

The River Between

Chapter 6

1. Why does Nyambura feel guilty when she thinks of the upcoming circumcision?
2. Why does Muthoni feel distraught?
3. How does Nyambura react to her sister's news?
4. Why does Muthoni feel that her father's ideas about circumcision are hypocritical?
5. How will Muthoni proceed with her plans?
6. Again, Ngugi wa Thiong'o uses foreshadowing. What does the bad omen tell us?

Chapter 7

- ec 1. Discuss the symbolism used in the following passage:

Joshua's house was different. His was a tin-roofed rectangular building standing quite distinctly by itself on the ridge. The tin roof was already decaying and let in rain freely, so on top of the roof could be seen little scraps of sacking that covered the very bad parts. The building, standing so distinctly and defiantly, was perhaps an indication that the isolation of Makuyu from the rest of the world was being broken down (28).

2. Discuss the irony of Joshua's tirade against Mugo wa Kibiro on p. 29.

3. What has caused Joshua to overcome his fear of returning to his Gikuyu village?

4. Explain Ngugi wa Thiong'o's use of plot structure here. He has just introduced Muthoni and her moral dilemma and now introduces Joshua to the reader. How does this affect the reader?

ec 5. What is Ngugi wa Thiong'o's purpose in mentioning Christmas and the initiation rites in the same sentence on p.30?

ec 6. What is the significance of Joshua's view of himself as someone who would lead the people out of Egypt and to the Promised Land?

7. Why does Joshua beat Miriamu?

8. Why are the people of the ridges growing angry at Joshua?

Chapter 8

1. Discuss Miriamu's inner conflict.

2. As you read this chapter, be alert to the harsh verbs Ngugi uses to describe Joshua's interactions with his family members:

Three of these are:

A.

B.

C.

3. Why does Joshua say "From that day Muthoni ceased to exist for him" and "Let her go back to Egypt. He, Joshua, would travel, on, on to the new Jerusalem"?

Chapter 9

- ec 1. What does the great harvest before the famine allude to in the bible?
2. Chege believes, on page 38, that there are ways other than taking up guns to beat the white man. What, do you think, is he referring to?
3. What is the significance of Waiyaki's reluctance at the ceremonial dance?
4. What, according to Waiyaki, is Livingstone's great fault?
5. Why does Muthoni's rebellion have such a great impact on Waiyaki?
6. What does Waiyaki yearn for at the end of this chapter?

Chapter 10

- ec 1. Explain the symbolism of the mist covering the ridges.
- ec 2. What does the river stand for in this first paragraph? Why is the water cold?
3. What is the significance of the blood sinking into the soil?
4. Why do the Gikuyu feel so hopeless in Muthoni's illness?

Chapter 11

1. What is the significance of the following quotation: "Waiyaki.....tell Nyambura I see Jesus. And I am a woman, beautiful in the tribe....(53)."

2. Explain the reference to Lot and his wife:

3. How does Chege see Muthoni's death? Why is he worried?

4. How is the death perceived at Siriana?

5. How has Livingstone changed in his time at Siriana?

6. Why does Livingstone think he will be blamed for Muthoni's death?

7. Why does Livingstone believe that there is a war on now?

Questions 6-11