**OLD STORY TIME**

**SUMMARY**  
This play is about a mother who wants the best for her child. As a result, she isolates him from the children in the neighbourhood and forcibly encourages him to study. The result of her 'encouragement' is that he obtains a scholarship to go to University in England, travels the world, obtains a PhD, and gets an excellent job in the banking sector in Kingston,Jamaica. Alongside her encouragement, regarding education, however, is her castigation of the Black race. She tells her son that Black is not good, therefore, he must try to court Margaret, the reverend's daughter who, it is implied, is white. He attempted to accommodate his mother and was brutally humiliated. This incident, however, led to him meeting his future wife, the dark skinned Lois. Mama does not react well to their marriage and maintains the belief that Lois has worked obeah on her son in order to obtain and keep him. We learn that Lois is, in fact, dedicated to Len. So much so that she embezels the bank's money in order to support Len while he was away at University. She paid for it at that time because her then boss, George McFarlane, blackmailed her. Her former boss re-enters her life when Len investigates George's financial activities in order to ascertain whether or not he has scammed Mama in a housing deal. George tries to use her former fraudulent activities against her, but it backfires on him because Len uses the same bank slip, that George had kept as evidence of Lois embezzlement of bank funds, to trap him. The story culminates with Mama working obeah on Lois in order to get her out of Len's life. Discovering that she was wrong in her treatment, and attitude, towards Lois over the years, she apologizes to Lois. Lois, Len and Pa Ben place her in a prayer circle in order to ensure that the boomerang does not catch her. All is forgiven by the end of the play. This story is narrated by Pa Ben, who is integral to keeping the peace, as well as keeping the lines of communication open between family.  
  
**SETTING**

* The first half of the play is predominantly set in an unamed parish in rural Jamaica.
* The last half of the play is predominantly set in Kingston, Jamaica.
* The story line is set between the 1960's to 1980.

**CHARACTERS**  
***Pa Ben***

* He is the narrator and story teller.
* He keeps the peace between Mama and Len.
* He keeps the lines of communication open between Mama and Len, and Len and Lois.
* He loves Len like a son, and treats him like one.
* Mama is his best friend.
* He loves to drink his white rum.

***Mama (Miss Aggie/ Miss G.)***

* Len's mother.
* She is a market lady.
* She is very invested in her child's education.
* She is very proud.
* She believes that whites and near whites, are superior to Black people.
* She is very witty.

***Pearl***

* Len's childhood friend.
* She is constantly pregnant
* By the middle of the play she had 11 children and is pregnant with another.
* She dies in childbirth near the end of the play.

***Miss Margaret***

* She is the white daughter of the minister.
* She attends Munroe College with Len and George.
* Mama wants Len to marry her because she represents advancement.
* She shows Len's love letter to her, from George, and enables the plan to humiliate Len.
* She marries George, they have a child together, and that child attends Munroe College.

***Miss Lois***

* Len's dark skinned wife.
* Mama does not, initially, accept her based on her skin colour.
* She, and her father, take care of Len after his humiliating experience with George and his friends.
* She sends money to George while he attended University.
* She is blackmailed by George, twice, because she embezzled money from the bank.
* She loves her husband and yearns for his attention.

***George McFarlane***

* Len's school mate at Munroe College.
* He treated Len very badly and was the mastermind behind Len's ultimate humiliation.
* He was very dunce at school, but was offered a place ate the bank.
* He eventually becomes the bank manager, where he embezels money and is caught and fired.
* The owner of the fraudulent ABC Homes, the company that scams Mama.
* He was Margaret's boyfriend in high school, and eventually marries her.

***Len***

* Mama's son.
* He was extremely bright and did very well in school.
* Attended Munroe College, earned a scholarship to University in England and travelled the world.
* He eventually obtained an excellent job in the banking sector, despite job issues after high school.
* Courted and married Lois, despite knowing that his mother would not approve.
* Loves his mother and tries to be patient with her.
* Loves his wife because he defies his mother by secretly dating her, then marrying her.

