what is the meaning of this statement

20. What is the significance of the reappearance of Doga and Nina and their freezing as they point at Mulili's body at the end of the play.

21. Identify the stylistic devices used in this scene

22. Identify the elements of betrayal in this scene

The act of untying the two symbolizes their freedom and by extension salvation or the citizens of Kafira.

Askari is a symbol of oppression. Political prisoners like J ere and Mosese are mistreated while in prison. The brutality of the regime is evident when askari says of Mosese '.....when they brought him in last night , he was all questions. We calculated that two mature strokes would ease the tension (pg 19) He informs J ere that he has once killed a man in that very cell. (pg 30)s

The gun is a symbol of power. The moment the askaris surrender their guns to J ere, Mosese and J usper, power shifts from Boss to the three. Mulili, Boss and Tumbo are at the mercy of the three.

The reappearance of Doga and Nina at the end of the play after the killing of Mulili is a symbol of change in Kafira, their reappearance at the graveside which now is for Mulili shows that the social order of injustice and misrule exemplified by poor advisors like Mulili has been done away with and now they expect a new Kafira with better leadership and justice.

## **HUMOUR**

The writer has employed humour in his play. He portrays Mulili humorously. His broken English and barely comprehensible talks ease the tense moments that keep building in the play. Some of the funny statements he makes include;

The green grass in the snake instead of the green snake in the grass to refer to hypocrites.

Sometimes I wonder why you possession that thing between your legs

You must apology to me this, now (pg 57)  
You plays with fire you goat!

Mulili's attempt to communicate in English is laughable. "Who you call child eeh? J ere you tell him. Tell him what I does with stubborn old mens' (pg 8)  
"Big coward. Why you doesn't let her get on with it. How many I have seen and I am still Mulili with my two eyes, natural? Look, no goggles" (pg 9)

Mulili's disjointed English is a pointer to his limited education. This is an indication of Boss' leadership which regards individuals not on the basis of their qualifications but on the basis of blood relationship and perceived loyalty.  
Moses says he has no front when asked by Askari, "What do you think you are doing showing us your back?" (pg 18)

While responding to Tumbo's question whether J usper drinks, Regina replies, 'there is no brand of beer he hasn't tasted.' (pg 41)  
In a bid to cover up the heinous crime he has committed Mulili says, "I also ask that, people say his breath smelled full of spirits. That hard stuff" (pg 63) When cornered by Nicodemo he says, "Who said breath, I said his body smelled whiskies." Humour here is used to portray the wicked and cruel nature of Mulili and clearly points out his direct involvement in the killing of Kabito.  
On realizing that tables have been turned in his cousin Boss and the guns are now in the hands of J ere and Moses, Mulili says, "I go for short call" (pg 72)

J usper refers to Regina as girlfriend number one (pg 6). Here humour is used to relieve the tension building up following the desecration of Adika's grave.  
It is ridiculously funny how Tumbo confuses Wole Soyinka a renowned writer, for a Prime minister and a politician.

## **PROVERBS**

Proverbs are pithy statements that are mainly employed to give advice or to caution. Several instances of proverbs are evident in the text.

The writer has used proverbs to illustrate the wisdom of Doga and his realistic nature. He says, "a mouse does not share a bowl with a cat." (pg 3) which implies that they cannot share mutual relationship with the sub-chief whose brother, Chagaga, is responsible for the death of Adika  
When Nina suggests that they should report to the sub-chief what has just happened to

the grave, Doga uses a proverb to explain her failure to see the futility of her actions. Thus he says, ‘...when dry thunder tears the sky before our eyes, do we forget the storm of yesterday?’ (pg 3)

Doga insists that the shaving ceremony must go on regardless of the obstacles that they face. He uses a proverb. “A cloudy sky does not always cry rain’ (pg 3)

Kabito tells Nicodemo, “the tree climber begins from the bottom, not top’ (pg 53). Through this proverb, Kabito wishes to be informed the terms of service of the committee before their meeting. The portrayal of Kabito is that of a materialistic, greedy and self-centred individual.

## **FORESHADOW**

A foreshadow is a premonition that something is going to happen. Authors use words, signs or events to prepare readers for something that is just to occur.

Doga foreshadows Mulili’s death when he says ‘Empty words will be your downfall. May you die the way Adika did’ (pg 10) His words come to pass when J usper shoots Mulili. After his parents are murdered in exchange for his release, J usper says, “I will get my revenge someday, even if it means going alone” (pg 33) His words are fulfilled when he shoots Mulili dead.

While reacting to Tumbo’s insistence that she must personally see Boss to secure her brother’s release , Regina says, “I have this funny feeling that something will go wrong’ (pg 45) Her fears are justified when later on Boss forcefully tries to get her and she is only able to escape by jumping out of a ten foot high window.

