



CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE: *Americanah*

- 1 **Either** (a) In what ways, and with what effects, does Adichie make hair significant in the novel?
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, analyse the following passage, considering in what ways it is characteristic of Adichie's methods and concerns.

"It doesn't matter what anybody thinks of Obama. The real question is whether white people are ready for a black president," Nathan said.

"I'm ready for a black president. But I don't think the nation is," Pee said.

"Seriously, have you been talking to my mom?" Paula asked her. "She said the exact same thing. If you're ready for a black president, then who exactly is this vague country that isn't ready? People say that when they can't say that *they* are not ready. And even the idea of being ready is ridiculous."

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Ifemelu borrowed those words months later, in a blog post written during the final, frenzied lap of the presidential campaign: "Even the Idea of Being Ready Is Ridiculous." *Does nobody see how absurd it is to ask people if they are ready for a black president? Are you ready for Mickey Mouse to be president? How about Kermit the Frog? And Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer?*

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"My family has impeccable liberal credentials, we've ticked all the right boxes," Paula said, lips turned down in irony, twirling the stem of her empty wineglass. "But my parents were always quick to tell their friends that Blaine was at Yale. As if they were saying he's one of the few good ones."

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"You're being too hard on them, Pauly," Blaine said.

"No, really, didn't you think so?" she asked. "Remember that awful Thanksgiving at my parents' house?"

"You mean how I wanted mac and cheese?"

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Paula laughed. "No, that's not what I mean." But she did not say what she meant and so the memory was left unaided, wrapped in their shared privacy.

Back in Blaine's apartment, Ifemelu told him, "I was jealous."

It was jealousy, the twinge of unease, the unsettledness in her stomach. Paula had the air of a real ideologue; she could, Ifemelu imagined, slip easily into anarchy, stand at the forefront of protests, defying the clubs of policemen and the taunts of unbelievers. To sense this about Paula was to feel wanting, compared to her.

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"There's nothing to be jealous about, Ifem," Blaine said.

"The fried chicken you eat is not the fried chicken I eat, but it's the fried chicken that Paula eats."

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"What?"

"For you and Paula, fried chicken is battered. For me, fried chicken has no batter. I just thought about how you both have a lot in common."

"We have fried chicken in common? Do you realize how loaded fried chicken is as a metaphor here?" Blaine was laughing, a gentle, affectionate laugh. "Your jealousy is kind of sweet, but there is no chance at all of anything going on."

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She knew there was nothing going on. Blaine would not cheat on her. He was too sinewy with goodness. Fidelity came easily to him; he did not turn to glance at pretty women on the street because it did not occur to him. But she was jealous of the emotional remnants that existed between him and Paula, and by the thought that Paula was like him, good like him.

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### Traveling While Black

A friend of a friend, a cool AB with tons of money, is writing a book called *Traveling While Black*. Not just black, he says, but recognizably black because there's all kinds of black and no offense but he doesn't mean those black folk who look Puerto Rican or Brazilian or whatever, he means recognizably black.

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Because the world treats you differently. So here's what he says: "I got the idea for the book in Egypt. So I get to Cairo and this Egyptian Arab guy calls me a black barbarian. I'm like, hey, this is supposed to be Africa! So I started thinking about other parts of the world and what it would be like to travel there if you're black. I'm as black as they get. White folk in the South today would look at me and think there goes a big black buck. They tell you in the guidebooks what to expect if you're gay or if you're a woman. Hell, they need to do it for if you're recognizably black. Let traveling black folk know what the deal is. It's not like anybody is going to shoot you but it's great to know where to expect that people will stare at you. In the German Black Forest, it's pretty hostile staring. In Tokyo and Istanbul, everyone was cool and indifferent. In Shanghai the staring was intense, in Delhi it was nasty. I thought, 'Hey, aren't we kind of in this together? You know, people of color and all?'"

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Chapter 36

ARAVIND ADIGA: *The White Tiger*

2 **Either** (a) 'The novel presents a world completely lacking in moral values.'

How far, and in what ways, do you agree with this view of *The White Tiger*?

**Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, analyse the following passage, considering in what ways it is an effective ending to the novel.

I love my start-up – this chandelier, and this silver laptop, and these twenty-six Toyota Qualises – but honestly, I'll get bored of it sooner or later. I'm a *first-gear* man, Mr Premier. In the end, I'll have to sell this start-up to some other moron – *entrepreneur*, I mean – and head into a new line. I'm thinking of real estate next. You see, I'm always a man who sees 'tomorrow' when others see 'today'. The whole world will come to Bangalore tomorrow. Just drive to the airport and count the half-built glass-and-steel boxes as you pass them. Look at the names of the American companies that are building them. And when all these Americans come here, where do you think they're all going to sleep? On the road? 5

Ha!

