

The Sins of the Fathers Analysis - A Silent Song and Other Stories

Easy Elimu Study Guide

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The Sins of the Fathers by Charles Mungoshi

[About the Author](#)

Charles Mungoshi was born in 1947 and raised in a farming family in the Chivhu area of Zimbabwe.

After leaving school, he worked with the Forestry Commission before joining Textbook Sales. From 1975 to 1981, he worked at the Literature Bureau as an editor and at Zimbabwe Publishing House for the next five years. In 1985-87 he was Writer in Residence at the University of Zimbabwe, and since then, he has worked as a freelance writer, scriptwriter and editor.

Charles Mungoshi has written novels and short stories in both Shona and English and two collections of children's stories, *Stories from a Shona Childhood* and *One Day Long Ago* (Baobab Books, 1989 and 1991); the former won him the Noma Award.

He has also continued to write poetry and has one published collection: *The Milkman doesn't only deliver Milk* (Baobab Books, 1998).

He has won the Commonwealth Writers Prize (Africa region) twice, in 1988 and 1998, for two collections of short stories: *The Setting Sun* and *The Rolling World* (Heinemann, 1987) and *Walking Still* (Baobab Books, 1997). Two of his novels: *Waiting for the Rain* (Heinemann 1975) and *Ndiko kupindana Kwa mazuva* (Mambo Press, 1975), received International PEN awards.

[The Title](#)

In this story, we see that the characters' relationships and actions are heavily influenced by their fathers and the experiences they had with them.

For example, Rondo's relationship with his father is strained and he struggles to understand the man's behavior. His father's treatment of him as a child, including physical abuse and neglect, has left a lasting impact on Rondo's view of himself and his ability to be a good father to his own children.

Similarly, Mr Rwafa's actions and beliefs are shaped by his experiences in the liberation struggle and his desire to maintain the power and status of the Rwafa family. This ultimately leads to conflict with his son, Rondo, who disagrees with his father's narrow-minded views and desires a different future for his own children.

Mr Mzamane, on the other hand, tries to break the cycle of inherited prejudices and conflicts by encouraging Rondo to see people as individuals rather than simply as members of certain groups. However, his efforts are overshadowed by the influence of Rondo's father and the longstanding tensions between the Rwafa and Mzamane families.

Overall, the title "The Sins of the Fathers" is appropriate for this story as it highlights the ways in which the actions and beliefs of past generations continue to shape and affect the lives of their children and future generations.

The plot / synopsis

Summary - In Charles Mungoshi's *The Sins of the Fathers*, we revisit scars of the past and appreciate how past hurts can cause present and future pain if the victims do not heal and forgive their supposed enemies. Forgiveness can help avert calamitous travails.

Mr. Rwafa, an ex-minister and liberation war veteran, clings onto hatred and this obstinate refusal to forgive and forget causes the tragic death of his grandchildren and his son's father-in-law, when they perish in a car crash he engineered.

Long take - *The Sins of the Fathers*, by Charles Mungoshi, is a post-colonial story set in rural Zimbabwe. It takes place between Borrowdale and Bulawayo.

Rondo is the antagonistic character whose revenge plans opens at the beginning of the story.

Rondo's father, Rwafa, is a former minister who remains active in Zimbabwean politics.

This is clear from the fact that a small number of mourners have come simply to snap photos with him, knowing that such photos would shortly "open doors for them"

Rondo is married to Selina, the daughter of Basil Mzamane, a politician and businessman.

In actuality, he is Rondo's father, Rwafa's, political opponent.

Rondo's two daughters (Yuna and Rhoda) are involved in an accident while driving home after a birthday party with their grandfather, Basil Mzamane, where, Rwafa takes the podium to criticize his son for marrying from his nemesis Basil.

This has always caused resentment between him and his son, and the accident leads Rondo to feel that his father is to blame.

A revelation of what his companion, Gaston, alludes to in their many stories: "Have you ever wondered about the Second Street accidents?"

