

Theme for english b



Effect of “ New York 1998” Published in 2007, Ishmael Beah’s “ A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier” is a riveting firsthand account of the civil war that lasted nearly for a decade in Sierra Leone as well as the dilemma of child soldiers caught up in war zones all over the world. The story that opens the book, “ New York City, 1998” introduces both the contextual and historical setting of the story narrated in the book; from this story, readers are given an overview of the content in the book. Readers suddenly become aware that they are about to read a story about a civil war in Sierra Leone, as witnessed through the eyes of a child soldier victim; introduction of the readers to the contextual and historical setting of the story is important because it facilitates interpretation of the unfolding narrative. This story presents the narrator in New York City in 1998, years after he fled the civil war in his country Sierra Leone; the conversation that occurs between the narrator and his friends at school reveals that the narrator has suffered the horror of having to witness things that he shouldn’t have at a tender age. The story also serves to build suspense and anxiety in the readers to carry on with the story, to unfold the mysteries alluded to in the passage; in other words, this piece of story raises numerous questions in the readers’ minds, which can only be answered by reading the full story. For instance, readers are curious to know that the war was about and the role of the narrator in the war; in that case, readers are anxious to read the entire story, to find out the exact events that transpired in Sierra Leone, forcing the narrator to run for his life finally arriving in New York City.

The first page of chapter one further builds on the effect of this passage by providing details of the stories that were told by passersby about the war in other places away from the narrator’s home. The first page gives a snapshot

of the entire story by alluding to the stories of the fleeing refugees, and their horrendous experiences in war torn zones; this page gives an overview of the events that are about to unfold in the next chapters, thereby arousing readers interest. Adults in families fleeing the war zones are described as having witnessed things that plagued their minds because they appeared disoriented and lost in their own thoughts during conversations. Their kids, on the other hand, were still to recover from the shock they had suffered in their homes, having to witness despicable things in the war torn zones; these stories seem unbelievable to the narrator, whose only experience of war had been in movies and in books. This passage sets the entire story in motion since it provides a context and motivation for action in the subsequent pages and chapters; the suspense built in the opening story is further heightened in this first page of chapter one to the level of raising reader's interest to read on. The desire to uncover what exactly happens to the narrator, his family and entire town after the horrendous stories of the passersby heightens the readers' interest in the rest of the story; readers are particularly keen to find out the fate of the narrator and his town after the passersby have fled.