



10th Grade Summer Reading Guide

Chiminanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*

This summer we will read Chiminanda Ngozi Adichie's debut novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), a much acclaimed *bildungsroman*, or coming-of-age novel. Adichie is a Nigerian-American writer and intellectual, and she has won many awards for her books. She has given TED Talks, spoken at elite universities, and one of her TEDx Talks was sampled by Beyoncé (*Flawless*).

NB: *Purple Hibiscus* includes many references to and descriptions of physical and emotional abuse. We acknowledge that this content may be difficult. We also encourage you to care for your safety and well-being. Abuse of any kind is serious and never the victim's fault.

Introduction

Purple Hibiscus is set in Nigeria. Nigeria, a country on the west coast of Africa, has a long history and it maintains a powerful presence in the modern world. It can be easy to overlook those countries that aren't in our immediate view or that don't easily align with our own traditions and cultural norms, but it is naive to think that Nigeria doesn't impact our lives, even if we aren't aware of it. A large oil producing state, Nigeria has also been a long simmering cauldron of terrorism, a significant power in African and global politics, and a major source of culture--on this last point we should pause: Nigeria has the third largest film industry in the world (India's is the biggest; America's is the second largest); Nigeria has produced a string of literary lights and thinkers, and the tough realities of its post-colonial society are becoming more frequent topics of conversation thanks to writers and public intellectuals such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. And it is not just because of Nigeria's intersections with modern America that we should consider its literature, history, and art. The contributions to global culture and history by this hugely populous nation merit study on their own.



During the 19th century, Great Britain colonized Nigeria. In the 19th century, palm oil was a high-demand commodity for the British. Palm oil, while occasionally used in cooking, was desirable as a lubricating agent for the many machines that were taking over production during Britain's industrial boom; it was also used in soap production, especially in Manchester. Nigeria was a huge producer of the stuff, and this drew the British deeper

into the area economically after they outlawed [the slave trade](#) in 1807. Indeed, the prohibition on slave trading was the perfect in-road for the UK's interest in more "legitimate" markets in West Africa.

As time went on, palm oil remained important, but the slave trade continued to be a problem. The local kings along the Bight of Benin maintained a black market that the British (and [even the US](#)) were keen to stop. Further, the American Civil War had an impact on the global cotton market, which, to some degree, Nigerian cotton production helped shore up. The British, as you can imagine, wanted to ramp up control in the region, both for access to raw materials and to impede the slave trade.

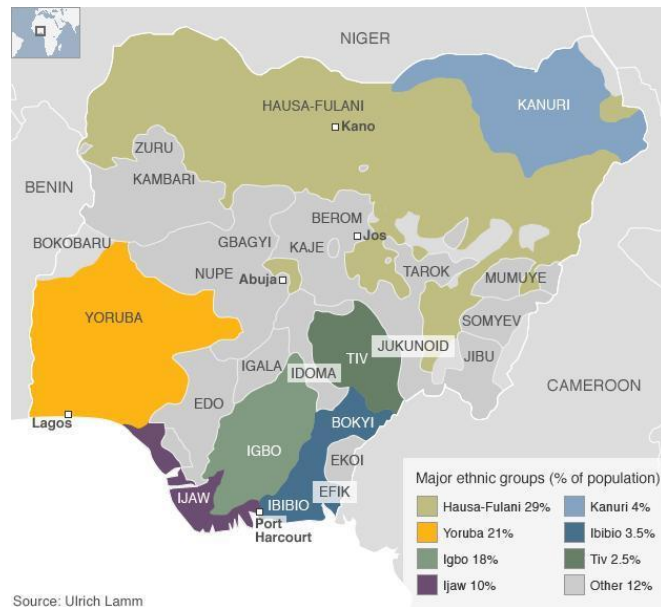
In 1861, after a military occupation of Lagos (Nigeria's largest city and major port; pr. LAY-gos), the British forced one of the local kings, King Docemo, to give Lagos over to England *in perpetuity*. This created the Lagos Colony, which was ruled directly by the British. As they did with other of their colonies, the British made use of "[indirect rule](#)" in their administration of northern Nigeria. Because authority no longer came from Nigerian people but rather the colonial system, this put these local leaders at odds with Nigerians. This system of indirect rule was rooted largely in the British racist belief that the "civilization" of Nigeria depended on British control. Therefore, in the British mind, indirect rule was in the best interest of Nigeria. Generally speaking, the British did not interfere that much locally and felt that Nigerian leaders were in the best position to make decisions. Of course, those same local leaders now worked for the British, so whatever autonomy they enjoyed, they still answered to the colonial authorities and catered to colonial needs.

