

LIRA TOWN COLLEGE

S.3 ENGLISH PASSAGE

THE UNTILLED FIELD

Mwangi thought of nobody else but his wife Wanjiku. She was lazy; always going to work in the day when everybody else had already done half their digging. By the time she reached the field, it was already so hot that to lift a hoe was almost torture. The heat of the sun disturbed the flies from their rest so that they buzzed around her as she slowly lifted her tool. She had to drop it again to strike the biting fly. There was no point in continuing to labour. After all she would come here tomorrow and the day after. Even the day after that she would be here.

She sat down in the cool shade of a muthaithi tree and soon fell a sleep. Mwangi watched her from afar, where he was herding his cattle. By now it was his field alone which lay untilled, and the rains were near. An hour went by, two hours, three hours and Wanjiku still slept. Was she dead? Could a snake have bitten her? He would have heard her cries. Mwangi decided to find out.

He left his cattle and slowly approached the spot where his wife lay. He looked back to see whether the cattle would stray far before he returned to them. Satisfied that they would not, he moved on. He quickened his step, hoping that she would wake up before he reached her. He did not want to show her that he had all along been watching her. But he would never be satisfied until he knew whether or not his wife's expression betrayed any guilty conscience for the neglect of her duties. He changed his pace. Quietly he stalked her as a lion stealthily hunts a deer, or like a cobra just about to strike. He feared to make a rustle.

Mwangi remembered the cows and goats he had paid her father as a dowry. The marriage feast surpassed any he had wife he had married, the woman he had so dearly paid for? Was she created only for child-bearing? What was she for? He would soon learn from the appearance of her face when asleep. He reached her.

There she was, sleeping like a log, except that a log does not breathe. The sight shocked him. Where he had expected to find at least a slight element of guilt, he found at least a slight element of guilt; he found only a pure, peaceful, calm face – only blissful happiness. Wanjiku was content to lie idle, a basket, a hoe and a *panga* by her side.

He stood there, not knowing what to do next.....

A PRISONER OF THE MASSAI

When I awoke, there was an unusual silence in the air and I found myself listening for something I used to hear whenever I awoke in the hot afternoons.

I then remembered how, two days before, I had been looking after my master's cattle and how two of the master's cattle and how two Massai warriors had come and had taken the cattle. They had beaten me savagely. They did not, however, leave me lying on the ground, half dead. Instead they managed to get me into their land somehow. I was a strong boy of twenty and I would guess that, that was the reason why they took me along with them. After they had beaten me, I was unconscious and did not come back to myself until the second day.

My friends and I had often fallen asleep in the hottest times of the day and when I awoke, I always heard the sounds in the air. I always heard the sound made by flying grasshoppers ka-rrrrrr- ah, the sound of men chopping wood with their axes in the forest nearby, kong-kong-kong. The sun was always so hot that one would say it shone loudly! Its heat seemed to have a sound to me. These sounds were familiar. They were the sounds I was expecting to hear when I awoke that morning.

The two men had put me in a mud hut with no windows. The door was very small and low and the inside of the hut with no windows. The door was very small and low and the inside of the hut was very dark. I recalled what had happened and then sat in the darkness opened and three men came in followed anything on her body. She was carrying a gourd which she offered to me. I took me outside and treated my wounds. They were kind and I liked them.

I could recognize the hills on which we were. They were the hills one saw far in the distance when at home. I hoped that when I got better, I would run away. Knowing how hard my master was at home, I could not go back to him. I would seek happiness among some other tribes.

The Maasi family looked after me very well. Meat was our food. The girl I had first seen brought me milk and meat daily. We grew to like each other very much. She taught me the Massai language and I learned very quickly. After some weeks I got better, but I did not want to run away. I stayed with the family and proved to be a trustworthy man. I became one of the members of the family and took part in every event.

