



A TEACHER'S GUIDE

ON

A large, semi-transparent watermark of the Teach For Change Nigeria logo is centered on the page. It includes the shield, the letters 'T F C N', and the text 'TEACH FOR CHANGE NIGERIA' and '...Teaching made easy'.

BAYO ADEBOWALE'S LONELY DAYS

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Pre-reading Activities

Pre-reading activities help launch students into the study of a new text. Use any or all of the following activities to get students excited about reading the book:

A. Predicting: Considering the Title of the Book

The title of the book is *Lonely Days*. Ask students what the title means to them.

Task: What do you think the book will be about based on its title? Write a paragraph response to the question and share what you have written with a partner.

B. Cover Page Prediction

Ask students the following questions:

- i. What do you see on the cover?
- ii. What does it (or do they) make you think of?

Cold call students to share their responses and record their answers on the board or on a wall poster.

C. Gallery Walk

1. Type or copy out lines from the prologue (called Entrance Verse in the book). Cut them into five and paste them on different sections of the classroom wall. If there are no printers available, you can write out the Entrance Verse on a large cardboard and cut them into five.
2. Print out pictures of Nigerian women looking sad, of a young boy running around and another picture of traditional men sitting in a circle, as though in a meeting. Maybe drawing these pictures ahead of time will be a good alternative for schools where there are no printers. Paste these pictures on different sections of the classroom wall too. Number each exhibit.
3. Next, instruct students to draw a table in their notebooks labeling one side, 'I Think' and the other side 'I Wonder.' Divide students into groups and have each group take turns, walking around with their pens and notebook. As students read the quotes and view the pictures, they should fill in their table. For example, looking at a picture, a student might

write: 'I think the woman is sad. I wonder why she is crying.' Reading a quote, a student might write, 'I think this means the woman is lonely. I wonder why she is lonely.'

This activity should be timed. Fifteen minutes will be a good bet and when students are done, gather them all back to their seats and discuss their responses, letting them know that there is no right or wrong answer and that you will all read the text to find out what actually happened.

D. Discussion Question

Put this question on the board. Give students 3-5 minutes to write a journal response (one paragraph) to it. Have them pair off and share their responses with a partner and then lead a whole class discussion based on their responses.

Question: Why are widows often restricted and treated more unfairly than widowers in Nigeria?

Reading Activities

1. This guide is written in chapters. Each chapter contains comprehension questions from that chapter of the book which will aid students' understanding and engagement with the text. Please, don't make students provide written responses to all the questions in this section as that might become too tedious.
2. Encourage classroom and group discussions: so instead of writing, students should, verbally, share their responses to most of the comprehension questions labelled '**While Reading**' in this guide.
3. **Prediction Game** is a short activity meant to spark up and renew interest in every chapter. Students can whisper answers to their seatmates for every Prediction Game and then you can go on with the next chapter and tell them they will find out if their predictions were right.
4. The **Vocabulary** section is a list of word from each chapter. Teachers are allowed to select a number of words (maybe five) from these lists and share the meaning with the class before reading each chapter. At the end of the week, prepare a vocabulary contest for all the words learnt that week. Divide students into group and have them work with their partners in providing the meaning of the words thrown to them. Get each group to create a poster (this could be with a cardboard paper, A4 papers, empty cartons, etc.) for the words they have learnt, accompanied with their meaning. Put up the posters in class for students

to constantly view and engage with it. This can happen weekly or bi-weekly. At the end, the goal is to increase students' vocabulary.

5. The **After Reading** section is where students get to do the writing. Based on how much time you have, decide whether to have students answer all questions in this section as classwork or as homework assignment.
6. Remember to adapt this guide as it suits your classroom. Decide whether to read a chapter or two a day, or to send students home with reading homework assignments while the comprehension questions guide them in their notetaking. Always encourage students to take note when they read at home. By writing down answers from the **While Reading** section, students engage more with the text at home. In class, do a review of what they read by asking few questions from While Reading and assigning them tasks from the **After Reading** section.

Chapter 1



Prediction Game: How can you tell what the book will be about from reading the title?

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Vocabulary

Castigating

Glared

Abominable

Torrents

Solidarity

Reproachful

Sombre

Desolate

Taffeta

Indolent

While Reading

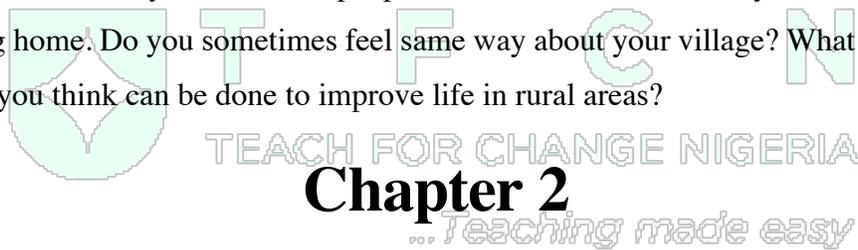
1. The story begins with the death of who?
2. The novel is set in?
3. What does the 'go away' bird on the bough of an iroko tree symbolise?
4. Why didn't Yaremi know whether to cry tears of gratitude or those of sorrow?
5. Have you ever lost a friend or family and you didn't know whether to feel relieved or sad?
6. Why must Yaremi be thankful?
7. What are some examples of an 'abominable death'? Why were they considered abominable?
8. Why did Yaremi feel the urge to apologise to her dying husband?
9. The line, 'All eyes followed every footstep she took with hostile closeness,' means what? Were the mourners happy with Yaremi?
10. Why do you think people would be bent on humiliating or spoiling the reputation of a woman who has lost her husband?
11. Why are the days ahead lonely for Yaremi?
12. What are the names of Yaremi's daughters and who are their husbands?
13. Who is Uncle Deyo?
14. What was Yaremi's main job?
15. Yaremi calls Woye, her grandson, 'indolent' because he couldn't do the hard chores she expected of him. What does 'indolent' mean?
16. Do you think Yaremi is being fair by expecting so much from a little child? Are there times adults had such high expectations of you? What was your reaction?

