

THE MOON ALSO SETS BY OSI OGBU.

It is set in West Africa, Nigeria in a post colonial period.

Plot Summary.

The novel rotates around Oby and her mother who are struggling so that Oby obtains university education.

Mama Oby is a devoted catholic Christian and hard working whose husband died during the First World War. Her devotion to God made her in-laws to think that Mama Oby is in love with Father Damian and thus they organize a family meeting headed by Pa Okoro; the elder in-law and family head. This meeting is intended to inherit Mama Oby forcefully to Uncle Ben incase she refuses to choose one from the husbands' brothers to be her husband. Their meeting ends in vain.

Her daughter; Oby has failed to join the university for three consecutive years yet she performed well. Later, she is admitted to Embakassi University .This excites her mother so much that she organizes for her a farewell party where she receives enough pieces of advice from every elder and the mother concludes by cautioning her about the bad behaviors at the university.

Oby too is a devoted Christian just as her mother but on reaching the university everything becomes a mess to her for instance whenever she visits the library, she finds her colleagues in pairs just coupling instead of reading.

She later falls in love with Chike, a wrong man/ poor relation well known as Mr. Kubwa, B among other nicknames in the university. Chike happens to be the same person who welcomes Oby on her first day she entered the university of Embakassi' gates and more so, the elected president for the Economics association. Chike organizes a welcome party for the new Economics association's president where Oby is debited to be the first lady. Unfortunately, Oby over drinks and loses herself during the party thus finds herself in Chike's room.

Oby approaches the professor over her termly paper for academic assistance and assured of help once she accepts the advances. The professor tries to woo her with a gift but in vain and thus he tries to molest her in his house that was abandoned by the wife, Erena and his children sometime back. Chris, Chike's friend rescues her by taking him photos while half-naked. That very Saturday, the campus bee, "The Bee" also comes out and Oby is on the front page over what took place at the Economics party hence a black Saturday to her.

Oby successfully passes her termly paper but nearly kicks the bucket due to over bleeding resulting from a planned abortion by Chike, her boyfriend and Okoro, her boyfriend's friend. The doctor well known as Dr. Inyang interrogates Chris their friend who happens to have affection for Oby and tells the doctor how the two had a plan B that he didn't know about. Chike and Okoro are handed over to the police sergeant accused of attempted murder and Chris promises to love Oby.

PART 1: A WIDOW'S MIGHT

Oby Onyia an auxiliary teacher is in the dilemma of not being admitted to any university for two years. The mother too is upset about the same. In Isiakpu, to get where you want to be depends on who you are and who knows you. Mama Oby is both a widow and a business woman who has a generous, loving brother in Onitsha, Amechi whom she normally reaches out to for financial assistance. In their village Isiakpu, a woman's life is meaningless without bearing children as it is said, "childlessness..." on page 5.

One Sunday evening, Mama Oby is invited by Father Damian to his premise who later attempts to molest her in vain. It is raining cats and dogs outside but she has to escape the stubbornness of father to her home in the night. Religious hypocrisy is portrayed by the fact that the priest who vowed celibacy is the one trying to rape Mama Oby. There is irony in the priest's behaviour as he is supposed to be exemplary before the Christians. In his house, a certain portrait of last supper is hung on the wall with an inscription that, " getting into temptation is human but getting out of it is Godly" His behaviour towards Mama Oby shows that the priest is not Godly but human as he failed to get out of the temptation.

The next Sunday, Mama Oby's family goes to church and both the mother and daughter say the same prayer about her admission to the university to God. What a coincidence! .As it is their culture to meet and talk about business issues every after the service, elders are doing their routine

and Oby also gets a chance of meeting her colleague at the school where she is auxiliary teaching.

A few days later, Uncle Ben visit Mama Oby late in the night while panting and sweating claiming to have come to his home which Mama Oby does not concur with. Mama Oby plays on her mind which makes him so furious.

One day as the family is settled on their lunch, the village mailman comes with good news that they have longed for, Oby's admission letter. The whole village is joyous about her admission to the university. The next day, Mama Oby sends Amechi to his brother in Onitsha, Uncle Amechi to alert him about the intended send off party of Oby to the university.

When Amechi is leaving Onitsha, his uncle wants to give him 1000Franc but the wife refuses claiming that it's lump sum thus she divides the money by a half. Amechi, their nephew leaves for their home in Isiakpu.