Rondo Rwafa laments the early deaths of his father-in-law, Mr. Basil Mzamane, and his daughters, Yuna and Rhoda.

He wishes they died blissfully, hoping to forget his own suffering.

After attending the girls' birthday celebration at Rondo's house in Borrowdale, the three happy family members were killed in a sad vehicle accident.

He's been sobbing for a week, numbed by the anguish.

Rondo is taken aback when his father declares that one day he will be grateful and glad that the catastrophe occurred then rather than later. He continues:

"You will remember me and thank me." (pg. 28)

When his father goes, Rondo's thoughts stray to a distant reflection. The prospect of living in his father's shadow gnaws at him.

He isn't his own person.

His wife feels she can perform better in his pants than he can, and he is a laughingstock among his friends and colleagues.

His wife, Selina, appears to be the more confident and influential of the two.

This is due to the fact that they were raised differently - Selina was raised by folks with "long

hearts" - people who forgave others.

On the other hand, Rondo's father is an unforgiving beast. His father is a scarred, bombed-out battlefield.

"And his deepest scar is that he cannot forgive: Not just his enemies," says Mrs. Rwafa, his wife. (pg. 31)

He is also incapable of forgiving his wife or his son.

His resentment that results in him being so hard of heart stems from the time when his Zezeru-Karanga clan was attacked by the maDzviti-Ndebele clan.

The conflict had such an impact on him that he will always remember the misery of the scars rather than the relief of mending.

His son Rondo married into a muDzviti family, further complicating matters.

Furthermore, instead of a grandson who would inherit Rwafa's wealth and attributes such as charm, he had two daughters.

Mr. Rwafa is so dissatisfied with Rondo that it affects his demeanor.

Mr. Rwafa's mistreatment of his only son is what makes Rondo a shy laughingstock among his peers.

It is thus suspicious that the grandchildren that Mr. Rwafa considers inglorious die in an accident together with their grandfather, whom Rwafa despised so much.

Rondo begins to make connections while engaging with his coworker and buddy Gaston Shoko.

Shoko describes the tragedy that killed Rondo's children as a typical Second Street accident, implying that Mr. Rwafa was the mastermind behind the crash.

The feud between Rwafa's and Mzamane's families is visible at the party.

Although Basil Mzamane is kind and caring, Rwafa is stubborn and harsh.

The two men's speeches represent the turning point in the birthday party, revealing the underlying resentment.

A day before the party, the two men had an argument about white people in the country.

Mr. Mzamane suggests that people be treated as individuals because some are good and others are bad.

Rwafa, on the other hand, condemns entire groups of people and considers everyone who appears to favor his alleged enemy to be a traitor.

Mr. Mzamane had previously covered the costs of their children's wedding, while Rwafa had skipped the ceremony entirely, claiming he was overseas on "state business" for two weeks.

Mr. Rwafa also desires a farm owned by a white guy named Mr. Quayle and is willing to go to any length to obtain it.

At the party, they try to hide the simmering resentment between them beneath forced smiles and boisterous laughter.

Later, Mr. Rwafa recklessly discusses betrayals and hostility amongst clans and families, prompting people to leave uncomfortably one by one.

During his diatribe, Mr. Rwafa disparages their weak sons who marry into families of their opponents and corrupt the family's clean blood.

Rondo always felt powerless in the presence of his father despite the fact that his mother insists that the old man loves his son but is unsure how to express it.

Mr. Rwafa commits suicide with his service pistol after being confronted by his son, whom he haughtily refers to as a "slob."

The bitter past loaded with grief is most likely buried with that gently muffled plop. The blood of the fathers washes away their sins.

Afterall, "Nobody wins when the family feuds."