17. What helped Woye get through the work of beating the taffeta?

18. Why did Yaremi become a workaholic?

After Reading

1. ‘But loneliness has now pitched a tent, and had become, to her, a deep black like the night.’ Describe the use of ‘tent’, ‘black’ and ‘night’ as metaphors for loneliness in this chapter.
2. The words, “All eyes” and “all ears” used to replace the mourners in this chapter are examples of what figure of speech? Explain your choice. Likely answer: Synecdoche, because a part is used to replace a whole.
3. Alani, Yaremi’s son, thinks his village has become too local for him, ‘a small un-mapped hamlet inhabited by a handful of people’ and so he lives in the city and never cares about coming home. Do you sometimes feel same way about your village? What are some of the things you think can be done to improve life in rural areas?



Chapter 2

Prediction Game: What do you think Yaremi will do next, apart from working on her taffeta?

Vocabulary:

Strenuous

Sumptuous

Meticulous

Diligent

Saturated

Compensate

Vicissitude

itinerary

While Reading:

1. Where did Yaremi spend a lot of time in apart from the farmhouse?
2. Why must a 'village woman' cook at all times regardless of how tired they may be? Do you believe cooking should be the sole job of a woman?
3. What did Yaremi turn to in order to lessen the burden of cooking?
4. Women of Kufi were _____.
5. Songs were symbolic in Kufi. List three significances of singing as mentioned in this chapter.
6. 'Life is fire' is an example of metaphor used in this chapter. What would this line mean for Yaremi?
7. 'Yaremi sang the song of the hot fire - wearing a garment of red guinea brocade.' What is 'the song of the hot fire'? What does Yaremi's 'garment of red guinea brocade' represent? Likely answer: Since songs were symbolic to the women of Kufi, this means that Yaremi's song was sad one that burns her like fire, arising from the pain of losing her husband, of doing all the work herself and loneliness. The 'red' garment may represent her grief.
8. Following the death of her husband, what are the new tasks Yaremi must take on?

After Reading

1. Draw a picture showing your understanding of Yaremi's kitchen and how much work done in there.
2. Yaremi carried on her daily chores energetically without complains. She would, as a matter of fact, mock other women and tag their movement 'slow motion.' Write a three-paragraph response describing Yaremi as a character full of strength and 'beautiful...in spite of the

occasional traces of fatigue hanging over her sober countenance.’ Give examples from the text to support your answer.

Chapter 3

Prediction Game: Would Yaremi ever get tired of doing all the work alone?

Vocabulary:

Foliage

Meander

Liana

Quivering

Subjugate

Vociferous

Monotonous

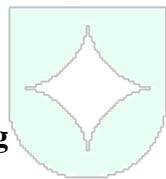


While Reading:

1. What road is referred to as the Widow’s Road?
2. ‘Several water pots on shaky necks’ is what figure of speech? Synecdoche: A part, representing a whole. ‘Shaky necks’ refers to the villagers carrying the water on their heads.
3. Why do you think such slippery, lonely and dangerous road was called the Widow Road?
4. Where were the widows free to raise their voices?
5. Widows of Kufi were united in what way?

6. The widows had a common sense of loss which included _____ and _____.
7. List six things widows shared/had in common according to this chapter.
8. The three widows long before Yaremi, had many issues of interest. What are they?
9. The three widows looked forward to the days when mourning would be over. Why?
10. How was Dedewe treated by her husband's relatives?
11. How do you think Dedewe must have felt being asked to confess to a crime she didn't commit?
12. Libation is a drink poured out as an offering to a deity. Why would Fayoyin, the second widow, be made to drink that?
13. "When Radeke's own husband, she knelt before the dead body, and strings of dirges ran out of her dry throat.' What is a dirge?

After Reading



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1. 'If you tip-toe on this road, you are doomed...This is not the road for the short-tempered people. Or the self-conceited ones who think highly of themselves.' Based on the statement above, discuss the use of 'road' as a metaphor for widowhood. How true is the statement for Yaremi?
2. Mourning the death of a husband in Kufi, meant the end of living for the widow. Discuss this using the examples of dance as a metaphor life and pleasure as shown in this chapter.
3. 'The people, out of hatred for her (Fayoyin), went beyond the dictates of their culture.' Write two paragraphs detailing the treatment of Fayoyin by the villagers in your own words.
4. Describe the widow's ordeal in Lonely Days, citing Dedewe, Fayoyin and Radeke as examples.