Anywhere there's an empty apartment, I take a look at it, I wonder, *How much can I get from an American for this in 2010?* If the place has a future as the home of an American, I put a down payment on it at once. The future of real estate is Bangalore, Mr Jiabao. You can join in the killing if you want – I'll help you out! 10

After three or four years in real estate, I think I might sell everything, take the money, and start a school – an English-language school – for poor children in Bangalore. A school where you won't be allowed to corrupt anyone's head with prayers and stories about God or Gandhi – nothing but the facts of life for these kids. A school full of White Tigers, unleashed on Bangalore! We'd have this city at our knees, I tell you. I could become the Boss of Bangalore. I'd fix that assistant commissioner of police at once. I'd put him on a bicycle and have Asif knock him over with the Qualis. 15

All this dreaming I'm doing – it may well turn out to be nothing.

See, sometimes I think I will never get caught. I think the Rooster Coop needs people like me to break out of it. It needs masters like Mr Ashok – who, for all his numerous virtues, was not much of a master – to be weeded out, and exceptional servants like me to replace them. At such times, I gloat that Mr Ashok's family can put up a reward of a million dollars on my head, and it will not matter. I have switched sides: I am now one of those who cannot be caught in India. At such moments, I look up at this chandelier, and I just want to throw my hands up and holler, so loudly that my voice would carry over the phones in the call-centre rooms all the way to the people in America: 20

*I've made it! I've broken out of the coop!*

But at other times someone in the street calls out, 'Balram', and I turn my head and think, *I've given myself away.* 25

Getting caught – it's always a possibility. There's no end to things in India, as Mr Ashok used to say. You can give the police all the brown envelopes and red bags you want, and they might still screw you. A man in a uniform may one day point a finger at me and say, *Time's up, Munna.* 30

Yet even if all my chandeliers come crashing down to the floor – even if they throw me in jail and have all the other prisoners dip their beaks into me – even if they make me walk the wooden stairs to the hangman's noose – I'll never say I made a mistake that night in Delhi when I slit my master's throat. 40

I'll say it was all worthwhile to know, just for a day, just for an hour, just for a *minute*, what it means not to be a servant. 45

I think I am ready to have children, Mr Premier.  
Ha!

Yours for ever,  
Ashok Sharma  
The White Tiger  
Of Bangalore  
*boss@whitetiger-technologydrivers.com*

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The Seventh Night

ELEANOR CATTON: *The Rehearsal*

- 3 **Either** (a) In what ways, and with what effects, does Catton present the music lessons in the novel?
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, analyse the following passage, considering in what ways it is characteristic of Catton's methods and concerns.

'This is a very personal memory for me,' the Head of Acting said, 'because I had always imagined that at the death of my father I would feel very great sadness, even hysteria, that I would cry and cry like I'd seen my sisters cry, that afterwards I would feel a deep longing for what was irreplaceable about my father, and I would have to work to rebuild my life as normal. I imagined that after it happened I would take time to think about my own mortality, but with a new appreciation and reverence for the brevity of life.' The Head of Acting's voice was steady but his voice was very soft, and somehow intensified by the hush, like the savage clear-blue flame of a gas hob turned low. 5

'But that didn't happen for me,' he said. 'I didn't cry. I didn't feel a great sadness, and I quickly replaced everything about him that I needed to. My own mortality was just as it had ever been, that was all. I thought I knew how I would react to the death of my father, and I was wrong. 10

'Like Stanley,' the Head of Acting said, quickening and shifting into a new, brisker gear, 'any one of you can turn on your television set and watch somebody pretend to die. You all will have seen thousands of deaths which are *not* deaths but merely people pretending. If I said right now, "You have been shot!" you would all roll around on the floor and clutch your bellies and twitch and moan, and what you would be doing—all you would be doing—is copying a copy. 15

'What I am asking of you for homework,' he said, 'is not to prepare a performance of death, for most of you have no first-hand knowledge of what it means for somebody to truly die. Instead I would like each of you to prepare a performance of your most intimate experience. You will place yourself at the mercy of this experience by showing this intimate moment to the rest of the group. The aim of this exercise is to see how we can *use* these terribly private experiences as a form of emotional substitute when we come to act a scene or a situation that we don't understand.' 20 25

There was a grudging silence. Everybody tried not to look at everybody else. They quickly tried to think up all the relatively unpainful moments of their lives that they would be prepared to recreate in front of the class and pretend that it was the most intimate experience of their lives. 30

The Head of Acting let the silence gather for a moment. Lazily he thought, What would happen if one of them performed a scene from one of my classes? What if the most intimate moment in one of these kids' lives was actually a connection with *me*, some kind of precious moment with *me*, and they had the gall to recreate it in class in front of the rest of them? He pursed his lips as he weighed the possibility in his mind. He thought, It would never happen. None of them would dare. 35