Great Britain maintained its colonial grip on Nigeria until 1960. Independence was complicated, as there were many groups with contradicting interests, and many people who therefore were vying for power. But it was clear to those who wanted a free Nigeria that unity was essential. Even in 1947, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, future Nigerian prime minister, recognized the problems with division in his country: "Nigeria has existed as one country only on paper. It is still far from united. The country is inhabited by peoples and tribes who speak different languages, who have different religions, different customs and traditions and entirely different historical backgrounds in their way of life, and who have attained different stages of development.... We do not want our Southern neighbours to interfere in *our* development." And so it is perhaps no surprise that in the year following independence, corruption and cronyism plagued Nigerian politics. Following a 1966 military coup d'état and counter coup, Nigeria fell to [civil war](#) in 1967 when the state of Biafra tried to secede from the rest of Nigeria. This civil war led to millions of massacred Nigerians. Although Adichie's novel takes place about twenty years after the Biafran conflict, its effects reverberate throughout the text, as does the impact of the colonial period.

Purple Hibiscus is set during the 1980s, when the wounds of the coups and the civil war of the late 1960s were still healing. Following a short-lived democratic government (1979-1983), Nigeria suffered several more violent coups. These coups, especially the 1983 coup that ended the democratically elected government, directly inform the political backdrop of the novel. This was a period when Nigeria was a police state. It was also a time of difficult changes in Nigeria's economy, changes that benefitted people in the south but that hurt people in the interior and north of the country. A vast majority of the Nigerian population relies on agriculture for their

income, but as a percentage of GDP, agriculture has steadily declined since the 1970s. Oil is king. Today oil makes up 90% of all federal revenue in Nigeria, but even at the time of *Purple Hibiscus*, oil constituted around 82% of federal revenue. This creates significant wealth and development gaps within Nigeria society, and as you might guess, it fosters resentment among the people.

One of the central challenges that Nigeria has faced for centuries is tension between its three most prominent ethnic groups: the Yoruba, the Hausa, and the Igbo. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Kambili and her family are Igbo. Pay attention to the different characters' relationships with their ethnicity—Igbo language and culture are important sites of identity expression in the novel. You will also encounter many Igbo words/expressions. A short guide to these phrases is included below. There is also a compendium of Catholic terms that may not be familiar to all readers. One does not need to look up all of these terms and phrases to understand this beautiful novel. It is recommended, though, for a greater appreciation of Adichie's text, that you keep these lists of terms close at hand as you read in case you want to consult it.



Guiding Questions by Chapter (adapted from mdhumanities.org)

Chapter 1:

- 1) The narrator describes the religious traditions her family follows every Palm Sunday. Reread the first paragraph, analyze the significance of the characters who are participating in the traditions of Palm Sunday, and predict what those roles might mean throughout the novel.
- 2) The narrator describes her mother's actions after Papa breaks the figurines and adds imagery of her mother two weeks prior "when her swollen eye was still the black-purple color of an overripe avocado..." (10-11). What can we infer from this description of Kambili's mother? What can we infer from the casual way Kambili inserts this description?
- 3) What is the purpose and effect of the following simile that the narrator uses to describe Jaja's defiance toward his father: "Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Auntie Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus: rare, fragrant with the undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom from the one the crowds waving green leaves chanted at Government Square after the coup. A freedom to be, to do" (16)?

Chapter 2:

- 4) Because the Igbo are a patriarchal society, marriage holds the utmost significance in order to procreate and continue the family line. However, it is common for a man who has a barren wife to procreate with a woman other than his wife, or even take a second wife. Why is it significant that Mama pointed out Papa's rejection of other women to her own children? (20). What does the reader learn about Mama's character through these comments?
- 5) What does the reader learn about Kambili's perception of Mama and Papa's love for one another? (21). Why is this significant for the reader?
- 6) The military coups of Nigeria were both successful and unsuccessful since the country's independence from the British Empire in 1960. The coups discussed in the novel were a permanent feature of Nigerian culture from 1966-1999. What did Papa mean when he stated "But what we Nigerians needed was not soldiers ruling us, what we needed was a renewed democracy"? (25).

Chapter 3:

- 7) Adichie makes it clear in this chapter that Nigeria is now ruled by a military regime, and therefore the soldiers can act with exemption from punishment. How is the theme of freedom versus tyranny illustrated through Kambili's thoughts and comments in this chapter?
- 8) What does the idea of a "love burn" (31) tell us about Kambili and Papa's relationship? How does this foreshadow the way Papa treats his family members throughout the rest of the novel?
- 9) Analyze the impact of the following simile: "Silence hung over the table like the blue-black clouds in the middle of rainy season" (32). What tone does it create and why is it significant?
- 10) The paragraph immediately after Kambili and Jaja scrubbing Mama's blood off of the floor is about an execution that was shown on television. What is the significance of this event and the characters' reaction to it following what they just witnessed with their parents?
- 11) For what, in Papa's eyes, did Mama need to be forgiven? What is ironic about Papa's beliefs and his actions?