I remember once the two men, Muriu and Karau, who had taken the cattle, and I went out to steal more cows. We were caught in the act by the owners. We all fought against them but I fought so bravely that afterwards when the two men. They gave Ngini to me as my wife. She was the girl I had liked very much wife. She was the girl I had liked very much and who had made me love Massailand so much; we loved one another. I did not ever again think of leaving Massailand. I grew old and my sons carried on the work of stealing cattle. Every morning when I awoke and found myself listening for something; but the familiar sounds were lost forever.

The Self-reliance worker

In Africa, there has been an enormous influx of young people into artisan activities. This has been possible for a number of reasons, the chief of which has been the nearly insatiable demand for cheap artifacts of various kinds: braziers (jiko), fence post nails, ladies debes, buckets, hinges and bolts for doors, wood – working tools – the list is endless. However, the boom in artisan activity would not have been possible without the readiness of those artisans already in trade to accept trainees for “on the job” training they needed them to cope with the work; and the speed at which these trainee artisans very soon became masters themselves. Within a year, trainees might in his turn take on fresh trainees himself for the training process to continue.

Gacuri comes from a family of black smiths. From a very early age, Gacuri was familiar with metal, wood and bits of machines. He used to make wooden models; once he used to make wooden carts for children to play on, and to carry debes of water some of these carts he would sell, others he would rent out. Later, in school vacations, he began to construct jikos out of scrap-metal to supplement the family income.

On leaving primary school, Gacuri set about finding employment. His first venture, mending bicycles, was unsuccessful, and he got a job picking coffee on one of the estates. A vacancy occurred in the farm workshop, and he convinced the manager that he would carry out most of the metal – working practices.

Gacuri now had what many would regard as a great job; but he wanted to be independent – he wanted to be his own boss. Within a short time he moved nearer Nairobi where he proceeded to make, full time, and the *jikos* and water cans that he had previously made in his school holiday. He would purchase a scrap metal in Nairobi for a few shillings, and take it back to his place on a borrowed bicycle.

Unfortunately the bicycle was simply not strong enough to carry the scrap-metal he wanted, and this gave him an idea. Why not make bicycle carriers; not those expensive, light-weight imported ones, but carriers strong enough to manage the weight of an adult, or sacks of charcoal, or debes of water?

To make such a carrier, especially strong tools were necessary. Gacuri bought a drill and bits for about 6/=-, improvised a handle for hacksaw blades, and made a small bellows from bits and pieces. With these implements he was able to make his first metal cutter. Within a short time he has made a sample bicycle which he carries round to the main Nairobi cycle stores to get orders. Very soon he had orders for dozens of these strong carriers. How did he manage it?

For one thing, his carriers were stronger and cheaper than those were factory-made. Secondly he made all the first ones personally, to ensure that they are of right quality, and so that his trainees could learn from his example.

There were other reasons for his success. He saw the need for an efficient, regular supply for good quality scrap metal. He also realized that his market is good enough to be marketed over a wider area. He did not rely only on the Nairobi firms. He also went personally to the main provincial towns of Kisumu, Eldoret, Nakuru, etc. Very soon he was provinces by road and rail, and getting a much better price for them than if he had sold them all in Nairobi. He even managed to arrange and order of 200 dozen in Arusha in Tanzania, and was only prevented from completing this by difficulty in fixing an export license.

Gacuri did not rest on his laurels. He saw that there was a danger in putting all his eggs in one basket, and so he began to diversify into making fore guards. Many people consider these essential in strengthening the bicycle's front fork and shaft for local road conditions. They were made entirely out of 1cm round

metal each pair linking the..... from axle and the shaft beneath the handle bars. Each length of metal had to be heated and then flattened at the extremity, and holes bored in for attaching to the axle.

Once these fore guards were established and popular, Gacuiiri turned to designing a bicycle stand for attaching to the back wheel.

