

Saboteur and dead men's path

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Entire stories can be told using the ironic point of view. It is often used as a means of presenting the theme of a story. Authors Ha Jin, and Chinua Achebe used the irony of situation. Irony of situation meaning discrepancy between the expected results and the actual results of the story. In "Saboteur" by Ha Jin newly weds Mr. Chiu and Mrs. Chiu on the day that they were to leave for home were dining in the square by the Muji Train Station. Nearby at a table sat two policemen who were conversing and at times taking glances at the newly wed couple. As Mr. Chiu and his wife were talking one of the policemen stood up and threw a bowl of tea in their direction. As Mr. Chiu rose to confront them, he questioned them, they denied what was done, and they proceeded to arrest Mr. Chiu for apparently no reason at all. Mr. Chiu was locked into a cell with a single window that was blocked by six steel bars. He was not afraid that he was in jail. He was more upset that he would get behind in his work, and would have to work hard to catch up. He tried to keep a peace of mind and stay calm because he did not want to get a relapse of his sickness. Mr. Chiu was recovering from hepatitis and heart disease. During his stay in the jail he requested newspapers/magazines to read, help for his sickness, but all to no avail for he was constantly denied. If he was to ever leave he had to write down a false statement stating that he was responsible for his arrest and he apologized for the public disruption that he had caused on July 13th. Realizing that this may have been his only escape and his only way to end the torture on his lawyer Fenjin whom his wife had sent to rescue him he signed the statement and was released. Mr. Chiu was enraged by the whole idea and while eating at one of many restaurants before returning home he

kept saying through his teeth, " If only I could kill those bastards!" In " Dead Men's Path" by Chinua Achebe Michael Obi was appointed headmaster of Ndume Central School because a young and energetic man whom the Mission authorities thought would help the change the school from being unprogressive to progressive. Obi accepted this new responsibility enthusiastically, and had many visions and wonderful ideas that he could not wait to put into practice. What set him apart was that he had somewhat more education than other headmasters in the field, and he was more modern and open-minded. Obi's wife had hopes and ideas as well. She wished to create a beautiful garden around the school. Both he and his wife put their all into the " backward" school. Obi worked on setting the high standards for the school, and his wife worked on her dream-garden with the beautiful hibiscus and the brilliant allamanda flowers. As they say " All good things must come to an end," Obi's end became near one day as he met with the village priest of Ani. There was a path by the school that Michael Obi did not want the villagers to be passing through for he thought that the villagers may use the school room for " pagan ritual during the inspection." The priest decided to speak with Obi on the matter of the path. He explained its importance to the village saying, " This path was here before you were born, and before your father was born. The whole life of the village depends on it. Our dead relatives part by it and our ancestors visit us by it. But most important, it is the path of children coming in to be born..." Obi's response to the old man's statement was, " The whole purpose of our school such beliefs as that. Dead men do not require footpaths. The whole idea is just fantastic. Our duty is to teach your children to laugh at such ideas." With that Michael

Obi dismissed what the old man had said and he did not unblock the path by the school. The next morning he woke up in the ruins of his work. A school building was pulled down, and the beautiful hedges along both the path and the school were destroyed. A supervisor visited that same day and wrote a nasty report about the state of the school, and about the "tribal-war situation developing between the school and the village, arising in part from the misguided zeal of the new headmaster." Both stories "Saboteur" by Ha Jin and "Dead Men's Path" by Chinua Achebe have the theme of revenge. The taking of justice into one's hands is what made these two stories ironic. Mr. Chiu took his own justice by eating up at many restaurants around where he was imprisoned. Within a month 800 people contracted acute hepatitis in Muji, the same sickness that Mr. Chiu had. Nobody knew how the epidemic started. In "Dead Men's Path" the villagers took justice into their hands by destroying everything Michael Obi had worked for. They destroyed his dream