

Beka lamb – college essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the novel, “ Beka Lamb”, written by author Zee Edgell’s, a strong focus is placed on her native land of Belize and the issues that its citizens face. This novel is about the upbringing and changes that a young girl goes through. In the first six chapters of the novel, Zee Edgell introduces the themes of death, success, maturity and change, with change, being the major theme that is developed throughout the novel and is related to many of the other themes in one way or another. To portray these themes, the author uses a range of techniques to arouse and maintain the interest of the reader.

Beka deals with death at a young age. Death was introduced in the first chapter as the author uses her craft to create a gloomy mood which signifies depression and/or death. The ‘ slapping at a mosquito’, ‘ insistent grumblings of frogs’ and the death of the polar bear further develops the theme of death. Gran reminisces about the polar bear, in chapter three, that came to Belize and died, instantly showing the reader that nothing prospers in Belize and that the final outcome is death. It shows the hopelessness and depression in Belizean society.

In chapter one, the writer uses the wreaths at her “ greatgranny’s” funeral and the swatting of the flies to symbolize the discomfort of death. Zee Edgell uses the “ whining mosquitoes, shrilling crickets and insistent grumbling of frogs” to show that even the smallest creatures aren’t happy with their environment, so why should Beka those be? The writer uses these subtle hints to sort of foreshadow what is yet to come, which in turn arouses and maintains the readers interest. The reader is interested in knowing how Beka deals with her development and the deaths that plague her existence.

The issues of success and failure were present throughout the first few chapters also. The writer shows that success is a process. We see that seven months before Beka won the competition she failed first form and she knew it would disappoint her parents so she resorted to lying, " I pass in truth, Daddy! " Beka's family didn't have much faith in Beka about passing. " How you passed the entrance examination to St. Cecilia's I'll never understand" and " The money you wasted could feed a poor family for six months" both found in chapter 5.

By contrast, when she won the competition in chapter one, her parents, even her grandmother was proud of her and had high expectations of her. Success and failure are common elements in any society. Readers are always looking for ways to cope with them. The writer introduces these themes in the first few chapters to arouse the readers interest. The reader is curious to see Beka's outcome, so that they can use her as an example of what they can do. The dream in chapter two is a symbol of change, success and maturity.

The author uses this dream to illustrate Beka's confusion and loss of control of her life. It is a technique used to show what was going on in Beka's life. The bridge was a symbol of change and maturity. It reflects that she was going through a transformation. The view of success was to cross the bridge. On her way, she saw jeering faces, laughing and mocking her. The bridge started to move away from her and her chance at success was slipping away. She cried out for help but no one seemed to hear her, she was voiceless.

The sailors represented the people who were there for her to give her the easy way out, “ Jump, nigger gyal, jump! We’ll ketch you! ” The crowd of people ‘ laughing uproariously’ and ‘ pointing elongated fingers’ represent the people who knew she failed the exam and now taunted her. The writer also shows that success diminishes grief and pain as the novel stated, “ It was only today, with a small success of her own, and the panic and fright subsiding... But the past surprised her, the pain wasn’t so bad anymore!”

This arouses the readers interest in that this is what everyone has to go through in life. There is a time in everyone’s life when they feel voiceless, when they are afraid of success, when they go through the big change and when they face people who laugh and mock them. Lastly, Poverty and politics is another theme introduced in the novel. They are closely related as we learn from the discussions between Granny Ivy and Miss Eila, that the politics affected the economy as there was a lot poverty due to devaluation.

The description of the houses as ‘ weathered wooden houses’ and ‘ rusty zinc rooftops’ further develops this theme and gives the reader a clearer image of what the situation was like in Belize. Also, the flashback that Beka had about the walk she and Toycie took in Fort George shows that the girls preferred the wealthier areas and that the walk was a sort of escape from the town which seemed ‘ staler, dirtier and altogether less pleasant than the lovely areas they had left. ‘ The reader is aroused in that it reminds the reader of home.

You go driving through the wealthy areas on Sunday’s and explore the homes and hope to one day live that way. Change is also associated with this

theme as we see that there is a symbiotic transformation as Beka's change is compared to political change and reform. It was implied by the author that Beka's internal change occurred simultaneously with the political amendment. Belizean society is similar to that of the Bahamas, which the reader can relate to. In conclusion, She makes some mistakes throughout her life but she soon realizes that she needs to alter her ways. With the help of a close friend, considered to be like a sister, she is able to look at life differently. Their friendship helps them to transform.