On the send off party, many people advises Oby to take care of her life as she is going to a strange land without mother, father, relative or anyone to keep a sharp eye on her steps.

The next day, Saturday, she is escorted by her mother to the bus station to catch the early bus that goes up to Embakassi University.

CHARACTERS INVOLVED

Mama Oby; widow and a mother to Oby and Amechi

Oby; a young beautiful girl so optimistic about obtaining the university education

Uncle Ben

Uncle Amechi; a generous business man and a brother to Mama Oby

Amechi; a brother to Oby

Father Damian; a hypocrite catholic priest in Isiakpu

PART 2: SEARCHING FOR THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Oby is in campus premises and her innocence captures Chike's attention. Chike and his friends; Chris and Okoro, are seated under the tree; their usual place where they see and throw comments about girls. The three are known around the campus for their cheating manners. Chike helps Oby find out the Hall residence where she will be residing during her stay at the university. Chike leads her to an ill-mannered Hall; Mary Slessor Hall, which is well-known for wooing practices. Oby has to share a room with Fumi and Ada who have reported for their by-elections (retaking their papers). The two have their boyfriends; Uche and Ben who are finalists. Her roommates have to wisely utilize the chance of having Oby Onyia as their counterpart to get money and other goodies from whoever comes to sweet-talk to her because she is good looking.

After two weeks, Oby goes to Cafeteria to have her supper and the three friends are there too. This gives Chike an opportunity to have a long conversation with her.

When supper is done, the three begin to talk about their relationships meanwhile in Oby's room they are doing the same.(coincidence)

Chike decides to write a poem of love to Oby and takes it to Oby's hall. Fortunately, he finds the roommates whom he bribes not to tell Oby about his past because he is known campus wide as Mr. Kubwa.

A few days later, Oby sets out to meet with Chike at the beach where an old mad man provokes their mind that they should always remember "The Moon Also Sets" which happens to be the title. This happens when they are enjoying the calm and serene environment at the beach.

Back home in the village of Isiakpu, Pa Okolo; Oby's uncle, is woken up by a knock at the door by Chief Ugwueze who has come to propose marriage for his son, Ndubisi and Oby.

The next day, Pa Okolo visits Mama Oby about the proposal. She declines the proposal for she knows much about Ndubisi. Pa Okoro has promised a good tiding to the chief who also intends to give a seat on the council of Isiakpu to him if their plan yields here the theme of corruption is portrayed.

Due to Pa Okolo's disillusionment, he hurls insults at Ben his young brother for his irresponsible nature. Mama Oby sobs so much for she does not want her daughter to be caught in the trap set by her uncle who has been the head of the family since Papa Oby joined the heavenly glory. More so, during the previous holiday, Oby informed the mother about her booming relationship with Chike.

NEW CHARACTERS

Chike; Oby's boyfriend
Okoro and Chris; Chike's friends
Ben and Uche; boyfriends to Oby's roommates
Fumi and Ada; Oby's roommates
Pa Okolo; uncle to Oby and the successor of Papa Oby
Chief Ugwueze; chief of Isiakpu village and father of Ndubisi
Ndubisi; son to the chief

Mary Slessor Hall; this hall residence symbolizes sexual immorality due to the following;
Men are found of coming to take girls out, a home of adultery and fornication.
It also initiates people into a life of fornication that seems normal at the university.
Embakassi; This symbolizes the struggle for education. People come from different parts of the country to acquire education. Prof. Akpanu feasts on girls in the name of passing their exams.

PART 3: IS THIS LOVE?

Oby dresses well and goes to the Cafeteria once again for her dinner expecting to enjoy it alone because Chike and Okoro have gone to Aba to buy Chike's suit for his inauguration party but suddenly Chris shows up. They find a private seat in the corner to have a private talk. Their dinner is accompanied by joy, a lot of laughter and short discussions especially about their love relationships that is Oby and Chike, Chris and the girlfriend. He later escorts Oby to her hostel and plants a kiss on her cheek more so, whispers to her.

The next day, Okoro and Chike return from Aba. Since it is Okoro's birthday, he arranges to have it from a very famous hotel, Hotel Metropol. He also hires rooms for Chris and his girlfriend only for Chike does not want to disappoint Oby before his inauguration. Okoro, Chris, Ifeoma and Cynthia reaches before Chike and Oby. Flashback as a technique is portrayed when we are reminded of the scenario of the outing that Chike arranged at Metropol and Ada got too drunk.