Chapter 4

Prediction Game: Seeing how the three widows were treated, in one word, how do you think Yaremi must be feeling?

Vocabulary:

Inkling

Transpired

Trepidation

Enthralled

Anecdote

Decipher



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While Reading

1. Did Yaremi ever imagine she'd join the league of village widows?
2. What was Yaremi's relationship with the three widows before the death of her husband?
What does that tell you about how widows are generally treated by the community?
3. Yaremi tried overcoming the loneliness of losing her husband by immersing herself into frequent work. Cite an evidence from this chapter that supports this. Likely answer: 'Work, to Yaremi, had become medicine against loneliness and frustration; a dose to fight fatigue and boredom with; a cushion for all pressures of daily life.'
4. What did Yaremi do during leisure time?
5. What are some of Yaremi's favourite childhood stories?

6. How did Woye feel listening to Yaremi's stories?
7. What effect did Yaremi's stories (anecdotes) have on her grandson?

After Reading:

1. Village life versus City life. Think about the stories Yaremi told of her childhood. Are there any similarities between life as it was then and life as it is now for you? Which would you say is more fun? Write in three paragraphs.
2. Yaremi tells Woye, 'There was really nothing like hatred among the little ones at Adeyipo.' Can this be said of children today? What are some of the reasons for quarrels and disagreements among children?



Prediction Game: What do you think will become of Woye in subsequent chapters?

Vocabulary:

Fatigue

Radiant

Vigour

Protuberant

Alacrity

Glutton

Incinerator

Maneuvering

Desolate

Escarpment

Deteriorated

Hallucination

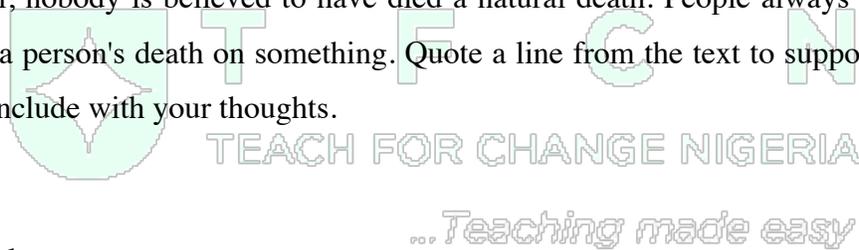
Esoteric

While Reading

1. Yaremi knew everything Woye loved and hated. How would you describe the relationship between mother and son?
2. What are some of the things Woye loved to do? What did he dislike?
3. What are some of the things you like to do? Do you always get the chance to do them?
4. What is 'the little aeroplane of heaven'?
5. What were other names for the hawk?
6. What else do we learn that Woye is afraid of? Answer: The hawk.
7. Why was Yaremi so sure that the hawk won't return 'to carry somebody away'?
8. What did Yaremi do that Woye thought was real magic and miracle?
9. What were the people of Kufi suspicious of?
10. The people of Kufi thought birds were ____? Answer: Witches arriving from the forest of Aku.
11. What was Yaremi's name associated with?
12. Why was Yaremi accused of killing her husband?
13. Describe the circumstances surrounding Ajumobi's death. Was Yaremi really at fault?
14. What do we learn about Ajumobi's occupation before his death?
15. What is the place of the oracle in Kufi?

After Reading:

1. At the beginning of the text, Yaremi calls her grandson lazy. Now, we see him being all active and hard working. Create a character sketch for Woye, based on what you've learned of him so far. Include a picture and two paragraphs.
2. Describe the use of imagery in the village herbalist's verdict over Ajumobi's life - 'The water jar has broken and its content spilled on the bare floor. All is over. Nobody can collect the spilled water with the five fingers of the hand...' Think of what happens when you spill water on the floor. Are you able to gather it all back into a cup? Apply that to Ajumobi's life. What does the verdict mean? Have you ever been faced with a hopeless situation? What did you do?
3. In Kufi, nobody is believed to have died a natural death. People always found a way to blame a person's death on something. Quote a line from the text to support this assertion and conclude with your thoughts.



Here is a model response:

In chapter five of *Lonely Days*, the author, Bayo Adebawale, writes that nobody had ever died a natural death in Kufi. He goes further to explain that 'the people were ever ready to advance reasons for sudden, unexpected deaths' as though humans had the power over their own lives. He also writes that 'a vindictive wife might evoke death vengeance through a medicine man on her wicked husband.' Whether true or not, it is unjust to blame people who are grieving for the loss of their loved ones, especially when they're innocent as is the case with Yaremi. People should be able to move on after losing their loved ones without having to constantly feel the pain of false accusations and judgement.

Chapter 6

Prediction Game: What new thing do you think we will be learning about Yaremi in this chapter?

Vocabulary:

Tugging

Drab

Futile

Conspicuous

Ultimatum

Expedition

Percussion

Fondling

Discern

Relic

Audacious



While Reading

1. What kept Yaremi awake?
2. In what ways were the women of Kufi held back by the claws of patriarchy? For your answer, think about the thoughts that plagued Yaremi that night: ‘Yaremi had become the beginning and end of all issues...Nobody governed her anymore on anything. Nobody sat her down anymore to give lectures to...There was no more that strong-arm rule of the man to keep her on her toes...’