Chapter 4:

- 12) Why was Ade (pr. ah-DEH) Coker arrested? What are the implications of his arrest in regards to the Head of State using violence to suppress and discourage free speech?
- 13) Adichie uses the rhetorical device anaphora, or the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses, when she writes "I needed him to touch the back of my neck..." and "I need him to hug me..." and "I needed him to smile at me..." (39). What is the purpose and effect of this device?

- 14) What mood does Kambili's statement, "I was stained by failure," create for the reader? (39).
- 15) How is the theme of perception versus reality reflected through Kambili and her classmates? How is it reflected through the Achike family thus far in the novel?

Chapter 5:

- 16) Kambili describes her determination to be the first in her class as "balancing a sack of gravel" on her head every day at school and "not being allowed to steady it" with her hand (52). What things in your life have you had to balance to achieve something better for yourself? Can you empathize with the pressure Kambili feels she is under?
- 17) Several times throughout the chapter Papa is called "omelora," or "The One Who Does for the Community" by the villagers (56). Why is he so revered in Abba? Do you think Papa gains something internally from their admiration? Explain.
- 18) What is the significance of Papa's silence when Ade Coker said, "Imagine what the *Standard* would be if we were all quiet"? (58).
- 19) Why are Kambili and Jaja instructed to stay at Papa-Nnukwu's house for only 15 minutes? What does Papa's traditionalist father constantly remind him of?

Chapter 6:

- 20) Auntie Ifeoma comes to visit and when speaking to Mama, calls her "*nwunye m,*" or "my wife" (73). Why is it significant that she accepts Mama in such a way? What does Papa's reaction to that term of endearment tell the reader about his beliefs?
- 21) Why is Auntie Ifeoma's "fearlessness" uncomfortable and forbidding to Kambili? (76). How does Kambili's outlook about Papa change when Ifeoma is interacting with him? How does she disrupt the order of Papa's family?
- 22) List several examples found throughout the chapter that reflect the economic differences between Papa's family and Auntie Ifeoma's family. Why is it important to note these differences? What can the reader infer about Kambili's views about these differences surrounding her family?
- 23) Similar to her classmates, Kambili's cousin Amaka takes her silence and reserve for privilege and snobbishness. Is there some truth to Amaka's and her classmates' assumption? Why is Kambili unable to speak when faced with someone who expresses herself?

- 24) Before picking up Papa-Nnukwu to join on the trip to Ezi Icheke, Kambili explains to her aunt that Papa does not want them to have a relationship with their grandfather because he is a pagan, to which Aunty replies that he is “not a pagan,” but a “traditionalist” (81). Research the difference between paganism and traditionalism in the Igbo culture and analyze why it was important for Aunty to clarify the difference.

Chapter 7:

- 25) As Mass ends, Papa donates money to fund the priest’s new house, and after his donation amount is announced, Papa left “smiling and waving at the many hands that reached out to grasp his white tunic as if touching him would heal them of an illness” (91). Analyze the symbolic figure he seems to represent and the irony of this symbolic depiction.
- 26) Explain Kambili’s metaphorical statement: “I felt, looking at her, that I was helplessly watching precious flaxen sand slip away between my fingers” (93). What theme does this figurative language develop?
- 27) The first revealing example of Papa’s violence occurs when Mama, Jaja, and Kambili are beaten for breaking the Eucharistic fast before church. After the beating, Papa “crushed” Jaja and Kambili into his body to hug them and asked if the “belt hurt” (102). Why does Adichie utilize the word “crushed” to describe a hug? What are other word choices during that violent incident that help create the author’s tone?
- 28) Predict what the following statement foreshadows: “Papa called Aunty Ifeoma two days later. Perhaps he would not have called her if we had not gone to confession that day. And perhaps then we would never have gone to Nsukka and everything would have remained the same” (104).
- 29) What is the significance of Father Benedict’s eyes being described as “the same green shade of a snake...”? (105).
- 30) When Jaja and Kambili discuss wanting to go to Nsukka, why does her throat tighten “at the thought of five days without Papa’s voice, without his footsteps on the stairs”? (108).

Chapter 8:

- 31) What has the reader learned about Kambili thus far through the way she perceives her surroundings and through other people’s views of her? Does the way Kambili narrates the story affect the reader’s perception of Nigeria and the Igbo people? Provide several examples from this chapter for support.
- 32) What are some examples of Amaka’s rejection of the Eurocentric colonial mindset? Why might her viewpoint be significant in relation to the previous question?
- 33) When Aunty Ifeoma laughed about the schedule Papa gave his children to follow while visiting, Kambili’s “mouth felt dry,” her “tongue clinging to the roof” of her mouth (124).

- 34) Why does Kambili yearn for the strict order and silence of her home? How do the family dynamics differ in each household, and why are the differences significant?
- 35) Why are Auntie Ifeoma's hibiscuses purple, rather than another color? Of what are they a result? Why is their existence significant to the story thus far?
- 36) One of the best-known Nigerian musicians is [Fela Ransome Kuti](#), who Amaka plays for Kambili. Kuti, who was educated in England, created Afrobeat, a style of music that blends jazz with traditional African rhythms. He railed against the colonial mentality of his upbringing and advocated for a return to both traditions and democracy. He was arrested, beaten, and tortured several times for openly criticizing the government. The popularity of his music was seen as a threat to the military establishment. Why is it significant that Amaka listens to this type of music rather than the popular music of the time? Does this make her an activist?