Mulili foreshadows the arrest and imprisonment of J ere when he threatens him; “Hey you.....you shall pay for it” (pg 15)

Boss foreshadows his near death when he says, just before the rehearsal; ‘In four out of five cases I had to die for little, mistakes that were not my own.....’”(pg 66)

The reappearance of Doga and Nina at the end of the play after the killing of Mulili foreshadows the change in Kafira, their reappearance at the graveside which now is for Mulili shows that the social order of injustice and misrule exemplified by poor advisors like Mulili has been done away with and now they expect a new Kafira with better leadership and justice.

## **PLAY WITHIN A PLAY**

The play written by J usper is entitled Betrayal in the City and captures the event of the palace coup so aptly, In this play prisoners stage a palace coup and exposes the villains in the government who are finally gotten rid of.

Tumbo, the inefficient government official is ordered out of the centre of power and

Mulili, the embodiment of evil is killed.

Boss' life is spared even when he offers himself to be shot- as a sign that there is hope for change in Kafira.

### **USE OF SONG**

The writer has used a song on pg 8;

When we walk with the Lord

In the light of his way...

.....But trust and obey.

This song and the subsequent prayer indicate that the couple can only turn to God for solace after all else has failed. Generally, it is their hope in life because under the Kafira government, they can only trust and obey.

It portrays them as religious despite the challenges they are facing. They are seeking for answers through divine intervention.

The song and the prayer summarize their total sense of loss and their deep religious devotion

### **CROSS PURPOSE**

This style is used in reference to individuals talking about different things in the course of their conversation without realizing it.

The first incident of cross purpose is when Doga, Nina and J usper appear not to communicate and their statements overlap. When J usper is at cross purpose with Doga and Nina. J usper appears not to communicate with his parents and their statements overlap. When J usper is referring to a murder he committed at night, his mother thinks that he imagines killing his father.

Doga tells Nina not to detain J usper and instead allow him to go for he is a nuisance.

J usper responds, 'he can't go he is dead' (pg 6) J usper is referring to Adika;s murderer (Chagaga) while his mother means that Doga is dead.

J usper and Nina also speak in cross purpose on (pg 7) when J usper asks "...shall I go and confess idid it?" to which Nina answers "yes my son, go and put on a clean shirt and then you can confess" Nina thinks J usper is talking about the ceremony whereas J usper is talking about confessing that he had killed Chagaga.

Mosese and J ere talk at cross purpose. (pg 30-31) While Mosese in his reverie, seems to be talking to imaginary persons. J ere's questions punctuate his reverie. In his attempt to understand Mosese's talk, he finally concludes,

When the madness of an entire nation disturbs a solitary mind, it is not enough to say the man is mad. (pg 33)

## BETRAYAL IN THE CITY ESSAY QUESTIONS

The Elites play a major role in salvaging countries marred by poor governance. Explain the truth of the above assertion with reference to Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*

2. The government of Kafira is a dictatorial regime that doesn't mind the suffering of the masses. Explain the truth of the above assertion with reference to Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*

3. Revenge is a vicious cycle that needs to be stopped since it hinders development. Explain the veracity of the above assertion with reference to Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*

4. Kafira is an epitome of corruption in the developing countries. Explain the truth of the above assertion with reference to Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*

5. Deceit reigns in situations of poor governance and with them comes conflict. Explain the truth of the above assertion with reference to Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*

6. A state can be brought down if its leadership thrives on cronyism and poor advisors. Explain the truth of the above assertion with reference to Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*

7. Kafira's woes can be attributed to the inefficiency of its leadership. Explain the truth of the above assertion with reference to Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*

8. *Betrayal in the City* is a perfect satire of the ills in third world countries. . Explain the truth of the above assertion with reference to Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*

9. Bad governance creates room for economic opportunism. Write an essay in support of this statement drawing illustrations from the play *Betrayal in the City* by Francis Imbuga

10. Mulili is an embodiment of evil attributes. Write an essay in support of this statement drawing illustrations from the play *Betrayal in the City* by Francis Imbuga

11. Many people in Kafira are traitorous. Write an essay in support of this statement drawing illustrations from the play *Betrayal in the City* by Francis Imbuga

12. Strikes come with many adverse effects. Write an essay in support of this statement drawing illustrations from the play *Betrayal in the City* by Francis Imbuga

13. Write an essay explaining the relevance of the title BETRAYAL IN THE CITY. from the play *Betrayal in the City* by Francis Imbuga

14. "THE OUTSIDE OF THIS CELL MIGHT AS WELL BE THE INSIDE OF ANOTHER" from instances in the play write an essay justifying Jere's assertion drawing illustrations from the play *Betrayal in the City* by Francis Imbuga

15. Oppression breeds misery and conflict. Write an essay in support of this statement drawing illustrations from the play *Betrayal in the City* by Francis Imbuga

16. The situation in Kafira has bred despondency amongst its citizens. Write an essay in support of this statement drawing illustrations from the play ***Betrayal in the City*** by Francis Imbuga

17. Many events and actions in *Betrayal in the City* are triggered by the need for revenge. Write an essay in support of this statement drawing illustrations from the play ***Betrayal in the City*** by Francis Imbuga