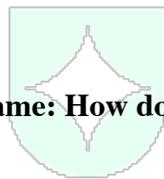
3. Do you think it was okay that women were treated as lesser creatures than the men as the lines above suggest?
4. How did Yaremi feel knowing there was no ‘man who would forcefully take over the absolute control of the matrimonial home’? Why did this matter to her? (Teacher, here is an opportunity to discuss societal expectations of women.)
5. Why was it difficult for Yaremi to stop thinking of Ajumobi?
6. What was ‘purely a man's private business’?
7. Was it easy for Ajumobi getting game to shoot?
8. Ajumobi’s amulet helps keep danger away from the household. Give examples.
9. Why does Ajumobi’s hunting dog howl all through the night?
10. Why did rats and the wooden vats remind Yaremi of Ajumobi?
11. What else do we learn about Ajumobi’s character apart from being a boastful hunter?
12. While the men drank and felt like ‘they could do just anything,’ Yaremi and the village women envied the men. Why?
13. Why should people not get drunk? Explain your answer with examples from this chapter.
14. Notice the switch from Third Person Narrative to First Person here: ‘Ajumobi had made promises to me too which he did not wait to fulfill.’ (56) to ‘He had resolved...to eliminate the red ants chewing the window panes of Yaremi’s room.’ (57) The novel is written in the Third Person narrative, but the author often switches to the First Person to reflect Yaremi’s deep thoughts and wishes. **Use this opportunity to review students’ knowledge on narrative techniques.**
15. What is Ajumobi’s theory on new and old wives?

After Reading:

1. Working with a partner, list five examples of simile from this chapter and explain what they mean.

2. It is ironic that ‘Yaremi was now completely on her own, and she was so unhappy about it.’ Why would Yaremi be uncomfortable with freedom and ‘her position of a woman almighty’? What was she afraid of?
3. The author uses flashback to let the readers into the kind of life Ajumobi lived. Give one example of how such flashback was used in this chapter.
4. Ajumobi used to be a boastful hunter. In three paragraphs, discuss this, citing evidence from the text.
5. The author, through the use of figurative language, explains how much Yaremi misses and yearns for her late husband. Select one of such figurative expressions and explain what it means. (You can use previous model on Synecdoche as guide.)

Chapter 7



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Prediction Game: How do you think Yaremi must have felt hearing her husband talk about a new wife?

Vocabulary:

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Idly

Incoherent

Pulsating

Lavish

Beam

Corrugated

Gaze

Dexterity

Diligent

Penetrating

Unbridled

Assail

Rummage

Adamantly

Nebulously

Succor

Reminiscences

While Reading:

1. What happened at moonlit night in Kufi?
2. 'This round pillow of heaven' is a metaphor for ___ in this chapter. Describe the author's choice for these words.
3. The children of Kufi would look at the moon and see varying images of children, men and women. Do you ever look at the sky or the moon and think about the shapes they create in your mind? What are some of the images you make out?
4. Do you believe the story about the moon that was told to the children of Kufi? What other folklores have you heard? Share with your group.
5. In the story about the moon, what did the women go to the bush to pick?
6. What happened when people started wiping their oily hands on the moon?
7. Did Yaremi make anything out of the things she saw while she stared at the moon?
8. What disturbed her mind?
9. Was Yaremi always happy with Ajumobi, her late husband? Give two instances of the unhappy times.
10. What literary technique helps us learn about the fights Yaremi had with her husband?
Answer: Flashback

11. What new thing do we learn about Ajumobi in this chapter?
12. What was common in Kufi?
13. Where do women get their vengeance on men?
14. What happens in the spirit world?
15. Do you think Yaremi's anger over Ajumobi taking a new wife was justified?
16. At this stage, we learn that Ajumobi was not at all a faithful husband. Show examples from the text.
17. How was Yaremi received on her first arrival in Kufi from Adeyipo?
18. Spot the use of alliteration in this sentence: 'She was all beads - a beaded beauty queen: beads on her wrists; beads on her calf...and beads around her pretty neck - the beautiful beaded bride from Adeyipo village.'
19. What are the stories told about Ajumobi not being truly dead? Do you believe in superstitions?
20. Yaremi thought she had seen her dead husband where and in what form?
21. Why does Yaremi want a second chance? What questions did she have for her husband?
22. Explain Yaremi's work in her dyeing yard.
23. Why did Yaremi think nobody could take the place of Yaremi in her heart?

After Reading:

1. 'Wife beating provided outlets for husbands' sense of powerlessness and frustration, in the face of grinding poverty.' Discuss how poverty can lead to domestic violence.
2. When angry, Yaremi hauled insulting words on her husband and Ajumobi beat his wife in retaliation. Imagine you're a relationship counselor or a therapist and Ajumobi and Yaremi come to you. What methods would you suggest that could help them resolve conflicts instead of resorting to hurtful words and blows? (Teachers, this is an opportunity to discuss domestic violence with the students. Have them create a short play script with students

playing Ajumobi, Yaremi, neighbours witnessing their exchange and the relationship counselors who settle them. Purpose of this activity is to teach students other peaceful ways of resolving conflict. So, students' play must gear towards that.)

