

## LESSON NOTE ON LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH WEEK 2

**SUBJECT:** Literature-in-English  
**TOPIC:** African Drama: "Let Me Die Alone" by John Kolosa Kargbo  
**CLASS:** SS1  
**WEEK:** 2

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

Gbanya: Chief of Mende Chiefdom and Yoko's husband  
Madam Yoko: Ruler of Mende Chiefdom  
Ndapi: Chief warrior of Senehun, Jilo's husband  
Lamboi: Yoko's brother  
Musa: seer and medicine man of Senehun  
Jilo: Ndapi's wife and Lansana's lover  
Dr. Samuel Rowe: the governor, the British Rep. in Mende Chiefdom  
Lansana: Jilo's lover  
Jeneba: Ndapi and Jilo's daughter  
Messenger  
Sande dancers

### SUMMARY OF THE PLOT

The play "Let Me Die Alone" opens up with the lovemaking scene between Gbanya, the Chief of Senehun and Yoka, his wife, she is among his thirty wives, a guard interrupts their romance to inform him that the colonial Governor is on his way to Senehun. Gbanya is saddened by the intended visit of the Governor and preoccupied by the dreams he had had before about his father calling him home, (in Africa, when the predecessor of a king or chief calls him home, it means that the incumbent will soon join his ancestors). Due to this, Gbanya has the forewarning (premonition) that something bad will happen to him soon.

At first, Yoko tries to dissuade him from engaging himself in such negative thoughts. Later when the latter (Gbanya) is unyielding to her advice, she reminds him of his promise to bequeath (will) the throne to her at his demise, Gbanya objects strongly to such arrangement, he claims that Menada land is in a state of chaos and so she needs a man to be her leader.

Next, we encounter Musa and Lamboi, member of Gbanya's administration. Lamboi who wants to become the chief, seeks the cooperation of Musa to kill Gbanya. At first, Musa refuses to oblige to

Lamboi's evil agenda but when Lamboi threatens to reveal his secret of human sacrifices, he accepts to help him.

The expected colonial Governor, Dr. Rowe, comes to Senehun and out rightly humiliates Gbanya for supporting a white brother against the other, the Governor orders his soldiers to stretch him out on the ground and beat him with a whip. The chief is equally fined to pay fifty pounds in the equivalence of cattle and rice. The Governor and his team leave. Lamboi and Musa cash in on this development to give the chief a poisoned drink to kill him, pretending the drink is meant to relieve his pain after the whipping. After the chief he had taken the drink, he is quick to recognize that he has been poisoned, in his death throes (struggle) he hands over power to Yoko to take charge of the chiefdom. Lamboi tries to persuade her out of the idea of becoming chief because she has to join the Poro cult which could consequently prevent her from bearing children but she insists she is ready to be chief.

Act Two opens with Jilo who is involve in extramarital affair in her husband's house with Lansana, her husband's friend. In the play, Ndapi is portrayed as a wife beater; one who maltreats his wife.

Yoko in her new palace with her maids then Ndani came to report Jilo and Lansana's affair. Jilo was late held in h Queen's custody while hey search to apprehend Lansana.

Next, Dr. Row's messenger brought the message of tax to Yoko who agrees to pay the tax imposition. Later on, Lansana was dragged to the palace. Yoko is disappointed with Jilo for the abominable act with Lansana, Jilo's three-month-old pregnancy is also wasted because of the illicit act. Yoko assures Ndapi that she will make Lansana pay all the damages. She is visibly angry more than ever before; Lansana betrayed his friendship with Ndapi.

Lamboi and Musa hatch up a plan to kidnap and kill Jeneba, the little girl, Yoko is fond of and loved by the community. The intention is to shift the blame on Yoko as the murderer and mislead the people to believe that her growing strength as a chief because she sacrifices young children to her charms by burying them alive. This plan they hope will whip up the sentiment of the people against her and ultimately force to abdicate the throne the throne or forced in to exile. With her out of the way, Lamboi hopes to ascend the throne. Musa does not believe it is a good strategy but Lamboi assures him that the searchlight will be on Yoko not them. In Yoko's palace, Jilo breaks in wailing and announces her daughter's (Jeneba) disappearance, Yoko orders a search party for the missing girl to be found. After that, the Queen embarks on a stately visit to the Governor. While the Queen was away, Musa has been busy spreading the rumour that Yoko has used Jeneba as sacrifice, the people believed him so upon her return from her stately visit, a messenger from the Governor to inform her that a large part of her

kingdom has been taken away from her by Dr. Rowe, she turns to the messenger to express her displeasure over the boundary demarcation. After long years of service and loyalty to the Governor, this manner of reward is least expected. She feels used and insulted and sends strong words back to the Governor. She is also called a witch, a murderer, a devil and wicked but she offers to swear by Poro to prove her innocence but she is not given a chance as nobody believes her. She is disappointed with the betrayal that surrounded her, so she committed suicide. Although after thorough investigation, it was discovered that Musa and Lamboi are the culprit.

### SETTING

The play "Let Me Die Alone" is set in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sierra Leone specifically in Mende Chiefdom in the Southern Province of Sierra Leone. Most actions of the play are set in the chief's palace located in Senenhun and Moyamba (Chief Gbanya reigned from Senenhun while Queen Yoko reigned from Moyamba).