Chapter 9:

- 37) What is the opening mood of this chapter, and how is it created by the author?
- 38) What is the significance of Auntie Ifeoma stating to Jaja "Defiance is like marijuana—it is not a bad thing when it is used right" when discussing the legendary king of ethnic Nigerians Jaja of Opobo (144).
- 39) Auntie Ifeoma covers for Jaja when Chima asks him about his deformed finger (145). However, Kambili wonders how her aunt knows about the incident, and Jaja says when Auntie asked, he told her the truth. What is peculiar about Kambili's thoughts regarding telling the truth about these situations? Why does she want to remain loyal to her family's secret?
- 40) How is the motif of governmental corruption interspersed throughout this chapter? Cite several examples, then analyze how the lack of a democratic government directly impacts the rights of the people.
- 41) When the family is dining with Papa-Nnukwu, Obiora comments that "Morality, as well as the sense of taste, is relative" (156). Knowing Papa-Nnukwu's beliefs, do you think he agrees with this notion? Would Papa agree with this? Would Mama? Explain your responses for each character.

Chapter 10:

- 42) After Kambili calls Papa-Nnukwu a heathen again, Auntie Ifeoma wants her to see her grandfather's rituals and to teach her about his faithfulness to his traditionalist beliefs (167-168). How do Kambili's views change after watching the full ritual? Explain.

- 43) Throughout the novel thus far, Adichie explores the oppressive nature of religion, not only on an individual's soul, but also on the hypocritical inclinations in religious groups. Although there are many instances of religious compromise and tolerance, some of the characters struggle with their views. Based on what you have read thus far, what stance do the following characters take on organized religion and why? Papa-Nnukwu, Father Amadi, Obiora, Amaka, Aunty Ifeoma, and Papa.
- 44) Analyze Kambili's internal dialogue when she states: "She seemed so happy, so at peace, and I wondered how anybody around me could feel that way when liquid fire was raging inside of me, when fear was mingling with hope and clutching itself around my ankles"(174).
- 45) How does the conversation with Father Amadi at the football field open the door for Kambili to question her father's rules? Cite examples for support.
- 46) What is significant about Kambili and Jaja's reaction to Papa-Nnukwu's death? Are their reactions expected or unexpected?

Chapter 11:

- 47) After Ade Coker's assassination, Kambili starts to have violent nightmares (207). What is symbolic about Kambili replacing herself in the nightmare for Ade's daughter, and her father for Ade?
- 48) What does Papa mean when he says there are "fake pastors at those mushroom Pentecostal churches"? (208). What can the reader infer about Papa's beliefs and his hypocritical nature?
- 49) What do Mama's figurines, Kambili's painting, and Jaja's purple hibiscus provide for all three characters in a world of unhinged violence?
- 50) What actions and internal dialogue reflect a change in Kambili's feelings toward her father after the violent incident that almost killed her?

Chapter 12:

- 51) After Kambili and Jaja are sent to Aunty Ifeoma's so she can heal, Kambili observes several aspects of nature, such as "the smell of freshness in the air" due to rain, and the air "filling with flapping, water-colored wings" (218). Why are her descriptions of nature emphasized in the first few pages of the chapter, given what she has just experienced with her father?
- 52) Amaka asks Kambili if it was her father who hurt her and, for the first time, she admits to the truth. Why won't Kambili look at Amaka to see her reaction to this response? Does Papa still have "control" over her?
- 53) Kambili overhears Aunty Ifeoma and her friend discussing the leadership at the university, and Obiora explains, "The university becomes a microcosm of the country" (224). Look up the definition of microcosm and analyze what Obiora means in regards to the spread of tyranny.

- 54) Why is Auntie Ifeoma's house searched? Why is she warned by the special security men to "be careful"? (231).
- 55) What is the significance of Jaja killing the chicken with a "precision...a singlemindedness that was cold, clinical"? (235). How has Kambili begun to see her brother? Is their bond as strong as it was in the past? Why or why not?

Chapter 13:

- 56) How is the story about Professor Okafor's son a lesson about oppression and tyranny?
- 57) For the first time in the novel, the reader sees Auntie Ifeoma using violence to reprimand her child (245). Are Auntie Ifeoma and Papa more similar than it seems? Or does this act of violence represent something other than Papa's forms of discipline?
- 58) Mama flees to Auntie Ifeoma's house after Papa breaks a small table over her belly, killing the fetus Mama was carrying (248), and after Mama speaks with Papa, "she looked like a different woman from the one who had come out of the taxi that morning" (250). Why does Mama continue to make excuses for Papa's violence?
- 59) As they arrive at their home in Enugu, Jaja notes "the purple hibiscuses are about to bloom" (253). What do they symbolize? Why does Jaja mention them right before the flashback to Chapter 1?

