

Little soldier by bernard ashley



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Bernard Ashley wrote the novel ' little soldier'. It is set in modern day London. The novel tells the story of a teenage black boy from East Africa, his life torn apart in war and loss, he is rescued by the UN, but all he want is to fight the enemy. The main genre of the story is about war and conflict, it also explores the rebellious feelings of teenagers and the urban tribal conflict in London. In my review I will discuss the plot, the theme and the main characters on the story. At the beginning of the story, we find out that the main character Kaninda Bulumba's entire family was killed in a brutal attack by the Yusulu Clan.

In grief and despair, Kaninda joined the rebel Kibu Army. After a defeat he was rescued by the UN and is sent to London as a refugee to live with the Rose family. However Kaninda wants to return to Laisai to fight the Yusulu. Meanwhile the family's daughter Laura was feeling rebellious and with her boyfriend they drove a car under age and without license.

In their excitement they thought they ran over a little girl. Laura is torn apart with guilt and she prays daily for forgiveness. After a while she felt let down by god and when she found out Kaninda was to leave for Laisai, she decides to go with him so she may redeem herself by helping the suffering people of Laisai. However before she went she decides to visit the little girl in hospital. Laura is overwhelmed to hear that she was run over by a white van, not her car.

But she was suspected of the hit and run and was hurt in a revenge attack. To add a twist to the story, another boy arrived from Laisai, a Yusulu. Kaninda attempts to kill him. However the little boy spoke passionately and

bravely. Kaninda realized the tragedy of war and the hurt and loss it brings on both sides of the conflict.

He spares the Yusulu and decides to give up on the war in Laisai. The main character in the story is Kaninda. About 14 years of age he is black, quite tall and quite muscular. He joined the Kibu army to avenge the death of his family. He was a well-trained soldier.

He was fast and agile and always alert for danger. He had a bullet wound in his arm. The same bullet had gone through his mother's stomach. He was left for dead amongst a pile of corpses that were his family. Torn by conflict he showed little emotion.

However beneath the mask that was his face, He had feelings. He was honorable. When Laura saved his life he repaid her by taking part in a tribe battle for her. He supported her as much as he could over her problems.

Although he hated the Yusulu bitterly, he was sympathetic to the Yusulu boy because they both were victims of war. He was brave, as he didn't flee from four opponents at the same time in the tribe war. He was patient and trained in the tactics of war. He set up ambushes for the more numerous enemies. Laura is another main character in the story.

She is 13 years of age. Not bad on the figure front for her age, she could look up to 20 years of age. She like her family is very devoted to Christianity, she is the drummer in the God's force band. She found life a bore so became a bit of a rebel. But her fun was short lived when she thought she had run over the little girl.

She gave up on rebellion and every day she begged forgiveness from god. He gave her no sign. She is a very emotional person and is torn with guilt. She is quite helpless and looks up on Kaninda for support.

She is not brave as she was too scared to tell anyone what she thought she has done, she also was not brave enough to run the obstacle course that will give her full membership to the ' Crew' the tribe her boyfriend is involved with. She tries to run away from her problems rather than stand and face them. Theme main theme of the story is war and loss. The war in Laisai between the Yusulu and the Kibu.

The tribal fighting in the streets of London. The suffering and loss on both sides. Both Kaninda and the Yusulu boy lost their families in war. And at the end of the clashes in London, dozens of people were injured.

The minor themes are guilt, racism and hope. The guilt that nearly destroyed Laura. The racism many blacks felt from the society and the police and finally Laura hope for a better future. To conclude this novel is about a refugee boy living in London and the horror and tragedy of real war. The story explores many themes from war to tribal conflicts.

Death and loss, guilt and hope. In my opinion the story is okay but the beginning is poor as it takes a while for me to get into the story. The ending is not great either, as we don't know whether Laura is hurt badly or not. Otherwise the author has achieved getting his message through that war is never good for either side. I especially liked the way he sort of uses flash backs from Kaninda's memories to tells what happened earlier in Laisai. Over all I would give this book 6/10.

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