3. With a partner, find the simile comparing the moon to human head. Analyse the use of imagery in that paragraph and then write a paragraph or two explaining your analysis. Prepare to present it before the class.
4. 'Yaremi missed her husband's occasional outbursts and shouts; his orders screamed out in his characteristics manly way...' Considering what we've learnt about Yaremi in this chapter, discuss why this is ironic.
5. Yaremi often said to the men who were after her, 'I am not for roasting, like slashed plantain on fire, inside the kitchen pot.' What does the analogy mean and how does it contribute to the character development of Yaremi?
6. Both Ajumobi and Yaremi are hot tempered. Discuss, citing relevant evidence (quotes) from the text to support your answer.
7. The author writes that Yaremi dished out insults to her husband, 'Sometimes, they would explode on Ajumobi like the hot fire from the mouth of a loaded gun; sometimes they were like the rolling peel of thunder, hitting the sky in different places.' Analyse the use of simile in this sentence. How does the author's choice of words contribute to the character development of Yaremi?

Chapter 8

Prediction Game: Do you think Yaremi would find man whom she'd fall in love with?

Vocabulary:

Sisal

Vigorously

Gritty

Vamoosed

Debt

Loan

Creditor

Gorge

Hallucination

Acrobatically

Cauldron

Dithered

Racked

Discarded

Glinting

Incinerator



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While Reading

1. What did Yaremi sell in the market? Answer - Taffeta cloths which she made herself
2. What did Woye and Yaremi do each time they carried a heavy load?
3. What did Yaremi's customers think of her taffeta?
4. What was Yaremi always in the habit of doing?
5. Why won't Yaremi sell on credit anymore?
6. Where did Yaremi record her debt?

7. What does 'Money slipped through their fingers like water' mean?
8. What do people give in exchange for the debts they owe?
9. Why were people unable to pay up their debts?
10. Did Yaremi make much gain when customers bought on credit?
11. Why wouldn't Woye be able to accompany her to the market?
12. What did Woye see in his dreams? Do you sometimes have weird nightmares when you're ill?
13. What medication did Woye get?
14. **Why** was Yaremi afraid of Woye dying?
15. What promises did Yaremi make to Woye so he could recover?
16. What did Yaremi do to put Woye in a 'lighter mood'?
17. What did Woye love to listen to?



After Reading

1. The author writes, 'In all these villages, poverty perched like the vulture on the camwood tree and the people embraced it cordially.' With your teammates, find out the meanings of 'perched', 'camwood' and 'cordially' and then explain the meaning of this analogy.
2. 'Yaremi watched with tears of joy as Woye bent down finally to begin to fold his sick mat. Her happiness was plain to see.' Explain how these lines reflect the relationship between Woye and his grandmother, Yaremi.
3. What did Woye do as soon he recovered? Create a three-paragraph Character Trait for Woye based on what we've learnt about him so far. Add illustrations to your work. Begin your sentence with, 'In *Lonely Days* by Bayo Adebowale, Woye, the grandson of the protagonist - Yaremi, is portrayed as...'

Chapter 9

Prediction Game: What do you think will happen to Yaremi in this chapter?

Vocabulary:

Toil

Enthusiasm

Workaholic

Winnow

Reverberate

Rivalry

Cudgel

Defected

Voluminous

Liberty

Reckoning

Assertive

Prominence

Impudence



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While Reading

1. What was dawn like in Kufi?
2. Apart from being singers, what else do we learn about the women of Kufi in this chapter?

3. How was time measured?
4. What does a new day mean for the women? Answer: A day of tending and caring.
5. Describe the roles and functions of women as stated in this chapter.
6. 'The women ate in silence what remained after their husbands and children had had their fill.' What does this tell you of how women were treated or regarded in Kufi?
7. Based on what we've just read, what would you say are some of the problems of polygamy?
8. Why was Yaremi secretly envied by other village women?
9. Describe Yaremi in the words of the village women. Answer: She was a 'comfortable woman, courageously coping with the challenges and disappointments of life - and so generous to everybody.'
10. Cite examples of Yaremi's generosity.
11. What did Yaremi tell the village men that they hated to hear?
12. Who were the three men who found Yaremi irresistible?
13. What was Ayanwale's occupation?
14. How did Ayanwale try to win Yaremi's love?
15. What did Ayanwale promise Yaremi?
16. What was Olonade's occupation?
17. What statues did Olonade erect?
18. Why do the people of Kufi call Olonade The Twin Father?
19. What did Olonade tell Yaremi would happen if they 'came together'?
20. What was Lanwa's occupation?
21. What did he boast about to Yaremi?
22. Why does Lanwa think he'd have the means to marry two or more women?
23. Why does Lanwa think that the 'custom of the land is on his side'?
24. Have you ever tried so hard to convince someone about something? Did it work or not?

After Reading:

1. Subjugation of Women is one of the themes of Lonely Days. Spot quotations from this chapter that support this theme and then write a three-paragraph essay discussing this theme

and analysing the quotations used. (Teachers, please define the word ‘subjugation’ for students. Create a graphic organiser that would help them gather their quotes and analyse them as draft or an outline. Next, guide them towards putting together, their ideas from the organiser, into a full essay. This method can be used for all literary analysis essays. A graphic organizer is like an outline that helps students with planning their writing and putting together relevant ideas. This is, especially, for students learning to write essays.)