Chapter 14:

- 60) Knowing what you learned in Chapter 1 about Palm Sunday, how is the first paragraph contradictory to what the religious day is supposed to represent?
- 61) How have Nigerian politics also "silenced" Auntie Ifeoma? What is significant about the fact that the women in the novel are silenced at some point or another?
- 62) Due to Papa's increasing weakness and loss of familial control, Jaja, Kambili, and Mama all seem to change due to the shift in power. Discuss each of the character's growing assertions due to the altered family dynamics.
- 63) Analyze the significance of the personification of the rain in conjunction with Igbo traditions and beliefs: "It stopped as quickly as it had started, and the sun came out again, mildly, as if yawning after a nap" (266).

Chapter 15:

- 64) Auntie Ifeoma took all of the children and Father Amadi to see the apparition at Aokpe where "a local girl started to see the vision of the Beautiful Woman" (274). How is this renewed religious faith separate from what Kambili was taught by Papa?

- 65) Is Kambili's love for Father Amadi a true love or an immature love? Is it unrequited, or is it squelched for another reason?
- 66) It is made clear by the lack of dialogue that Jaja has changed from the beginning of the novel, and how he is stoic about his aunt and cousins leaving for America, as "finality hung in the air, heavy and hollow" (279). What exactly do you believe he is rebelling against? Use examples throughout the text for support.
- 67) The last two scenes of this chapter are a joyful, climatic experience with her cousins on top of Odim Hill and the shocking death of her immortal father. Why do you suppose they are juxtaposed with one another? What is the purpose and effect of the juxtaposition of mood?

Chapter 16:

- 68) When Kambili tries to communicate with Jaja through eye contact, they are blank "like a window with its shutter drawn across" (289). Why?
- 69) Kambili comments on Jaja's frustrations about taking care of Mama, and she says "God knows best. God works in mysterious ways," and then thinks, "Papa would be proud that I had said that" (289). Why is she still searching for Papa's approval, even though he is now gone?
- 70) Jaja responds to Kambili's previous comment and asks "Why did He [God] have to murder his own son so we would be saved? Why didn't He just go ahead and save us?" (289). What connection is he making between the death of Jesus and his Papa?
- 71) Does Jaja suffer more than Kambili throughout the novel? Support your response with examples from the text.
- 72) What is the significance of tea throughout the novel? Think back to the idea of the "love burn" from chapter 3 and then the way Papa dies. Can you think of any other examples where tea or kettles play an important role or symbolize something?

Chapter 17:

- 73) How has Papa's abuse created "a different silence" that might never be repaired between Jaja, Kambili, and Mama?
- 74) Do Jaja's upcoming release from prison and the death of the Head of State both represent hope for the family and for Nigeria? Or do these events represent a false hope that has been a part of the Achike family for the majority of their lives?
- 75) Identify and analyze a passage in the novel that reflects Kambili's growth in her understanding of her father's strengths and weaknesses.

Vocabulary from First Half of the Novel

1. **adjoin** (58)—(v.) to be next to and joined with (a room, piece of land, or building).
 - a. SYN. border, conjoin, meet, be contiguous with.
2. **ashen** (30)—(adj.) pale gray, like ash; (of a person's face) very pale with shock, fear, or illness.
 - a. SYN. wan, pasty, sallow, colorless, blanched, ghostly, waxen.
3. **benediction** (25)—(n.) the utterance or bestowing of a blessing esp. after a religious service.
 - a. SYN. blessing, prayer, invocation, grace.
 - b. ANT. malediction, curse.
4. **colonial** (13)—(adj.) relating to or characteristic of a colony or the political and cultural attributes of a socioeconomic system administered by a occupying power in which local people are subject to the prerogatives of a foreign ruling class; (n.) a person who is a native or inhabitant of a colony.
5. **coup** (5, 24)—(n.) a highly successful plan or stratagem; a sudden takeover of power. Note: often heard in the term *coup d'état*.
 - a. SYN. masterstroke, tour de force; overthrow, mutiny, insurgece.
 - b. ANT. blunder, gaffe, faux pas.
6. **gait** (33)—(n.) a person's manner of walking.
 - a. SYN. walk, bearing, carriage.
7. **heathen** (62)—(n.) (chiefly derogatory) a person who does not belong to a widely held religion, as regarded by someone who *does* belong to such a religion; (a person regarded as lacking moral principles or cultural sophistication; (adj.) of or relating to such a person.
 - a. SYN. pagan (see below)
8. **intercede** (60)—(v.) to plead on behalf of someone else; to serve as a go-between in a disagreement.
 - a. SYN. intervene, mediate.
9. **iridescent** (28)—(adj.) showing luminous colors that seem to change when seen from different angles. (Note: In classical Greek mythology, Iris, goddess of rainbows, was responsible for transmitting messages to the gods.)
10. **mandate** (10, 100)—(n.) an authoritative command, an official order or authorization; (v.) to issue such an order.
 - a. SYN. (n.) directive, authority, edict, injunction; (v.) instruct, order, direct, require.
11. **pagan** (59)—(adj.) a person whose religious beliefs do not conform to those of Christianity; (n.) one who does not worship the deity as described in the Bible. Note: archaic, often used pejoratively; however, some modern practitioners of nature-based or pre-Christian religions cheerfully refer to themselves as *pagans* or *neopagans*.
 - a. SYN. [pej.] heathen, idolator, infidel.
12. **paltry** (67)—(adj.) trifling, insignificant; inferior, trashy; mean, despicable.
 - a. SYN. measly, meager, piddling, trivial.
 - b. ANT. gigantic, immense, substantial, significant.