Characters and characterization

List of Characters

- Rondo: He is the protagonist of the story and the son of Mr Rwafa. He is conflicted about his father's actions and values.
- Mr Rwafa: He is the father of Rondo and a former minister who is obsessed with power and the purity of his family's bloodline. He is willing to go to extreme lengths to protect his reputation and position.
- Mr Mzamane: Rondo's father in law. He is a fatherly figure who intervenes to help a woman in need and tries to teach the other characters to see people as individuals, rather than enemies.
- Selina: She is Rondo's wife and is aware of the tension between Rondo and his father.
- Mrs Quayle: She is a neighbor of Rondo and his family and is in possession of a rifle when she encounters Mr Mzamane and Rondo.
- Children: There are several children present at Rondo's birthday party and they are interested in hearing stories about Mr Rwafa's past.
- Guests: There are several guests present at Rondo's birthday party, including reporters and other members of the community. Some of them are uncomfortable with Mr Rwafa's rhetoric and leave early.

Character Traits

Rondo

- Loyalty: Rondo is loyal to his friends and family, as demonstrated by his willingness to stand up to his father to protect Selina and their children.
- Courage: Rondo shows bravery in standing up to his father and in his decision to confront him with the letter he had written.
- Respect: Rondo respects his father's authority and position, even when he disagrees with him.
- Empathy: Rondo is able to understand and relate to the feelings of others, as demonstrated by his concern for the woman who was being threatened by the group of men.
- Responsibility: Rondo takes his responsibilities seriously, whether it's taking care of his family or upholding his duties as a husband and father.
- Impulsive: Rondo takes actions without thinking them through, such as stealing mangoes from a neighbor's garden or bringing a gun to confront his father.
- Emotionally sensitive: Rondo is deeply affected by his mother's pleas to spare him during a physical altercation with a neighbor and is overwhelmed with sadness when his father points a gun at him.
- Resentful of his father: Rondo feels that his father doesn't show love towards him and resents the way his father has always controlled his life.
- Disobedient: Rondo disobeys his father's orders and secrecy surrounding the party and plans to confront him about it.

Mr Rwafa

- Villain in the story is a ruthless, intolerant influential former minister who cannot forgive anybody. (p31, 34, 35, 39, 40).
- Power-hungry: Mr Rwafa is described as being driven by a desire to be in a position of power, and he talks about how he always wants to be at the top and in the front of the crowd.
- Authoritarian: Mr Rwafa has a tendency to be dictatorial, as seen in his behavior at Rondo's birthday party, where he dictates what the children should listen to and talk about.
- Arrogant: Mr Rwafa is described as being arrogant, especially in his belief that people who carry Rwafa's blood should never be subservient to anyone else.
- Vengeful: Mr Rwafa is shown to hold grudges and to be willing to seek revenge when he feels he has been wronged, as seen in his reaction to his son's marriage.
- Hot-tempered: Mr Rwafa is quick to anger and prone to outbursts, as seen in his behavior at the birthday party and when he snapped his walking stick in half.
- Controlling: Mr Rwafa tries to control the people around him, especially his son, and is unwilling to let them make their own decisions. He is contemptuous as he vilifies his son vehemently, affecting his self-esteem.
- Arrogant: Mr Rwafa frequently displays a sense of entitlement and superiority, as seen when he insists on being the center of attention at his son's birthday party and tells the guests that he expects them to listen to him.
- Selfish: Mr Rwafa often puts his own interests and desires above those of others, including his own family. He is more concerned with preserving his reputation and status than with the happiness or well-being of those around him.
- Vindictive: Mr Rwafa holds grudges and seeks revenge against those who he perceives as having wronged him, as seen when he lashes out at Mr Mzamane for being a "traitor" and tries to sabotage his plans.
- Closed-minded: Mr Rwafa is resistant to new ideas and perspectives, and is unwilling to consider the viewpoints of others. This is seen when he refuses to listen to Mr Mzamane's stories and dismisses his ideas as "traitorous."