**CHAPTER SUMMARIES**  
***Act 1***  
This act is about Mama's aspirations for Len. She encourages her only son to study hard and leave the company of girls like Pearl, but instead, to set his sights on Margaret, the pastor's near white daughter (her race is implied in the play). We learn that, as he grows up, he goes against his mother's desires and secretly dates a dark skinned girl (Lois), with Pa Ben as his co-conspirator. He soon leaves Jamaica to attend University in England. He communicates very little with Mama, initially, until Pa Ben wrote him a letter explaining how this absence of communication affects Mama, and could possibly affect him. Over time they learn that Len has visited many countries around the world, obtained a PhD, and has married Lois. Mama is pleased and proud about all his achievements, with the exception being his marriage to Lois. He returns home, without Mama's knowledge, and pays her an unexpected visit. Mama is pleased and proud, but takes him into her house to talk to him about her disappointment in his marriage to Lois. He also finds out that Mama has been scammed by George McFarlane and invites him to his home, in Kingston, for a meeting. They discuss a business deal, but George makes a speedy retreat when he discovers Len's identity, and his possible knowledge of the scam. We also discover that Lois is frustrated in her marriage because she wants attention from her husband, and that Mama treats Lois with open disdain.   
  
***Act 2, Scene 1***This scene outlines the manner in which Len was terrorized and bullied in school.  It also highlights the fact that, despite his high scholastic achievement, Len cannot get a job at the bank.  
In contrast, however, George McFarlane, aka Duncey Mongoose, was offered a job in the bank, where he quickly advanced to the position of bank manager. Unfortunately, he took advantage of his position and embezzled the bank's money. He was fired as a result, and invested a lot of time and effort in ABC Housing, where he started scamming people like Mama. We then see Len explaining to Lois how he found George, by baiting him with the rumour that he would be open to 'under the table' deals. He asks Lois if she knows George, since they worked together at the same bank, but she denies it. The audience's curiosity is piqued, however, by how familiar George behaves with Lois, especially when he calls Lois to enquire about her mother in law's last name. When Lois hangs up on him, the scene ends with George trying to locate Mama on his own.  
  
***Act 2, Scene 2***  
Len is amusing himself with George's documents and Mama shows up. She wants Len to help George but Len refuses. They have a terrible fight in which Mama calls Len ungrateful and he reacts by raising a chair to hit her. She blames his actions on his 'Black Sambo' wife whom she believes has 'obeahed' him. She leaves with the statement that she must set him free, implying that she is going to set 'obeah' on Lois, to get her out of Len's life.  
  
***Act 2, Scene 3***  
Len pays a visit to Pa Ben, hoping to get the address of an obeah woman in order to protect Lois from the obeah that he is sure that Mama intends to work on her. Pa Ben tries to disuade him, but Len does not relent. Pa Ben finally gives him a name of an obeah woman in Kingston. Len then asks Pa Ben to visit her for him because he has a reputation to maintain. Mama arrives, Len leaves, and Pa tries to get information from Mama regarding her threat to Lois. He is unsuccessful in his attempts to glean information from Mama and decides to play sick in the morning in order to stall her.   
  
***Act 2, Scene 4***  
This is a hilarious scene where Len attempts to follow the directions of the fraudulent obeah woman that Pa Ben recommended.  
  
***Act 2, Scene 5***  
Mama pays George a visit and tries to console him. She tells him that Lois controls Len and is preventing him from lending George the money. She tells him that she will take care of Lois.  
  
***Act 2, Scene 6***  
George arrives at Lois' house and blackmails her. Len comes home and she reveals the story of how she embezzled the banks money and got caught and blackmailed by George. Len supports his wife and, in turn, blackmails George into silence regarding Lois' embezelment. Len then shares the traumatic story of Margaret's love letter with his family, Mama reacts by attacking George, who makes a speedy retreat. Pa Ben, Len and Lois then pray for Mama's deliverance from the boomerang.  
  
**THEMES**- click here for [ADDITIONAL NOTES](http://www.bulbsoup.com/lt-additional-notes-csec-2012--2015.html)  
Racial and class discrimination  
Religion and Obeah  
Education vs. progress  
Dreams and Aspirations  
Love  
Love and family relationship  
Power and authority  
  
**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**  
***Batter batter*** - To knock about aimlessly.  
***Breed*** - To get pregnant.  
***'Burn a candle on his head'*** - To work obeah on him.  
***Drudge****-*To constantly wear something.  
***Duppy****-*A ghost.  
***Hold Dog*** - Literally means to 'hold the dog'  
***Kirrout****-*To literally 'clear out', or get away.  
***Lawd****-*An exclamation meaning 'Lord'.  
***Malice*** - To deliberately not speak to someone for an extended period of time.  
***Primps*** - To show off.  
***Tot*** - A little of something.

\* It is IRONIC that the persona is behaving in the exact way that he despises, however, and there is an implication that things cannot go back to what he remembers, due to the influence of societal expectations.