2. Yaremi is a symbol of women emancipation in the text. Discuss the meaning of ‘emancipation’ with your group partners and then identify three quotations from the chapter that support this. Use these quotes in writing your three-paragraph response to the prompt.
3. Lanwa tells Yaremi, ‘I am Ajumobi’s half-brother and so, fully entitled to a fair share of his property, both human and material.’ Discuss this as a theme of The Objectification of Women.
4. In the text, the author writes, ‘Yaremi had gradually maneuvered her way into a position of reckoning in village affairs, spreading her influence, and asserting her personality in pleasant, subtle ways. But such a development had never gone down well with the men of Kufi.’ Why were the men of Kufi threatened by Yaremi’s confidence and outspokenness? What kind of women did the men like? ... *Teaching made easy*
5. Women in Kufi were expected to accept their husbands’ rage without complaints. It was their duty to detect their husbands’ mood and to please them, regardless of their own state. Cite an evidence from this chapter to support the point above. Model answer:

Women in Kufi were expected to accept their husbands’ rage without complaints. It was their duty to detect their husbands’ mood and to please them, regardless of how they, themselves, might be feeling. The women were expected to put their husbands first at all times. In the text, it says, ‘Women of Kufi would spend a long time, each day, trying to detect their husbands’ mood, pleasure and dispositions, in order to adequately prepare themselves for anticipated resignations or outbursts.’ This means that the women were always sitting on the edge in their attempt to please, satisfy and relieve their husbands of stress or to pacify them for offences they may not have committed. In basic terms, it was the woman's job to embrace her husband's rage and make sure that he was okay.

6. Explain how men exploited women in polygamous homes.

You can begin your response with, 'The men exploited their wives, setting them up against each other...'

Chapter 10

Prediction Game: What do you think would be Yaremi's response to these men?

Vocabulary:

Gait

Restive

Exuding

Sentiment

Distress

Ignited

Clumsy

Intoxicate

Fiend

Deliberate

Victimisation

Oppression



While Reading

1. Why did Yaremi wonder if she was becoming a man?

2. Why was Woye confused about his grandmother?
3. How did Yaremi feel towards her new personality?
4. What was Yaremi's experience with the woman whom she shook hands with in the market?
5. Why was it good for Yaremi to begin to play a man?
6. What other activities did Yaremi engage in that made her 'manly'?
7. What was Yaremi's response to Ayanwale's offer of love?
8. Why did Yaremi say that the women 'crowding' Ayanwale were a disgrace to Kufi?
9. What did she say she'll do in Ayanwale's dream?
10. Why would Yaremi have nothing to do with Ayanwale?
11. What did Yaremi say to Olona's offer of 'giving' her twins if she marries her?
12. What did Yaremi say of Olona's images?
13. Why did Yaremi say she didn't want to be a mother anymore?
14. Yaremi tells Lanwa that nobody can use her like a _____?
15. What other things did Yaremi say she'd rather do instead of being remarried to a man?
16. By refusing all three men, Yaremi tells Ajumobi that they were 'all for you.' Why do you think she did that for his sake?
17. What promise must Yaremi keep?
18. How did Yaremi hide from Ajumobi's rivals who tried seeking her love?
19. What did Ajumobi say to Yaremi in her dreams?
20. Why can't Yaremi feel it when Ajumobi touches her?
21. In what ways have Ajumobi helped Yaremi in his death?
22. Why did Ajumobi play these 'pranks' on Yaremi?
23. How did we know that Yaremi felt lonely and missed her husband? Answer: She kept on thinking about the great times they'd had and she felt him close 'like somebody behind a closed door.'

24. Why did the elders of the family think Yaremi needed purification at the shrine?
25. 'Time was ripe now for Yaremi to choose a new cap to wear.' 'Cap' here is a synecdoche for what? Answer: Man or husband. 'A new cap to wear' is a metaphor for what? Answer: Marriage
26. Was it fair that the custom dictated when widows should stop mourning and remarry?

After Reading

1. Why is Yaremi unmoved by Lanwa's excuse of tradition and custom which he says makes him an eligible husband?

Likely answer: Yaremi was unmoved by Lanwa's excuse of tradition and custom which he believes makes him an eligible husband because Yaremi does not care about the dictates of tradition. She's an independent woman who believes strongly in herself and her right to choose the kind of life she wanted to live. In the text, it says, 'I reserve the right to choose the type of life I want to lead.' She goes further to explain her decision by citing examples of the kind of life she'd prefer, 'It could be that of a woman deliberately aloof in self-contentment, untouched by the victimisation and oppression of the man or that of a woman sulking the anger of an injury, protesting the humiliation heaped on her over the years, by the man.' Yaremi shows, in the lines above, that not tradition nor customs can take away her freedom or stop her from feeling the pain of victimisation and opposing the oppression of women in Kufi. She is resilient in her pursuit.

(Teachers, notice that in responding to prompts – or questions, I often write in the simple present tense. Students should be discouraged from writing their literary analysis essays in the past tense.)