Questions:

1. In what ways did Gacuiiri show himself to be self – reliant?
2. What advantage did Gacuiiri have from birth?
3. In what ways did Gacuiiri show enterprise while still at school?
4. Why didn't he stay in the good job on the coffee farm?
5. How did he get the idea of making bicycle carriers? In what ways were his to be better than the imported ones?
6. Vocabulary

Discuss the following with your teacher

Influx (I.2)

insatiable (1.5)

artifacts (I.6)

boom (I.10)

"on the job" training (I.14)

supplement (I.31)

Word family: (i) technical

scrap – metal (I.31)

a drill and bits (I.61)

hacksaw (I.62)

a bellows (I.63)

Word family : (ii) business

a sample (I.67)

orders (I.69)

product (I.81)

marketed (I.82)

an export licence (1.82)

diversity (I.98)

idioms

did not rest on his laurels (1.95)

put all his eggs in one basket (I.96 – 7)

7. Why did Gacuiiri diversify? What was the danger of "Putting all his eggs in one basket"?
8. Draw a diagram illustrating Gacuiiri went through a number of stages. Here they are but in the wrong order. Re-write them in the correct order.
9. In order to be successful, Gacuiiri went through a number of stages. Here they are but in the wrong order. Rewrite them in the correct orders:
 - a. Decide how to satisfy the need.

- b. Identify the need.
- c. Gain orders.
- d. Make a sample.
- e. Get or make the materials necessary.
- f. Market the product more widely.
- g. Diversity.
- h. Produce the goods in quantity.

10.

THE WEEDING

The wedding was in December and so I could attend it. Some dates stick out. December fifth. A week ⁵ before Kenya's independence. Two great ceremonies for the neighbourhood to look forward to.

I was not to be left out. I polished my pointed shoes and put on my sleek jeans. I put a hat and a scarf. ¹⁰ Always dressed to kill, that was me. My dream – girl was being married to a fellow whose face I did not like, but there were other birds to kill.

¹⁵ I joined the crowd at their home. Tradition said that she must wait in the house with her pretty little maids until he came for her. She was in there now, surrounded by them and waiting. I heard someone say that the bridegroom and his party were one hour late. Someone else replied that the distance from

²⁰ Murang'a to Kangemi was not like that from the nose to the eye. We must be patient. He would come for her.

²⁵ What if he didn't turn up? I thought. The neighbourhood would give a hoarse laugh and disperse. And she would kill herself from shame. The goat with a broken leg.

³⁰ "Are these people from Murang'a coming or not?" an impatient woman cried. She was dressed for her part, which was to bargain with the bridegroom's people. For a child does not leave her home ³⁵ just like that. Those people from Murang'a would have to pay dearly for being late. Kangemi people were very particular about time and did not like to be kept waiting.

⁴⁰ Peter Mboca, who was going to give away the bride, paced around and looked at his watch. He was a grey old man in a smart suit, and he was one of the richer uncles. He paced around, his lips ⁴⁵ moving . He was rehearsing the speech he would make later. How good Liz was.... and how very obedient, how hard working , how bright in school....

At last they came. They announced their coming with the aggressive blare of car-horns. Popoooooooo. Pipeeeeeeee. We were very impressed. Although we could not see over the hedge and the tall maize we could not see over the hedge and the tall maize we could tell, from the sound, that it was a small ⁵⁵ precession.

I hurried to see them arrive. A Peugeot, a Toyota, a Volkswagen.

A woman spat into the grass. "There filthy cars. Not even decorated."

⁶⁰ "It must have been raining in Murang'a," someone said.

True to custom the Peugeot, with the bridegroom stayed outside the gate while the other two ⁶⁵ cars came in. The bridegroom stayed outside the gate while his best man gets the bride for him.

The cars stopped their ineffectual blaring and out of the Toyota shot a young man. He wore a three-piece suit and had a red flower sticking out from his breast pocket. Smart but muddy, we thought. The rain must have been terrible at Murang'a. This must be the best man. Very young chap. Very smart but very muddy. We could see that he had done his best to wipe the mud off his new shoes.

