

Country of the one eye god

Family



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

After reading “ Country of the One Eye God” by Olive Senior, I couldn’t help but think that the story sounds all too familiar with the world in which we live today where money devours the souls of people with good intentions.

This is a short story of a grandmother, Ma Bell, who has raised her grandchildren up from nothing. One grandchild in particular, Jacko, grows to become a rebel. Eloped with bitterness and resentment, Jacko gets what he wants by any means necessary, even if it means crossing those he loves. In this story, Olive senior takes us on a short journey with an uncut reality of a madness that goes on everyday. Olive Senior holds nothing back as he vividly depicts how poverty takes a toll on people which can result in devastation.

My first and last impressions of Ma Bell were positive. She is an Ol’ School grandmother who came from nothing but spent her entire life raising children. She first had her own at age sixteen, and at seventy-six years of age still feels responsible for their growth which she guided.

She has a comfortable relationship with her God, whom she has come in the habit of talking to aloud. Ma Bell resents her social status but over the years has come to terms with it, and has learned to grip the bull by the horns and make it work for her and her children.

Her higglering days earned her money; portions of which she saved for herself. Ma Bell’s biggest dream is to have a proper burial when she dies. She dreams of a fine coffin, not the “ plain cedar coffin” that most people are buried in. She feels that she deserves a proper way of leaving this earth

since she came in through poverty. To Ma Bell this dream, this vanity, represented a final checkpoint - ironically she looked forward to it.

It is the one thing she put money aside for and it was so important to her that she always kept the money on her person. Her clothes had many layers and within these layers she kept her money stash. This dream gave her a reason to live and keep going because she knew once she couldn't go anymore, she'd go out in style. Her very own flesh and blood, Jacko, takes this dream from Ma Bell. In a spree of murder, rape, robbery, and other illegal activity fuelled by bitterness and resentment, Jacko returns to the house where he was raised.

At 19 years old, he is a wanted man. Jacko's parents left him in Ma Bell's care as a child so they can "go foreign" and seek a better life for their family. It was their intentions to come back for him once a better life was established, but unfortunately sometimes the best plans don't work out for everybody. In this case, the plans did not work out in Jacko's favor.

They left him with his grandmother and false promises of returning for him each year. Nothing is more dangerous than a man with nothing to lose. A feared man on the streets, Jacko headlines the news and returns to Ma Bell for money to escape the country. His ego from all the people he has gotten over overflows into arenas he has no right venturing into. After a meal and some rum, Jacko demands Ma Bell hand over her savings.

Ma Bell lives for a proper burial, and the only possible way of that happening is with her savings. In her mind, losing the money gives her no reason to live

anymore; so she refuses. Jacko feels his family never gave him a fair share, so he decides he is going to leave with the money one way or the other.

He pities Ma Bell's relationship with God, calling him a "One Eye God" who only favors to the rich and forgets the poor. Ma Bell's faith in God disgusts him, and angers him even more in his attempt to retrieve the money.

The story ends with Jacko holding a gun pointed at Ma Bell, his very own grandmother. I think most people will think "no, he wouldn't shoot his grandmother". But I think most people watch too much TV. In reality, domestic violence runs rampant among many societies. Life isn't a blockbuster movie where the FBI runs in and says "freeze!" In real life, the unexpected happens everyday, and in too many cases it is over money.

A sorry story of a poor grandmother who came from nothing will not make that gun jam. Money has caused mass genocide and murder in poor places like Africa. Money has people of higher power manipulating people's faith in religion, causing them to strap bombs to their body and detonate. Money has given birth to social status.

Unfortunately, there are thousands of people just like Jacko around the world who are bitter about things in life that haven't quite worked out in their favor, and will do anything to ease their suffering. In my opinion, Jacko isn't the real bad guy in this story.

Neither is Ma Bell or any of her other children. This story, "Country Of the One Eye God", is a metaphor for the money infested society we live in where greed conquers all and all the wealth is divided amongst a handful of people. So who do you think really killed Ma Bell?