'I myself have used the memory of my father's death many times in my acting career,' the Head of Acting said at last. 'I have recalled it, I have re-imagined it, I have replayed it until the memory is sucked of all useful juice and I have *learned* something. I used it as Løvborg. I used it as Kent. I used it as the Chief Tragedian, believe it or not. I used it as Algie.' 40

On the floor, Stanley was thinking of his own father: he pictured him with them now, leaning against the barre with his hands in his pockets and winking solemnly at Stanley as he caught his eye above the sea of nodding heads on the gymnasium floor. He would hate the Head of Acting, Stanley thought, and he imagined what his father would say now: That's right, worship the things that break you down. Worship 45

the deaths and the divorces, and learn to listen to your own sufferings above all other noise. That'll put everything into a nice healthy perspective for you. Just the ticket. Stanley imagined his father shaking his head and laughing in a disgusted, helpless sort of a way, shrugging his shoulders under the grey pilled sports jacket he always wore when he was with a client at work. 50

But perhaps he wouldn't. Perhaps his father would jerk his thumb at the Head of Acting and say, I have to hand it to him. It's people like this guy who eventually give employment to people like me. Let him screw you all up, slowly but surely. After you've robbed yourselves of everything that's spontaneous and good about your lives, after all that, I'll have twenty new clients to fix. So go ahead. I'm right behind you, son. I'm right behind all of you. Dig deep. 55

Chapter 8

ATHOL FUGARD: *The Road to Mecca* and *My Children! My Africa!*

- 4 **Either** (a) 'Fugard presents characters struggling for self-expression and fulfilment in these plays.'

How far, and in what ways, do you agree with this comment? You should refer to **both** plays in your answer.

- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, analyse the following extract, considering in what ways it is characteristic of Fugard's methods and concerns.

*[ELSA cleans herself as thoroughly as a basin of water, a face cloth and a bar of scented soap will allow.]*

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*Elsa* [*too easily*]: Hope so. If not, she and her baby are in for a night beside the road.

*The Road to Mecca, Act 1*

ARTHUR MILLER: *Death of a Salesman*

- 5 **Either** (a) 'A man has got to add up to something.'

With this quotation from the play in mind, discuss how Miller presents different ideas about what it is to be a man.

- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language, tone and action analyse the following extract, considering in what ways it is characteristic of Miller's dramatic methods.

*Biff:*                   Somebody got in your bathroom!

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*Willy:* Biff, come back here or I'll beat you! Come back here! I'll whip you!

Act 2

DEREK WALCOTT: *Selected Poetry*

- 6 **Either** (a) In what ways, and with what effects, does Walcott present the past in his poems? In your answer you should refer to **three** poems from your selection.
- Or** (b) Write a critical appreciation of the following poem, considering some of the ways it is characteristic of Walcott's poetic methods and concerns.

*Lampfall*

Closest at lampfall

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to the highway's brightly multiplying beetles.

**Turn to page 14 for Question 7.**

W. B. YEATS: *Selected Poems*

- 7 **Either** (a) 'Yeats presents people as symbols, not as individuals, in his poetry.'

Discuss Yeats's poetic treatment of people in the light of this opinion. You should refer to **two** poems from your selection.

- Or** (b) Write a critical appreciation of the following poem, considering in what ways it is characteristic of Yeats's poetic methods and concerns.

*The Circus Animals' Desertion*

## I

I sought a theme and sought for it in vain,  
 I sought it daily for six weeks or so.  
 Maybe at last, being but a broken man,  
 I must be satisfied with my heart, although  
 Winter and summer till old age began 5  
 My circus animals were all on show,  
 Those stilted boys, that burnished chariot,  
 Lion and woman and the Lord knows what.

## II

What can I but enumerate old themes?  
 First that sea-rider Oisín led by the nose 10  
 Through three enchanted islands, allegorical dreams,  
 Vain gaiety, vain battle, vain repose,  
 Themes of the embittered heart, or so it seems,  
 That might adorn old songs or courtly shows;  
 But what cared I that set him on to ride, 15  
 I, starved for the bosom of his faery bride?

And then a counter-truth filled out its play,  
*The Countess Cathleen* was the name I gave it;  
 She, pity-crazed, had given her soul away,  
 But masterful Heaven had intervened to save it. 20  
 I thought my dear must her own soul destroy,  
 So did fanaticism and hate enslave it,  
 And this brought forth a dream and soon enough  
 This dream itself had all my thought and love.

And when the Fool and Blind Man stole the bread 25  
 Cúchulain fought the ungovernable sea;  
 Heart-mysteries there, and yet when all is said  
 It was the dream itself enchanted me:  
 Character isolated by a deed  
 To engross the present and dominate memory. 30  
 Players and painted stage took all my love,  
 And not those things that they were emblems of.

## III

Those masterful images because complete  
 Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?  
 A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street, 35  
 Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,

Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut  
Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone,  
I must lie down where all the ladders start,  
In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.

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