Mr Mzamane

- Selina's father and Rondo's father-in-law. A peace-maker and crusader of He takes a low profile, although he has the opportunity and ability to show off. This shows he is peaceful and humble.
- According to Rondo, nothing in his demeanour shows he is a man of opulence as a successful businessman and the P. of a constituency in northern Matebeleland.
- Compassionate: Mr Mzamane is concerned about the well-being of others and is willing to help them, as demonstrated by his assistance to the woman with the broken-down car.
- Open-minded: Mr Mzamane is open to different beliefs and ways of life, as evidenced by his story about the farmer in the Manhize Mountains who practiced vadzimu. He is so liberal that even with his differences with Rwafa, he declares he is free to think as he likes. (p38).
- Respectful: Mr Mzamane respects others and their beliefs, even if he does not necessarily share them, as demonstrated by his willingness to listen to the headman of the Pazho people and follow his advice.
- Good-humored: Mr Mzamane has a good sense of humor and is able to make light of difficult situations, as shown by his joking about going duck-shooting with the woman's husband.
- Persistent: Mr Mzamane is determined and does not give up easily, as demonstrated by his efforts to engage Rondo in conversation and get him to open up about his feelings.
- His friendly and affable nature makes Rondo feel free around He is a helpful man as he gives a hand to the white woman whose car is stuck. (p37).
- He is tolerant, for he rescues her from being lynched by the angry He tells them. Today is

cancelled. Go home.... ” he tells Rondo to grow up and see people as individuals. (p37).

Mrs Quayle

- Friendly and hospitable: she invited Mr Mzamane to her farm for a cup of tea and offered him the opportunity to go duck shooting with her husband.

Themes

Power dynamics

- Throughout the story, there is a recurring theme of power dynamics, particularly between different social groups. For example, the relationship between Mr Rwafa and Mr Mzamane is shaped by their different positions of power, with Mr Rwafa being a former minister and Mr Mzamane being an MP.
- There is also a power dynamic between Mr Rwafa and his son Rondo, with Mr Rwafa being the dominant figure in the relationship.

Betrayal

- The theme of betrayal is present in the story, particularly in the relationship between Mr Rwafa and Rondo.
- Mr Rwafa feels betrayed by Rondo's decision to marry Selina, who is the daughter of his traditional enemy. Rondo, on the other hand, feels betrayed by his father's actions and his treatment of him.

Family dynamics (Parental resentment /child discontentment)

- Family dynamics play a significant role in the story, with the relationship between Rondo and his father being a central theme.
- The story explores the complexities of this relationship and the impact of past events on the present.
- Rondo has never been close to his father as his memories of his past him make him cry. (p31, 40).
- At four, his father destroys his guitar, and at eight, he thrashes him without finding out what he has done. Rondo always feels more space with his father-in-law and would choose him as his father. (p34).
- He carries many scars that thinking of his father as none other than a shadow he has to live in becomes Rondo cannot think independently, and this reduces him to an object of laughter and ridicule among his friends. (p28).
- Rwafa has no sympathy for his son as he despises him vehemently. He does not bother to answer when asked a question by his son. (p36).
- His mother describes her husband as ‘one bombed-out battlefield of scars’ whose deepest scar is that he can’t forgive not only his enemies but This clearly shows a rift in the family. (p30, 31).
- At the party, Rondo and Selina feel relaxed with their (p39).
- Rondo could not look at his (p40).

Race and racial tensions

- The story touches on issues of race and racial tensions, particularly in the relationship between Mr Quayle and Mr Rwafa.
- Mr Quayle is a white farmer, while Mr Rwafa is a black man who was involved in the liberation struggle.
- There is a tension between the two men due to their different experiences and perspectives.
- On their way to the birthday party, the trio meets a white woman who needs help. The political youths want to descend on her because she’s white. (p36).

- On the other hand, the white woman is already armed with a gun to shoot the blacks. (p36).
- Again, from Mzamane's story about the white who lives in the Manhize mountains, we find out that he sends away the blacks who live there and takes their ancestral land (p38).
- Having alienated the lands from the blacks, the whites are the source of the hatred and envy that fills the Rwafa clan, and Rwafa has his eyes on the white farm in the Ruwa (p34).