2. Group Discussion: Why can't strength be feminine? Do you really think that strength is gender-based? Think of some powerful women you know in real life. Would you say that being strong made them masculine even though they're women?
3. Swearing and shouting epithets (words of abuse) were reserved for men alone in Kufi as women were meant to be saints; docile and submissive. Discuss the theme of gender inequality considering that women were put in a box while men enjoyed freedom of speech.

4. Yaremi tells Lanwa that she is not ‘the wife to be sent home during planting season and be summoned back to her husband's village during harvest season, to do the work of a donkey.’ Explain. How does this contribute to Yaremi’s character development?
5. Despite all the fights and quarrels they had, do you think Ajumobi and Yaremi were a happy, loving couple? Discuss your answers with your group partners and then independently, write a three-paragraph response to the prompt. Remember to cite textual evidence.

Chapter 11

Prediction Game - Will Yaremi find a fitting ‘cap’?

Vocabulary:

Solemn

Ostentation’

Flamboyance

Sonorous

Valour

Progenitors

Minstrels

Arduous

Discordant



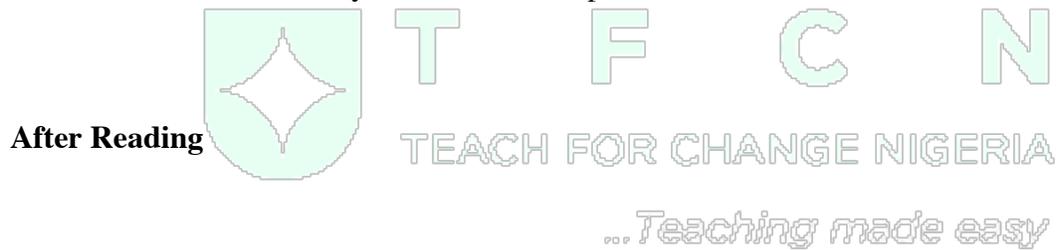
T F C N

TEACH FOR CHANGE NIGERIA

...Teaching made easy

While Reading

1. What are the surrounding villages of Kufi? Answer: Ope, Idiogun, Olusokun, Koleeyan and Bankesa.
2. What is the significance of the cap-picking ceremony?
3. Is it okay that the village decided when widows should take a new husband? How do you think this must make them feel?
4. What are the demands of traditions from a widow? Likely answer: To forgive all the maltreatments they received and remarry.
5. Would you really consider the treatment of widows in the book a 'guiding light' capable of 'transforming behaviours'?
6. Do you think Yaremi would have picked a cap just to satisfy the audience?
7. What was Yaremi's final decision?
8. What does this tell you of the kind of person she is?



1. 'Let us, women of this land, learn to be humble, meek and submissive, and be ready, at all times to accommodate our men.' Explain how this statement by the ex-widows relates to the central idea (theme) of Subjugation of Women.
2. In your notebook, write down examples of the maltreatments widow received in Kufi as listed by the three ex-widows, Dedewe, Fayoyin and Radeke. Turn and share your answer with a seatmate.
3. With the use of illustration, describe the three caps displayed for Yaremi's choice.
4. In three paragraphs, describe the difference between Yaremi as a widow and the three ex-widows, Dedewe, Fayoyin and Radeke.

Chapter 12

Prediction Game: What do you think will happen to Yaremi now that the village is furious at her for walking away and defying customs?

Vocabulary

Rivulet

Machinations

Adversaries

Perplexities

Gunnugun

Elulu

Intermediaries

Ostracised

annihilated



T F C N

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...Teaching made easy

While Reading

1. What happened to Yaremi's popularity after her refusal to pick a cap?
2. What idea did Yaremi think of to get away from the vicious eyes of the people of Kufi?
3. Why was Yaremi sure she would triumph in the end?
4. Olokun is a Yoruba Orisha for _____?
5. What is the story about Aye and why would Yaremi pray against it?
6. Why did Yaremi begin tending her husband's grave two times a day?

7. Find out the meaning of ogbo and ogba.
8. Why was Yaremi told during her courtship with Ajumobi that their marriage wouldn't last?
9. What are some of the ridiculous tales you have heard?
10. What did the rumours say will happen to Yaremi?
11. What was Yaremi's final resolve?

After Reading

1. Based on what we've read in this chapter, do you think Ajumobi was a good husband? Why or why not? Divide class into three groups (depending on the number of students in the class) and have them write their points, supporting each with an evidence (quote) from the text. The group should select one person who will do the presentation.
2. Yaremi always reminisces times with her husband. This is a literary technique called the flashback. Explain how Flashback is used in this chapter.
3. Based on Yaremi's reminisces, design a character trait for Ajumobi. Does he remind you of any man you know? (Character traits are aspects of a person's behaviour, often labeled with descriptive adjectives. Students should be able to make a list of character traits that can be associated with Ajumobi and then develop these traits into full paragraphs, with quotes from the text supporting their answers in each paragraph. A picture is a bonus that can be added to the work to make it fun and creative. The goal is to teach students how to write about characters.)

Chapter 13

Prediction Game: Will Yaremi really leave her husband's village for her hometown?