13. **presumptuous** (78)—(adj.) assuming rights, privileges or status in excess of what real circumstances would indicate.
 - a. SYN. audacious, brazen, impudent, insolent, overfamiliar, immodest.
 - b. ANT. demure, unpretentious, retiring.
14. **refurbish** (46)—(v.) to renovate and redecorate something (esp. a building).
 - a. SYN: recondition, restore, redevelop, upgrade, retrofit.
15. **resound** (32)—(v.) to fill a place with sound; to be loud enough to echo; to be filled or echo with a particular sound.
 - a. SYN. echo, reverberate, ring out; resonate.
16. **secular** (6, 300)—(adj.) (of attitudes or activities or systems of belief) without religious or spiritual basis; not subject to or bound to religious law.
 - a. SYN. lay (as in *layperson*); temporal, worldly, profane, areligious.
 - b. ANT. holy, religious.
17. **thwart** (32)—(v.) to oppose successfully, to prevent the completion of something (such as a plan), to frustrate.
 - a. SYN. derail, foil, hinder, impede, stonewall.
 - b. ANT. assist, abet, facilitate, further.
18. **tinge** (58)—(v) to imbue slightly with color; to have a slight influence on the feeling or quality of something; (n.) a trace of color, a tendency toward something.
 - a. SYN. (v.) tint, color, stain; affect, flavor, taint; (n.) tone, shade, hue; trace, hint, note, modicum, strain, streak, vein.

Vocabulary from Second Half of the Novel

1. **constrict** (280)—(v.) to make smaller or narrower, draw together, squeeze; to stop or cause to falter.
 - a. SYN. contract, curb, restrain. ANT. enlarge, dilate, expand.
2. **desecrate** (102)—(v.) to commit sacrilege upon, treat irreverently; to contaminate, pollute.
 - a. SYN. debase, defile, dishonor, violate.
 - b. ANT. revere, honor, venerate, consecrate.
3. **extort** (104)—(v.) to obtain something by force, threats, or other unfair means.
 - a. SYN. wrest, extract, blackmail.
4. **flaccid** (101)—(adj.) limp, not firm; lacking vigor or effectiveness.
 - a. SYN. soft, slack, flabby, drooping.
 - b. ANT. hard, solid; spirited.
5. **forebear** (183)—(n.) an ancestor.
 - a. SYN. antecedent, progenitor, forefather.
 - b. ANT. descendant

6. **heretical** (279)—(adj.) believing in or practicing religious heresy; embracing beliefs at odds with generally accepted opinion.
 - a. SYN. rebellious, iconoclastic, heterodox.
 - b. ANT. orthodox, conventional.
7. **indigenous** (118, 267)—(adj.) native, originating in the country or region where (something or someone) is found; occurring naturally in a particular place.
 - a. SYN. endemic, domestic, homegrown.
 - b. ANT. foreign, transplanted (e.g. invasive species), imported, exoteric, alien.
8. **microcosm** (224)—(n.) a miniature world or universe; a group or system viewed as a miniature or model of a larger group or system.
 - a. SYN. epitome.
 - b. ANT. macrocosm, cosmos, totality.
9. **pidgin** (231)—(n.) a grammatically simplified form of a language with a limited vocabulary, used for communication between people who do not share a language; a simplified version of a language used by a non-native speaker. (Pidgins arise when populations with different languages encounter one another; they are not native languages but may borrow elements of the local language.)
10. **pilgrimage** (137)—(n.) a journey to a place associated with someone or something well known or regarded with reverence (e.g. a religious site); the journey of a pilgrim. SYN. crusade, expedition, hajj, mission.
11. **resonant** (228)—(adj.) (of sound) deep, clear, and continuing to ring; filled with or resounding with (a sound); able to evoke enduring images or memories.
 - a. SYN. vibrant, sonorous, full-bodied, reverberating, echoing; suggestive, expressive, redolent.
12. **sacrilege** (144)—(n.) improper or disrespectful treatment of something held sacred.
 - a. SYN. desecration, profanation, defilement.
 - b. ANT. piety, orthodoxy.
13. **sear** (“searing” 298)—(v.) to make or become dry and withered; to char or scorch the surface of something; to harden or make unfeeling.
 - a. SYN. char, parch, singe.
14. **sporadic** (184)—(adj.) occurring at irregular intervals; having no set plan or order.
 - a. SYN. intermittent, spasmodic.
 - b. ANT. steady, continuous, uninterrupted.
15. **stringent** (299)—(adj.) strict, severe, rigorously or urgently binding or compelling.
 - a. SYN. stern, rigorous, tough, urgent.
 - b. ANT. lenient, lax, mild, permissive.
16. **unrest** (229)—(n.) a state of dissatisfaction, agitation or disturbance in a group of people, often involving public demonstrations or disorder.
 - a. SYN. anarchy, disturbance, turmoil, dissent, strife, uprising.
 - b. ANT. peace.