Another fellow came out of the Volkswagen, leaving others inside. A murmur of astonishment passed through the crowd. This chap was so muddy he should have stayed in the car. He was short and stocky and looked crude.

⁸⁵ Our women closed in and asked sarcastically what these muddy people wanted. The shy best man, trying to look as cocky and as brave as a best man should, said they had come for the bride.

Two muddy brave warriors, come for the bride! So!

"Is there no water where you come from?" our women shot back. "Is our girl going to a place where there is no water?"

⁹⁵ The short – crude fellow said, "This is mud, not just soil, mother. It means Murang'a is not as dry as people say, but full of water."

Smart answer. Some women nodded and approved. Murang'a was full f water. And water was good.

The slender best man began to explain how "in fact....."

“Don’t speak English to us. We are not Europeans.”

He coughed and smiled disarmingly. He was quite a charming young fellow but this was obviously the first time he had got mixed up in these things. He started again. Without resorting to English words like “in fact” and “actually” he explained that they had got stuck in the mud and had had to pay a tractor to haul the cars out of the mess.

Now read the rest of the story. Reluctantly, the people of Kangemi accept the story of the men from Murang’a:

115 “All right, since you have gone to so much trouble coming here we might give you the bride...”

But there were strings. Little things to be paid for. She had broken her mother’s pot once and it must be paid for before she was allowed to go.

To our astonishment the two muddy gentlemen sheepishly said they had no money. They had spent their last cent on the tractor, whose driver had taken advantage of the situation to demand a lot of money. Every cent they had.

“We did not come empty – handed, we beg you to understand. But what we had beg you to ¹³⁰understand. But what we had was used up in our battle against the Murang’a mud.”

What could one do with such people?

135 We set out in much bigger force to come for the bride. But luck has not been with us. Two cars were defeated and are still on the road, stuck. Please excuse us.”

140 The women were annoyed, but Peter Mboca pushed his way forward to calm them. He reminded them that the sun was not still but moving. And the preacher was waiting. *Rekei tuhiRahiRe*, he said. Let us hurry.

LIRA TOWN COLLEGE

S.3 ENGLISH PASSAGE

WELCOME HOME! (1)

Unlike mail – boats, which docked at the

Lagos wharf on fixed days of the week,

Cargo-boats were most unpredictable. So when the MV Sasa arrived, there were

⁵ no friends waiting at the At the Atlantic Terminal for her passengers. On mail- boat days the beautiful and airy waiting- room would be full of gaily dressed friends and relations waiting for the arrival of the

¹⁰ boat and drinking iced beer and Coca- Cola or eating buns. Sometimes you found a little group waiting sadly and silently. In such cases you could bet that their son had married a white
¹⁵ woman in England .

There was no such crowd for MV Sasa, and it was quite clear that Mr. Stephen Udom was deeply disappointed. As soon as Lagos had been sighted he had returned to his cabin to emerge half an hour later in a black suit, bowler hat and rolled umbrella, even though it was a hot October day.

²⁵ Customs formalities here took thrice as long as at Liverpool and five times as many officials. A young man, almost a boy in fact, was dealing with Obi's cabin. He told him that the duty on his radiogram would be five pounds.

³⁰ “Right”, said Obi, feeling his hip pockets. “Write a receipt for me.” The boy did not write. He looked at Obi for a few seconds, and then said: “I can be able to reduce it to two pounds for you”.

³⁵ “How?” asked Obi.

“I fit do it, but you no go get Government receipt”

⁴⁰ For a few seconds Obi was speechless. Then he merely said: “Don't be silly. If there was a policeman here I would hand you over to him.” The boy fled from his cabin without another word. Obi found him later attending other passengers.

“Dear old Nigeria,” he said to himself, as he waited for another official to come to his cabin. In the end one came when all the other passengers had been attended to.