

The imperfections of imperi



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi, the two protagonists in the novel, were born in the village of Imperi, Sierra Leone, but moved elsewhere after their adolescence. The two main characters assert the necessity to return to their native village to see family and friends. After stepping on the land that was their hometown, Pa Mowi and Mama Kaide conclude that the town has been destroyed which demonstrates their dejected attitude as; their whole outlook on life has become hopeless. The protagonists utilize sorrow diction, somber imagery, and dismal allegory in order to reveal Pa Mowi and Mama Kaide's character as depressed due to the civil war within their village.

In the beginning of the passage, Pa Mowi and Mama Kaide arrive in their hometown of Imperi, Sierra Leone with a dismissive attitude due to the damage within their village without knowing the cause. Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi reach their destination of Imperi after a long absence. Mama Kaide is the "first to arrive where it seemed the wind no longer exhaled." After stepping on the land of Imperi, Mama Kaide is in dismay because of the current state of stagnation. The repented diction of Mama Kaide exemplifies her newly acquired pessimistic attitude as a result of the rundown village of Imperi. The speaker describes the tree branches in the village as growing "towards the ground, burying the leaves in the soil to blind their eyes so the sun would not promise them tomorrow with its rays." Because of the current torn down village of Imperi, the trees are starting to droop and the leaves are hidden under the ground. The despondent diction parallels the misery felt by Mama Kaide after returning to a ruptured environment. When first stepping on the land that once was her hometown, Mama Kaide comes across a path that "were spoken of as 'snakes' that one walked upon to

encounter life or to arrive at the places where life lived.” The serpentine paths in the village of Imperi serve to enlighten the natives about the values of life. By comparing the lengthy, winding path to a snake, Beah denotes that life lessons can be taught. Even though the village is destroyed for an unknown reason, the path has the power to change Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi’s attitude towards life from disdainful to buoyant. After appearing on their home land, Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi are despondent over the destruction of their village without knowing the principle reason for the damage.

Mid way through the text, Pa Mowi and Mama Kaide become enraged when they realize that their hometown was destroyed due to a civil war. The speaker personifies the wind as a powerful by “ nudging [Mama Kaide’s] bony body, covered with a tattered cloth thin and faded from many washings, toward what had been the town.” The wind is so robust that it moved Mama Kaide’s frail body directly to the village. By personifying the wind, Beah draws a comparison between Mama Kaide’s weak body and the strong wind; almost pushing her toward her home that she has lost all hope in after the eradication from the civil war. Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi recall the fresh scent of coffee in the mornings of their childhood, however “ today the scent made [Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi] weep, starting slowly at first, with sobs that then became a cry of the past.” The two protagonists began to bemoan after finding the cause of the ruins of their village. Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi’s moaning over the aroma of coffee parallels how they feel about the ruins of Imperi which illuminates the two protagonists mournful mindset. Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi describe the suffering they have

experienced “ A cry, almost a song, to mourn what has been lost while its memory refuses to depart...” They feel a keening lament best honors the torndown village as well as their anguish felt towards the village. The image of a gloomy song conveys a sense of moroseness within the village of Imperi, which has been eradicated leaving many families ripped apart due to the selfishness of the government in Sierra Leone. The civil war that occurred in Imperi has a major influence on Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi’s memory of a more wistful and delightful time.

Towards the end of the passage, Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi become even more despondent as a result of the deaths of their friends and family as a result of the civil war. The two characters remember a time in which the village was jolly, however that feeling has been eliminated. Now, Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi arrive at the “ quiet town without being greeted by the crows of cocks, the voices of children playing games, the sound of a blacksmith hitting a redhot iron to make a tool, or the rise of smoke from the fireplaces.” As a result of the war, the citizens are feeling anguish towards their town due to the lack of substance within the village. Just like Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi’s childhood, the multiple examples of lively activities reminds the audience that Imperi has fallen hostage to the destructive actions taken by the Sierra Leone government which has made the protagonists irate. After passing by her childhood house, Mama Kaide realizes her house was burnt to the ground with only a couple of pillar remaining. In response, Mama Kaide begins to sob while “ tears consumed her deep brown eyes and slowly rolled down her long face until her sharp cheekbones were soaked.” The protagonist began to weep because her

house turning into an uninhabitable debris pile. Beah exaggerates Mama Kaide's "long face" and "deep brown eyes" to such an extent to make it seem that the protagonist is in such trepidation as a result of the surprising events that have occurred in her hometown. Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi are so discouraged that they had to walk away from the town and reflect upon themselves and the village. The two protagonists echo that the "name of [their] land had been released into the ears of the wind..." As a result of the civil war, the town will soon be forgotten by all. As the wind is personified as a human, this emphasizes that the gust of wind can sweep a legacy of a village away - everything will soon be forgotten which exposes Mama Kaide and Pa Mowi's enraged mindset. The two protagonists exhibit their furious demeanor as a result of the trashfilled town.

In today's society, with the presence of terrorism, cities, towns, and villages get sabotaged; henceforth, families and friends are separated. More importantly, the area faced with mass extermination loses their identity. It takes strength, courage, and a positive attitude to relieve the area of the stress of rebuilding the community. Due to the slaughter of Imperi's identification from the civil war, Pa Mowi and Mama Kaide illuminate their destroyed sense of belonging through sorrow diction, somber imagery, and dismal allegory.