

The ancestry of a slave



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, it shows how one person can go from living in bliss to living in a dungeon. But how could this happen you may ask. Slavery. The people would become enslaved after being taken from their families. "The Asante had power from capturing slaves. The Fante had protection from trading them" (Miller 1) The Asante would become wealthy after stealing the people from their lives. They would sell their "loot" to the British in return for money and to be revered throughout the other villages. They would get their power from making other terrified of being in their path. The Fante would sell their own people just so they wouldn't get raided. If they got raided the whole village would become destroyed and many would be enslaved. At least if they gave them their own people, their own families it wouldn't be as much of a loss, right?

Esi was one of the characters that the novel essentially originated from. She and her long-lost sister against the cruel world of slavery. Her sister, Effia married a slaver (against her own will of course) and Esi, who actually got enslaved. I will tell the story of Esi, the half-sister born from a forgotten mother and warrior father. One day when her mother, Maame was cooking her father, Big Man told her that she should get a house girl. She didn't want to but he made her, Esi and Maame then went to the square to choose a slave. Her name was Abronoma, she was horribly mistreated because she was bad at doing the chores. She was beaten with a switch anytime she would mess up and would be left with welts and scars often times bleeding. Once Big Man decided to give her a task, carry water on her head without spilling a single drop. She came so close but at the very end two measly drops spilt out and she was beaten for it!

Big Man reached for his switch, and soon the song gained its accompaniment: the percussion of reed to flesh, the woodwind of reed to air. This time, Abronoma did not cry. (Esi 37)

Why in the world would someone treat another being this way, it's insane. Maame empathized with the girl and did her best to teach Esi to as well. She dreaded that her own daughter would talk so badly of the poor servant girl. One day when Little Dove told Esi a little of her own mothers past Esi was confused that something so horrible had happened to her mother and she didn't know it. She wondered how her own mother could have been beaten and raped, how she could've been a slave too. This is why Maame hated when Little Dove was mistreated. She knew how it had felt to not be loved in her own " home". The information Esi had learned about her mother made her only want more, but she wouldn't just tell her she wanted to be bribed. Esi told her she would send word to Little Dove's family saying that she was alive and where she was at. Later the raid started on their village, Abronoma's father had come for her and he would enslave or kill anyone in his path. I wonder if Big Man would've done that for Esi or any of his other children.

Maame then tells Esi of her sister that she had and gives her a necklace which is the same as the one Effia has. I wonder if Esi will spend lots of time thinking of her long-lost sister. I wonder if they will ever meet. Esi is then captured and enslaved in a dungeon.

The smell was unbearable...a soldier came into the dungeon and began to speak. He had to hold his nose to keep from vomiting...The porridge passed

right through her, it seemed. The ground was littered with their waste, the unbearable smell. (Esi 28-29)

This dungeon is horrible, they can't walk or talk hardly and they even have to sit in their own waste. It is not hygienic and they go hungry most days. How can someone be so cruel as to keep a group of people locked in this enclosure. It is made of mud and clay so they can't possibly keep warm and they even stole Afua's baby. They all must sit their naked and starving. And when they do get to eat they end up sitting in their own waste because it is so crowded that no one can move. Sometimes it's so crowded that the women would be laying on top of each other crushing each with their own weight. (not that they would weigh that much after being starved though)

He put her on a folded tarp, spread her legs, and entered her. She screamed, but he placed his hand over her lips, then put his fingers in her mouth. Biting them only seemed to please him...When he had finished, he looked horrified, disgusted with her. As though he were the one who had something taken from him. As though he were the one who had been violated. (Esi 48)

In this room, they get beaten and raped whenever the soldiers feel like it. They are looked at like they are disgusting and are a burden when they were the ones that enslaved them in the first place. They have no respect for any of the women there whom were taken from their lives to become slaves. They just fuck them and throw them back in the dungeon again; sometimes whilst they are in the dungeon thrown against a wall, trapped between the crushing wall and the rapist. At the end Esi and some of the others are

transported out of the gruesome dungeon to water, I wonder where they will go now.

Works Cited

Gyasi, Yaa. Homegoing. Knopf. 2016. Print.

Miller, Laura. “ Descendants.” The New Yorker, 30 May 2016. Web. 12 November 2017.