Power and powerlessness

- The story touches on the theme of power and powerlessness in various ways.
- For example, Mr Rwafa's past as a minister and his present status as a wealthy farmer highlights the theme of power and privilege.
- On the other hand, Rondo's mother's experience of being physically and emotionally abused by her husband and the neighbor demonstrates powerlessness and vulnerability.
- The theme of power and powerlessness is also evident in Mr Mzamane's relationship with Rondo's father, as Mr Mzamane seems to be at the mercy of Mr Rwafa's anger and resentment.
- The theme of powerlessness is present in the story, particularly in Rondo's relationship with his father.
- Rondo feels powerless in the face of his father's authority and his inability to stand up to him.
- This powerlessness is also evident in Rondo's mother's inability to protect him from his father's anger and abuse.

Ethnic tension / negative ethnicity

- Rwafa believes in maintaining rigid boundaries in establishing social and political relations. (p34).
- In his tirade, he laments that he is hurt by the effeminate spineless sons of the family who marry into families of their enemies, poisoning the pure blood of the Rwafa clan. 9p34 – 39).
- There has always been tension between Rwafa and Mzamane, a quarrel, a misunderstanding, but the episode at the party renders it dramatic. Their speeches turn sour. The two old men are crystal clearly, political nemeses. (p34).
- Rwafa cannot forgive and forget the effects of the war, once the Ndebele attacked them, and the pain of the scars remained in him more than the relief of healing. (p30 – 32).
- These adversaries contrast each other in character and demeanor. The former is the villain in his very nature, and the latter is a gentleman.
- He belongs to the political elite who must fan clannism and ensure they remain at the top. (p39, 40).
- Primitive accumulation There is evident greed in the arch-nemesis, Rwafa, for he strives to maintain the status quo by acquiring material power through underhand deals. He leaves in the morning and returns in the evenings. (p33).
- He is disappointed and bitter when Mzamane rescues the white woman from irate Chimurenga warriors. He disappears and reappears from a bush two minutes after the white woman has driven off. (p34 – 37).
- This shows that he plans to have her lynched so he can proceed to acquire the property. (p36)
- Rwafa is preoccupied with the sudden beauty of the land they are driving through. The land provides a breath- taking view of its immensity. (p36)
- Affluence, material power and lavish extravagance are explicit in the family as they flock around him. He gains recognition from his generosity by squandering the accumulated wealth in the form of favours, money, advances. (p31, 32)
- Many use his name to get something from legal firms, financial houses, or credit stores at month-ends. (p32). Rwafa desperately needs a grandson from Rondo to whom he can leave all his cars, houses and money. (p31).

Death

- The fear of death also hangs/lingers in Selina's mind. She fears losing Rondo as well. (p30)
- Mysterious deaths rock the family, and according to Gaston, Rondo's colleague, we know that a political hand is involved. (p33).
- He asks Rondo, "Do you know what your father does?" (p33).
- Selina's mother had died, and Mzamane marries again, but to the detriment of his daughter, she alludes to the invitation to her father. (p34).
- Assassinations could be the ex-minister's trade as he happens to control the political group dubbed Chimurenga, which also narrowly spares the life of Mrs.
- The old man had rambles (flashback) (p40). smoked out, flushed out, blasted out.. "

Family relationships

- The story delves into the complexities of family relationships, particularly between fathers and sons.
- Rondo's relationship with his father is strained and marked by conflict, with Rondo feeling misunderstood and undervalued by his father.
- Similarly, Mr Rwafa's relationship with his own father and his disappointment in his son's lack of ambition and drive highlights the theme of family expectations and disappointments.