Meanwhile, Chike goes to the restroom and his friends follow him giving the girls an opportunity to talk about Oby's relationship with Chike. This leaves Oby disappointed. At the end of the party, Oby and Chike go to campus under the concrete garden chair where Chike explains himself to Oby about what the girls told her at the party.

On the day of inauguration, as Oby is preparing herself for the party, she hears a knock at the door and on opening the door; it's Chike who has come. Oby is shy at dressing up when Chike is looking at her so she gives him an album to make him busy. Chike finds Father Damian's photo in the album who he knows very well knows that he is hypocritical remembering when he brought two sisters(nuns) to his apartment while he was teaching at Asaba where they danced, drunk beer and even went to bed.(flashback as technique). Oby is so curious about the story and so he has to first tell this story to her before they go for the party.

At the new social Auditorium, Chike and his first lady, Oby, arrive. Chike wants to know whether everything is in place and thus goes to find out from Akpan Udo, the head of planning committee and Chris is touching Oby and pouring on her complements. At the party, visitors included Chike's ex-girlfriend, Meg, whom they do not want to spoil the day by letting Oby know about her thus Chike asks Okoro to help him and make sure she is taken out.

Okoro too tasks Jim who is seated with Meg. Jim is given another card that he will use to re enter into the party. Jim requests Meg to escort him to pick something from his vehicle. Hardly had they moved out when Okoro gave money to the security men not to allow her in again.

While dancing, Oby mixes a lot of fanta with alcohol making a punch that she heard from Ifeoma and Cynthia. She is taken to Chike's hostel where she passes out and throws out. As she is lying naked in Chike's room, Okoro and Chris leave and Chike begins to clean the room and also washes Oby's dress.

After gain consciousness, she requests for water and aspirin. Thereafter, she forces Chike to sleep with her naked too. The two make love and after sometime, Chike sleeps out of the bed with mixed emotions to write a poem to her titled, "LOST IN THE CROWD."

NEW CHARACTERS

Meg; ex-girlfriend to Chike
Akpan Udo; head of planning committee
Jim

PART IV: TRADITION AND AMBITION

Pa Okolo's failure in the deal of marrying off Oby to Chief's son lessens his power and position among family members and begins to hid for instance once he hides at the funeral. After sometime, he decides to speak to the chief and we see Chief's house standing on a former forest, sacred land that belongs to the Ndu Nwa Agu clan of Isiakpu. The place is respected and once one defies this place, the lion visits him/her for punishment because it is well known for protection and prestige thus the technique of description developed and the theme of culture. More so, we are told that Chief Ugwueze acquired this land by bribing people with envelopes and when he was confronted, he brought in two juju brothers to send away the spirits thus the theme of bribery and superstition or belief in supernatural powers portrayed.

Pa Okolo is ushered into a mansion's sitting room where he awaits for 20 minutes and when the chief finally comes, Pa Okolo tells him how he has failed which infuriates the chief. The chief is forced to tell Pa Okolo how he has been cheating on people, killing some and generally his life and behaviour in Lagos.

The latter decide to clear her small store by the Eke market and Pa Okoro tries to use Mama Ijeoma to send her words of their interest in her daughter. That very morning, Pa Okoro passes via Uncle Ben's house where he insults him about failing to deal with Mama Oby and makes a mistake of informing him about what they intend to do to Mama Oby. As soon as he leaves, Uncle Ben sends Mr. Eze's twins with a bottle to buy him petrol from the nearby dealer, Mr. Okeke.

Meanwhile, Oby is at home for her long vacation after completing her first year and narrates her experiences to the mother in a woman to woman talk. Oby learns about the Christians' expulsion from the church because of Obeta Nwaeze who was accused of murdering Ezekiel Nwaeze (page 186). Father Damian excommunicates all the other Christians due to the fact that they refuse Obeta to join church after committing murder. More so she is told about the marriage proposal by the chief, sickness of Papa Ijeoma and the circumcision rites.

Akatakpa is a period between the end of July and August where during this period wives prepare nice meals for their husbands so as a custom, Mama Oby sends Amechi with the meal to Pa Okolo's house.

As soon as Amechi is back, they settle down on their delicious meal. Later they sit in the living room and unexpectedly Mama Ijeoma and Father Damian pays them a visit due to the fire that razed Mama Oby's small store at the Eke market and she is greatly disappointed. She is driven to the Eke market to look over the situation at the place.