17. **vacuous** (“vacuously” 302)—(adj.) mindless, showing a lack of thought or intelligence; devoid of matter, substance or meaning.
- SYN. inane, insipid, fatuous, vapid, empty.
 - ANT. incisive, perceptive, intelligent.
18. **viscous** (143)—(adj.) having a gelatinous or gluey texture between solid and liquid, lacking in easy fluidity or movement.
- SYN. thick, sticky.
 - ANT. watery, aqueous.
19. **wry** (150, 283)—(adj.) using or expressing clever, ironic or mocking humor; of a facial expression conveying disappointment or annoyance.
- SYN: sardonic, droll; irked, vexed, piqued, peeved.

Archaic, obscure, or infrequently used

timbre (69)—(n.)

regalia (68)—(n.)

lest (4)—(prep.)

Glossary of Igbo Words, Expressions

Abi: “Right?” “Isn’t it?”

Amam: “I know”

Amarom: “I don’t know”

Anam asi: “Am saying”

Biko: “Please”

Bunie ya enu...: “Lift him/her high up” ---referring to Jesus Christ

Chelu nu: Hold your horses (idiom)

Chelukwa!: Hold on a moment

Ebye: “Yes,” “yeah”

Ekwuzina: “Stop saying that!”

Ezi okwu: “Is that true?” “Honestly?” “It is true!”

Gini mezia: “What happened then?”

Ifukwa: “you see!” “Do you see?”

Ke kwanu?: “How are you?”

Kedu: How are you? (singular)

Kedu nu?: How are you all? (plural)

Mba: “No.”

Neke!: “Look!”

Nne, ngwa: “Come on, dear.” *Nne* literally means “mother;” *Ngwa* means “come on” “here you go/take this” “begin”

Nno: “Welcome” (singular)

Nno nu: “Welcome” (plural)

O di egwu: “Yeah! It is scary!”

O gini?: “What is it?”

O maka: “It is so beautiful.”

O zugo: “That’s enough,” “Let’s go”

Umu m: “My children”

Igbo Terms and Cultural References

Agbogbo: short for Agboghobia; young lady, maiden

Agwonatumba: "The snake that strikes the tortoise" (i.e. despite the shell/shield)--the name of a masquerade at Aro festival

Aja: sand or the ritual of appeasing an oracle

Aku: winged termites, common during the rainy season; also means wealth.

Akwam ozu: Funeral/ grief ritual or send-off ceremonies for the dead

Aro: Spear referring to Aro-Igbo people, short for Arochukwu

Aro festival: The main cultural festival of Aro people known for its fierce masquerades

Asusu anya: Eye language

Atilogu: A form of Igbo acrobatic dance performance

Atulu: Sheep/lamb--insinuating stupidity, dumb, a fool

Azu: Fish

Big man, Big Oga, or Big people: Powerful, wealthy, influential, high status in the community, large (ex. Head of state)

Chukwu: God

Dim: my husband

Kwa: also

Kobo: Nigerian Currency, cents

Harmattan: dry, dusty West African trade wind, blows south from Sahara into Gulf of Guinea between the end of November and the middle of March (winter)

Mmuo: spirits, separated between good and bad

NEPA: Nigerian Electric Power Company

Naira: Nigerian Currency, dollar

Nwunye m: My wife

O bugodi: dispel

Ogbunambala: "He that kills in public." No secrecy or privacy. He who loves to publicly disgrace or shame another

Okada: motorcycle taxi

Omelora: one who does for the community

Umunna: "ancestors;" extended group of paternal kinsmen; extended family

Unu: you (plural)