The theme of identity / identity crisis

- The story touches on the theme of identity and how it is shaped by societal expectations, cultural traditions, and personal experiences.
- Rondo struggles to find his place and identity in a society that expects him to conform to certain roles and expectations, while Mr Rwafa's obsession with preserving the purity of his family's bloodline reflects the importance of cultural and ancestral identity.
- Rondo suffers low self-esteem through the way his father treats Rwafa loathes and persistently frustrates his son. His first disappointment is when his father breaks his guitar and throws it into the fire when he is only four. (p30- 31).
- Rwafa does not approve of or even attend his son's He purportedly leaves town on state business for two weeks. (p34).
- Through flashbacks, Rwafa thrashes his son, Rondo, when he is only eight, for 'stealing a neighbor's mangoes'. This memory gives him an uncomfortable feeling and affects his self-esteem. He must have understood what powerlessness meant (p40).
- This grows into his adulthood when his father refers to him as an effeminate son who wants to demean his family by marrying into an ignominious (p31
- While Rondo admires and thinks his father is the greatest, his father, Rwafa, writes him off. Rwafa always gives Rondo "a little sad laugh" and labels him "Slob". (p28, 31, 32).
- His colleagues laugh at him at work, and Rondo doubts his mother and He feels defenseless and resigns to accept being a fool. "Well, if you see me as a fool, I'll be one." (p28).
- Rondo has developed a stammer that makes him barely answer any of his father's questions. (p32).
- His wife Selina tells him she could do better in his pants, and his friend and colleague, Gaston, scolds him, "You can't be a child forever, Rondo". (p33).
- Later, Rondo's father disparages With contempt, he enquires whether one of Rondo's more intelligent friends has written for him the piece of paper he hands him. (p41).
- Both Rondo and Rwafa have psychological problem that needs psychosocial support. (p26 — 41).

Vengeance

- The author expresses the theme of vengeance in the story's beginning through the flash-forward as Rondo comes to his father with a (p26, 41). From the death of his two children and how his father has been treating him, he believes that he has a hand in the deaths, and therefore, he's here to revenge. (p29, 33, 34, 41).
- Rwafa causes the accident as a form of revenge against the "traitors" or Furthermore, Rondo is not happy with what his father says about his marrying Basil – his enemy. (p31, 39).
- In his speech, Rwafa calls his son a 'traitor'. This is another reason for revenge. (p38).

Forgiveness and redemption

- The story touches on the themes of forgiveness and redemption, as Rondo is faced with the decision to either forgive his father for his past mistakes or hold on to his resentment.
- Similarly, Mr Rwafa is faced with the opportunity to redeem himself and make amends for his past actions.

Power and privilege

- The story touches on issues of power, privilege, and inequality, particularly in relation to race and class.

Betrayal and loyalty

- The story deals with themes of betrayal and loyalty, particularly in the relationship between Rondo and his father.
- Rondo struggles with his loyalty to his father and his sense of duty to his own family and values, while his father grapples with his own sense of betrayal and disappointment in his son.

Identity and self-discovery

- The story touches on themes of identity and self-discovery as Rondo grapples with his own sense of self and his place in the world. He is torn between his loyalty to his family and his own desires and values, and must ultimately come to a decision about who he is and what he wants in life.

Love and Friendship

- She takes her head during the mourning night and puts it on her She calls her a great woman. (p29).
- Friendship is also evident between the two women, Selina and her mother-in-law (Rondo's wife and his mother). (p29,30)
- Selina, the daughter of Mzamane, stays with Rondo even though Rwafa disapproves of their marriage. He says that his son became a 'traitor' by marrying Selina, from Basil Mzamane's clan – his sworn political (p29, 30)
- However, Selina sticks with her husband, Rondo, until the end of the She also has a gun from the mother- in-law. (p41).
- He lets his head rest against her belly, his skull nudging the underside of her She makes him breakfast. She accompanies her husband to serve revenge. This is love. (P41)

Change

- The story portrays the ways in which change can be difficult and unsettling, as seen in Rondo's struggle to come to terms with his father's actions and the repercussions of his own choices. The theme of change is also seen in the way that Mr Mzamane adapts to the changing political and social landscape of the country.