Pa Okolo comes to sympathize with her in the evening but his guilt is well stationed on his face. Before he leaves, an eye witness comes to tell Mama Oby how the Mini supermarket was put to ashes.

He sneaks out to meet Uncle Ben who confesses to have burnt the store. Uncle Ben thinks that no one has seen him during the act. He continues to say that he is ready to put Pa Okoro and chief Ugwueze to shame once suspected.

The following day, Oby goes to the police station to report the act. She finds trouble dealing with the policemen that she finds at the reception but the inspector saves her from that trouble. The inspector sends two constables and the sergeant to investigate the suspected arson. Uncle Ben is captured but the chief bribes the constables with a lot of money (bribery as a theme) and he is released page, 211.

Thereafter, Chief Ugwueze comes to offer condolences to Mama Oby but he is turned down by her and refuses his money.

Oby once again visits the police station and fortunately finds the same inspector who was their previous day. The inspector sends for the sergeant whom he sent to come with files of the case. This later brings us to the arrest of Uncle Ben by an unmarked police vehicle and now at Nsukka police station where the chief tries in vain to bail him out.

Chief Ugwueze sends for Pa Okolo and informs him that he is ready to pay any amount of money to Uncle Ben once he keeps quiet and accepts to be imprisoned.

Pa Okolo is dropped home after a heated argument sweating and serves himself vodka and empties the chloroquine tablets ending his life. This marks the end of his wishes of being buried with a red cap because even on the burial ceremony his death is feigned that malaria claimed his life for no proof was there for his suicide.

NEW CHARACTERS

Mama Ijeoma

Mr. Okeke; petrol dealer
Obeta Nwaenze; accused of murder

PART V: THE MOON FINALLY SETS

We are introduced to a new symbolic character, Professor Akpanu Akpabio who lectures Social Statistics at the University of Embakassi. He is a womanizer, exploitative, drunkard, irresponsible and inconsiderate.

One night as usual, he visits the Pepper Soup Joint or Beer Parlor and his family is helped to flee to a far country. Erena, his wife and children are helped by a family friend because they are tired of living in poor conditions but leaves behind a note for the husband informing him their whereabouts.

Halfway to his house, the rain showers intensify and the house looks empty and deserted. But amidst all the challenges, Professor Akpanu is facing, he continues to lecture Sociology 210, a compulsory social statistics course for every student. Oby, a beautiful, seductive well built girl has to do this course in her second year whereby it is this course that Professor Akpanu earmarks girls to exploit threatening them that failure to cooperate with him leads to failure to graduate.

Oby returns from her traumatic holiday determined to do better and at least earn her a scholarship award together with pushing on with Chike harmony. Oby narrates the whole story to Chike about what transpired at home during the holiday which compels him to write praising poem to her for her courage.

In the morning as Oby walks in the rain showers going for her lecture, she feels a light touch on her shoulder and turning to her shock, it's Professor Akpanu who requests her to escort him to his office with her umbrella. The term paper has always worried her so when Professor Akpanu introduces it, Oby is so curious and inquisitive. The professor assures her that her cooperation will help her to pass that paper. They make an appointment to meet over the weekend and go through the term paper.

Meanwhile, the finalists; Okoro, Chris and Chike hold their first meeting at Freedom Park and share the dinner together. Mainly, they talk about their studies and The Bee which focuses on Oby and Chike because of what happened on The Economics Association dinner. Having been at campus for years, they know how The Bee in question stings and they would not wish to sting Oby but it's late so they have to face the consequences together.

On Saturday, Professor Akpanu intentionally forgets the term paper at home and Oby's naivety force her to go with the professor to his home where the professor tries to rape her. Oby lies to him that he is in her period therefore they have to meet a week after as agreed on page 249. That evening, Oby does not go for dinner, returning to the hostel, she finds everyone eagerly waiting for her because of the university magazine, "The Bee" and her roommates too have placed a copy of it and along stemmed red rose on her pillow. Oby sobs so much.

The next day, Chike takes her out and when Okoro finds them, he congratulates them though Oby does not acknowledge it. Oby in the evening escorts Chike to his hostel and informs him about the professor's behaviour. Oby, lying on her bed at night meditates on the events of the day and reaches out to her Bible to read Psalms 120 and sleeps, page 260.