Vocabulary

Mien

Galvanise

Apprehension

Whimpering

Propped

Radiant

Emerged

implication

While Reading



1. Who protested Yaremi's re-marriage?
2. In Kufi, a person's first child is considered to be what?
3. Do your parents have same relationship with the first child in your home? Describe your relationship with your parents.
4. How do you think Yaremi felt seeing her daughter?
5. Segi came to Kufi to discuss the issues pertaining her mother's remarriage. She asked many pertinent questions like, 'was a second marriage really necessary? Was mama ready to play the role of a stepmother? ... how was Mama going to get rid of the taunting memories of the past and settle down to a brand-new life?' Do you think these mattered to the elders of Kufi?
6. Who was unfazed by all the happenings?
7. What did Woye get busy with?
8. What impact did the preschool age have on him?

9. How do we know Woye is ready for formal education?
10. What school did Segi pick for her son?
11. How long has Woye lived with Yaremi?
12. What are some of the stories that Woye now know from living with Yaremi?
13. Segi's husband village is _____?
14. Why was Yaremi sad about Woye leaving for school?

After Reading

1. Yaremi compares her feelings about Woye's departure to stitching, 'It was like stitching a needle of pain into the heart!' What figure of speech is used and what does she mean?
2. What are some of the things you did as a child to keep you busy and distract you from the happenings in the house?
3. Imagine you're Segi. Would you take your mother's stand against the whole village? Explain the reason for your choice.

Chapter 14

Prediction Game: How would Yaremi get through life now that Woye is gone?

Vocabulary

Enmeshed

Prodigal

Intricate

Succumb

Frivolous

Taverns

Freak

Crooked

Maneuvering

Query

Countenance

Sublet

Swoon

While Reading



1. What changed Yaremi's plans of packing out of Kufi?
2. What was Yaremi's number one choice place for migration?
3. Why was Alani called a 'prodigal son'?
4. Why was Alani scolded by Uncle Deyo?
5. Uncle Deyo called him a freak. What does 'freak' mean?
6. What did Yaremi set Alani to do?
7. Was Alani eager to take on the farm work his father left behind? Cite an evidence (quote) from the text to show this.
8. What do you think of Uncle Deyo, is he proud or just a good man trying to assist his nephew?
9. What did Alani's father's farmland look like?
10. According to customs, what is the duty of a son?
11. Do you think Alani is able to take up this task?

12. What reasons did Alani give for not being able to work on the farm? What did he say he was busy with?
13. What did he suggest Yaremi can do with his father's farmland?
14. What did Alani say was his plan for his mother?
15. What happened to Yaremi upon listening to her son?
16. What worsened Yaremi's state after her son left?
17. What did the villagers conclude was Yaremi's punishment for defying the 'traditional widowhood injunctions'?
18. Did Yaremi agree to the verdict?
19. Who was her anger directed at?
20. What was Yaremi's decision?
21. The last paragraph of the text says, 'She threw off the ipele, which circled her neck.' What do you think 'ipele' would mean?



...Teaching made easy

After Reading

1. 'The sudden exit of Woye was, to her, like the loss of a vital part of the human body - one eye, one ear, or one kidney.' What does this analogy mean? Have you ever missed someone in similar way?
2. The author writes, 'Her eyes dimmed with tears of accumulated injustice.' Do you think the customs and traditions of Kufi had been just to Yaremi? Discuss. Remember to cite quotes from the text as evidence.
3. An allusion is a figure of speech that refers to a well-known story, event, person or object in order to make a comparison in the readers' minds. The author calls Alani a 'prodigal son' and this could be compared to the Parable of the Prodigal Son in the Bible. In other words, the author makes use of Biblical Allusion. Compare Alani's story to the story of the prodigal son in the Bible.

4. The author writes, ‘...She was down. But definitely not out! A fresh surge of determination seized her.’ Describe Yaremi as a strong, assertive woman, citing other examples from the text.



Post Reading Activities

These are some projects you can assign students when you're done studying the text as a class. The idea is to engage students in something fun, practical, extracurricular and problem-solving. Projects can be done in groups, as a whole class or individually.

1. If you had the power to stop the maltreatment, seclusion and degradation of widows in your immediate surrounding, what would you do? Think about writing a petition demanding fair treatment of widows and women. Convince your schoolmates and teachers to sign it. Next, make suggestions of the kind of bills that can be passed into law to solve the issues. Ask your Government teacher for help. (Teachers, you can take this project a notch higher by planning a field trip to a motherless babies' home with items after students are done with the petition.)
2. Write a letter to the author of *Lonely Days* sharing your thoughts on the book, asking him questions on diction, style and themes as used in the text and giving him suggestions on how to make the book a better read for you and why. Teachers, if you can, please find author's address and post the letters. You might be lucky enough to get a reply, if you ask for it and students will be happy to get letters from an author they have read!
3. Yaremi made a difference by standing for herself, speaking up against the treatment of women in the text and maybe in future, widows and women in Kufi would be accorded more respect. If you had the opportunity to speak up against certain ills in your community, what would they be and what can you do to change them? Write a five-paragraph speech and do a presentation before the class/school.
4. What traditions or customs in your village do you think needs reforming? Explain reasons for your choice and suggest what can be done to change them.
5. Write and perform a one-page script on what you think could have happened to Yaremi and other widows in Kufi if the book didn't end where it did.



THE AUTHOR

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