

LESSON NOTE ON LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH WEEK 9

SUBJECT: Literature-in-English

TOPIC: African Prose “Unexpected Joy at Dawn (I) by Alex Agyei-Agyiri

CLASS: SS1

WEEK: 9

MAJOR CHARCTERS

1. Nii
2. Mama Orojo
3. Joe Boye
4. Massa
5. Aaron Tsuru

MINOR CHARACTERS

1. Ibuk
2. Tom Monday
3. Tally
4. Headmaster
5. Linda

PLOT SUMMARY

“Unexpected Joy at Dawn” is a story of migration, identities and lives undermined by cynical and xenophobic politics pertains to the Ghanaian orders of ‘alien compliance’ issued in 1970-1971, which was designed to force all non-citizens of Ghana so-called illegal immigrants, to return to their home a similar situation played out in Nigeria at the wastefulness of the new civilian regime under Shehu Shagari, when he ordered that all Ghanaians in Nigeria should leave..

The novel tells a story that centres on the life of two siblings, Mama Orojo and her younger brother Nii, who are Nigerians by blood but Ghanaian by birth who suffered in the then military dictatorship decree. The then military administration in Ghana passed a decree stating that non-citizens of Ghana should leave Ghana for Ghanaians alone.

The mentioned siblings suffered from such decree. However, Mama Orojo could not withstand the tension so she had the courage to go back to Nigeria; she left with her mother, painfully, her mother died on their way to Nigeria as a result of illness.

Back in Ghana, Nii stays with his grandmother fighting hard in order to survive. Due to the decree made against the non-citizens, he faced hardship; he did all kinds of menial jobs to keep flesh and soul together. He manages to marry a wife Massah in Ghana who got pregnant. Life became unbearable for Nii when his wife died with the pregnancy after much money was spent. He became frustrated and decided to go back to Nigeria. On his way to Nigeria, he also encountered a lot of problems. He was also mistaken to be a robber when he was found in an uncompleted building; he was arrested and sentenced to prison ignorantly. Later he was released and finally taken to the refugee camp in Lagos for rehabilitation. When he arrived at the rehabilitation centre, at first, he was not accepted by his Yoruba brothers because he had no tribal mark on his face. On the other hand, Mama Orojo became very worried over the absence of her younger brother from home so she decided to go to Ghana to look for him but when she got there, he was nowhere to be found but fate smiled on her as she found a man of her desire for companionship. She is not happy that Nii was not found, however, she was happy that now she has a man (Joe) to marry her. The two set to go back to Nigeria to live as husband and wife. As fate would have it, Mama Orojo decided to go to the refugee camp and unexpectedly, there was an unexpected joy at dawn when Nii and Mama Orojo met each other at the camp.

SETTING

The novel is set in Ghana and Nigeria.