Stylistic Devices

Repetition

- Repeating words or phrases.
- (There are actually many different types of repetition like anaphora and epiphora.)
- The phrase "traitor" is repeated several times to emphasize Mr Rwafa's dislike for Mr Mzamane.

Irony

- The definition of irony as a literary device is a situation in which there is a contrast between expectation and reality.
- For example, the difference between what something appears to mean versus its literal meaning.
- Irony is associated with both tragedy and humor.
- When Mr Rwafa tells Rondo that he should ask one of his "more intelligent friends" to write the letter for him, it is ironic because it is clear that Rondo has written the letter himself.

Symbolism

- Symbolism is the use of words or images to symbolize specific concepts, people, objects, or events.
- The broken walking stick can be seen as a symbol of Mr Rwafa's declining power and influence.

Foreshadowing

- Foreshadowing is a literary device used to give an indication or hint of what is to come later in the story.
- Foreshadowing is useful for creating suspense, a feeling of unease, a sense of curiosity, or a mark that things may not be as they seem.
- The incident with Rondo's mother and the neighbour foreshadows the tension and violence that will later occur at the birthday party.

Suspense

- The definition of suspense in literature is the tension that keeps our attention between one moment and another.
- The use of short, choppy sentences and the description of the gun in Rondo's hand build suspense and create a sense of tension.

Imagery

- Imagery is a literary device used in poetry, novels, and other writing that uses vivid description that appeals to a readers' senses to create an image or idea in their head.
- Through language, imagery does not only paint a picture, but aims to portray the sensational and emotional experience within text.
- The phrase "foam flecking the corners of his mouth" creates a vivid image of Mr Rwafa's emotional state.

Personification

- When an idea or animal is given human characteristics. "The sky weeps."
- The phrase "something was wrong. Rondo had the butt of the gun pointing at his father, as if he was offering it to him" personifies the gun as if it is a living being.

Metaphor

- Comparing two things without using the words “like” or “as”.
- "The old man rambled on: "They need to be smoked out, flushed out, blasted out of their hiding places, the impostors!" (comparing people to animals that need to be hunted and removed from their hiding places)

Simile

- Comparing two things using the words “like” or “as”.
- "He looked wearily into the face of his one and only son. He searched all over his face for a foothold of manhood, for a handhold of hope" (comparing the search for manhood and hope to searching for something physical, like a foothold or handhold)

Hyperbole

- Exaggeration of ideas.
- "He talked without any shame of his personal prowess. Of his achievements. The obstacles he had to overcome to get where he was. 'The obstacles were nothing'" (exaggerating the ease with which Mr Rwafa overcame obstacles and achieved his goals)

Revision questions for *The Sins of the Fathers*

1. Discuss the role and significance of the title *The Sins of the Fathers*.
2. Which sins do you think the father commits in the story?
3. "Because I'd like you to watch some 'duck-shooting today'. " What does this statement from Rwafa refer to?
4. Make inferences from the following:
 - a. "Do you know what your father does?" (p33)
 - b. "Rondo had not been used to living his life from deductive or logical thinking but now, the accumulation of events and the history behind them had made him so numb, he was almost a " (p33).
5. Brainstorm about 'Second Street accidents'.
6. What is the role of the family unit during bereavement and children's growth?
7. How are youths used to execute the selfish desires of the political elite?
8. Why are power and prejudice significant in the ex-minister's life?
9. How does greed for material power affect the human character?
10. Compare and contrast Rwafa and Mzamane as antagonistic characters in the story, *The Sins of the Fathers*.
11. How does Rondos mother manage the psychological problems of both her husband and her son at home?
12. What do you think could have happened if Rwafa had told his only son, "You are an intelligent son"?
13. Suppose Rwafa had had another son; could his attitude be different?

Essay Questions

1. Making reference to *The Sins of the Fathers*, write an essay to justify the claims below (20 mks).
 - a. Hate ruins relationships
 - b. Anger is calamitous
 - c. Forgiveness heals past wounds