Chris' emotions delayed his meeting with Oby and when they meet; Oby tells him what the professor tried to do to her in his house. The next day, Friday, Oby receives a letter from her mother with a lot of information but above all, encouraging her to stay strong and confident (letter writing).

Saturday morning, Oby sets out to meet Professor Akpanu and finds his house wide open. The professor presents his wrapped gift to her. Later, the professor seems to continue from where he stopped last time and tries to make love with her and Oby hits him between the legs.

The moment the professor begins to crawl on the floor, Oby finds her way out of the house. She collides with a man wearing a bowler hat and dark glasses who turns out to be Chris who has come to end the professor's plans and dirty manners with a camera. He shots photos of professor and exeunt. He tries to find out where Oby is hiding and finds her in an empty classroom crying and later takes her to a restaurant to soothe her worries.

While having their breakfast, Chris informs Oby that he is going to threaten the professor with the pictures not to fail her and assures Oby that he was determined to break through the door incase she failed to hit him between the legs.

A week later, Chris sends two copies of the pictures of the professor enclosed with a note .

Oby continues attending lectures and when results are released, Oby has got a B in the course and successful, page 276.

The next morning Oby goes to see the doctor as she has missed her periods. Fortunately, she is pregnant and advised to talk about it with the owner of the pregnancy. Chike is so much irritated about her being pregnant and opts for abortion, a sin that Oby never thought of committing, page 283.

That very evening, when Chike seeks the company of Okoro and Chris at the cafeteria for advice, Okoro advises him that abortion is the only option but Chris disagrees with them though Oby's giving birth to Chike's child would reduce his chances of being with her.

A week later Chike seeks private advice from Okoro who offers to bring him "touch and go" for abortion from Aba an inducing concoction in a powder form. Chike accomplishes his evil plans and suddenly tells Oby that he wants to meet the lecturer and Oby too leaves for her hostel to do her assignment.

Reaching her hostel, Oby's conditions worsen and supported by her roommates, she is taken to the hospital and Chris' hostel being the nearest, he is informed first to let Chike know about Oby's frightening conditions.

Chris sends a note to Chike and goes to the clinic to see his crush's conditions. Chike later joins him. The doctor sets out for a D and C and informs the police about the case.

Dr. Inyang, knowing the university life convinces Chike to let her know of what happened having learnt from Chris that there was plan B that they did not tell him about. Chike later reveals everything to the doctor and when the police sergeant arrives, Dr. Inyang hands Chike to the police custody to be charged with attempted murder. Chike is led away handcuffed towards the police van and the doctor goes to check on Oby who is now recovering.

Oby has been silent for long but when the doctor mentions Chris' name, Oby turns with a smile on her face. Chris is ushered in and Oby smiles widely when he holds and strikes her hands. The two lovers are given a chance to privately talk together in the hospital room and express their affection for each other.

That night, both sit looking out of the clinic window holding each other. Looking at the sky, Oby remembers Psalms 121 and the madman at the beach who reminded Chike and her that "The Moon Also Sets"

NEW CHARACTERS

Professor Akpanu Akpabio; Lecturer at Embakassi university

Dr. Inyang; Oby's personal doctor

RELEVANCE OF THE TITLE

The genesis of The Moon Also Sets is at the beach when the mad man tells Oby and Chike, "remember that the moon also sets" This foreshadows the bad ending of their relationship.

The setting of the moon may mean the outcomes of selfish acts, punishment given to the wrong doers among others.

Pa Okolo is over the moon and his wives adore him but his venturing into a deal with the chief leads to his moon setting. when Uncle Ben sets the small shop of Mama Oby, Pa Okolo commits suicide for fear of being arrested.

Chief Ugwueze is so rich but he ends up in exile when he flees from the village at the arrest of Uncle Ben who threatens to put him to shame.

Prof. Akpanu enjoys university girls at the expense of his family. This leads to his moon setting when the wife abandons the home together with the children.

Father Damian who seems above all, enjoys women sexually, stops Christians from going to church but later he is transferred to another place.

Chike's moon sets when he is handed over to the police accused of attempted murder.

THEMES INVOLVED

Religious hypocrisy

Suffering

Exploitation

Male chauvinism

Love

Betrayal

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

Irony

Biblical allusion

Description

Symbolism

Dialogue

Proverbs and sayings

Dialogue