Glossary of Catholic Terms

1. **Act of Contrition:** A private devotional prayer as part of a daily examination of conscious
2. **Advent Sunday:** The 4th Sunday before Christmas day, it marks the first day of Advent - the season when preparations are made for the coming of Jesus Christ
3. **Articles of Vatican I, II:** Vatican I: refers to the ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church who met in 1870 to adopt the first dogmatic constitution on the catholic faith
4. **Vatican II:** The second ecumenical council of the Church convened in 1962 and ended in 1965
5. **Ash Wednesday:** The first day of Lent, 46 days before Easter. Lent is a period of fasting and prayer in preparation for Easter
6. **Ave Maria:** a.k.a. **Hail Mary:** a traditional Roman Catholic prayer or song upholding the sacredness of Mary mother of Jesus

7. **Benediction:** A short invocation for divine help, blessing or guidance, usually at the end of worship service
8. **Blessed Sacrament:** Refers to the Host and wine after they have been consecrated in the sacrament of the Eucharist (ceremony commemorating the Last Supper), or Holy Communion
9. **Catechism/Catechist:** Catechist: Someone who engages in instruction of Catholic doctrine in the form of Q&A
10. **Catholic chaplaincy:** A chaplain is typically a priest or pastor serving a group of people who are not organized as a mission or church, or who are unable to attend church for various reasons; such as health, confinement, or military or civil duties
11. **Communion:** That part of the Eucharistic rite in which the consecrated bread and wine are distributed to participants
12. **Confession:** When individuals confess their sins before a priest and are absolved
13. **Confirmation:** A rite of initiation bestowing full membership of the church Feast of the
14. **Epiphany:** A Christian feast day which celebrates the revelation of God in human form in the person of Jesus Christ First Holy
15. **Communion:** A Roman Catholic ceremony for the first reception of the sacrament of the Eucharist
16. **Good Friday:** The Friday before Easter Sunday. It commemorates the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Golgotha
17. **Holy water:** Water that has been blessed and set aside for baptism
18. **Knights of St. John:** The Knights of Saint John are those members who commit to undertaking a pilgrimage to the Cathedral or Co-Cathedral of a diocese to pray for the Holy Father, the Bishop of the diocese and his intentions, the auxiliary bishops, priests and all who assist the Bishop in shepherding the faithful of the diocese
19. **Knights of St. Mulumba:** The Knights of Saint Mulumba were founded in Onitsha, Anambra, Nigeria in 1953. Currently, there are 7,689 members. The Supreme Knight of the order is Chief Dr. Fidelis R. C. Ezemenari
20. **Mass for the repose of the soul:** A prayer for the departed that his soul may be forgiven of his sins in the eyes of God
21. **Missal:** A missal is a liturgical book containing all instructions and texts necessary for the celebration of a Catholic Mass throughout the year.
22. **Novenas:** In the Catholic Church, a novena is a devotion consisting of prayer said (most typically) on nine successive days, asking to obtain special graces. These may consist of small prayer books, recitation of the Rosary, or small prayers through the day.
23. **Oblate:** Oblates are everyday people who seek to live extraordinary lives of devotion. Oblates take no binding vows, but they dedicate themselves in a special way to live as balanced Christian people, offering witness to the world of Christ's transformative power. What sets them apart from other devoted Christian people is their special way of living an enriched Christian life according to the Gospel
24. **Palm Sunday:** Palm Sunday is a Christian moveable feast, or holy day which always falls on the Sunday before Easter.

25. **Pentecost Sunday:** Pentecost is the festival when Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost means "fiftieth day." It is celebrated on the Sunday 50 days after Easter.
26. **Peter's Pence:** Peter's Pence is the name given to the financial support offered by the faithful to the Holy Father (Pope) as a sign of their sharing in the concern of the Successor of Peter (the Pope) for the many different needs of the Universal Church and for the relief of those most in need.
27. **Purgatory:** Purgatory is the condition or process of purification or temporary punishment in which the souls of those who die in a state of grace are made ready for heaven.
28. **Rosary:** The Rosary (from Latin rosarium, meaning "rose garden"[1] or "garland of roses"[2]) is a popular traditional Roman Catholic devotion. The term denotes both a set of prayer beads and the devotional prayer itself, which combines vocal (or silent) prayer and meditation
29. **Sacristy:** A sacristy is a room for keeping vestments (such as the alb and chasuble) and other church furnishings, sacred vessels, and parish records.
30. **St. Nicholas:** Nicholas of Myra, a saint and Bishop of Myra (in Lycia, part of modern-day Turkey). Because of the many miracles attributed to his intercession, he is also known as Nicholas the Wonderworker. He had a reputation for secret gift giving, such as putting coins in the shoes of those who left them out for him, and thus became the model for Santa Claus, whose English name comes from the German Sankt Niklaus.
31. **St. Vincent de Paul:** Vincent de Paul (24 April 1581 – 27 September 1660) was a Catholic priest dedicated to serving the poor, who is venerated as a saint.
32. **Unction (Extreme Unction):** Extreme unction is the ritual anointing (pouring, sprinkling, or rubbing of (perfumed) oil) on the seriously ill and the frail elderly. The sacrament is administered to give strength and comfort to the ill and to mystically unite their suffering with that of Christ during his Passion and death.