

2nd Edition

A Comprehensive Handbook for Ordinary Level Literature

For Secondary Schools

Best for Literature Students: Forms 2, 3 & 4

Analysis of Mabala the Farmer

EMMANUEL KACHELE



‘O’ LEVEL ENGLISH (OLE)
FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Analysis of *‘Mabala the Farmer’*



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Emmanuel Kachele
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ABOUT THE STORY WRITER

Richard S. Mabala is a Tanzanian writer who has authored several books. Among of them is *Hawa the Bus Driver* and *Mabala the Farmer*, the famous short stories that are the among the Class Readers studied in Form One and Form Two in Tanzanian Secondary Schools. These two short stories are the best works for the Children Literature that's why they are taught in Lower Secondary School Classes.

INTRODUCTION

'*Mabala the Farmer*' is a short story about one man called Mabala. This Mabala lived in Dar es Salaam and worked as a clerk. He did not save money and he was very stubborn. He decided to go to live and work in shamba in the village but he did not know how to cultivate. He made a lot of mistakes on the farm. His wife helped him and later he worked as a village accountant and he won the respect of the villagers at last.

This short story is the collection of seven (7) chapters that all narrate the life of Mabala, his work, and his family experiences.

ANALYSIS OF THE SHORT STORY

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE GETTING STARTED

1. Brainstorming (Before Reading). Before reading a Class Reader, the teacher should guide students to use and discuss title, cover, blurb and other book illustrations to predict what a book will be about.

2. Reading. The students should also be guided to read a part of the Class Reader or the whole Class reader and answer the questions (obviously guiding questions given by the teacher) on various aspects like chapter's events, characters, settings, and message. They should do this task in groups or pairs.

3. Writing a book report (After Reading). The students are also guided by the teacher to write a book report. In their level, it is just a simple book report in which they can include only important details of the book they have read. Most commonly, the book report they should write should include the following aspects:

- Title
- What is the story about?
- The Setting of the story
- The characters of the story (Main and minor characters)
- Events of the story (general or for each chapter)
- The message of the story
- The lesson of the story
- How does the story ends?

Setting

The short story is set in Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Tabora, the village, Mtama bar, and the shamba.

Characters

The short story has several characters like:

The short story has several characters like:

Mabala, clerk and village accountant, Mauja's husband

Mauja, Mabala's wife

Martina, their daughter

Mabala's drinking pals at Mtama bar,

Villagers

Language

The writer has applied a very simple language that suits the level of Form One and Form Two Students. However, in some cases, the writer has applied Swahili words such as Bwana, Bwana Shamba, and others which can be difficult for Non-Swahili speakers.

Some of Kiswahili words

Bwana Haambiliki (Mr Never-Told)

Baba – Father

Bwana Shamba – Agricultural officer

Chapati – Unleavened bread

Jamani – a cry to all attention and sympathy

Mama – Mother

Mama Martina – In Tanzania, people are often addressed as being the father or mother of their child. So ‘Mama Martina’ means the ‘mother of Martina.’

Mtama - millet, the local beer brewed out of millet

Mzee – Elder, old man.

Figures of Speech

As usual, Form One and Form Two Students are only introduced to a few examples of figures of speech, and in this story, the following figures of speech can be identified:

Sayings

These are statements that are considered wise and they teach the truth or a moral lesson.

Mama Martina says: *“In Kiswahili, they say that if a child cries for a razor blade, give it to him.”* (Page 20)

Men: *“Drinking and farming cannot be cooked in the same pot.”*

Simile

This is the figure of speech that compares two things by using conjunctions such as, ‘like’ and ‘as’. For example:

“Plants are like men, he told us.”

“Plants are hungry, he said,”

“Their leaves are open like mouths.”

“A hoe is not like a pen.”

Personification

This is the figure of speech that makes inanimate objects act like human beings. For example:

“Plants don’t like sugar.”

“Seeds get lonely he says.”

“Give them food,

“Pour it down their throats.” (Page 25)

“The plants never said thank you.”

“His stomach complained again.” (Page 7)

Imagery

This is the figure of speech that is used by the writer to produce pictures in the reader’s mind. Similes, metaphors, personifications are all used to produce pictures in the reader’s mind. Some other examples from

the story are:

“Plants are hungry.”

“Life is easy. You dig, you plant, you weed, you harvest, you eat. No problem.” (Page 29)

Exaggeration

This is the situation of making things look bigger than they are. For example:

Sekulu: *“Do you want to cook tea for all the farmers?” (page 21)*

Jokes

Mabala continues to receive more maize jokes such as:

“Oh, MrMabala, do you want to fertilize the books?”

“Have you ordered the sacks of sugar for the maize?”

“Are the books lonely?”

Mabala joked: *“You see, I told you. Life is easy. You dig, you plant, you weed, you harvest, you eat. No problem. Look at all this maize.” (Page 29)*

Emphasis

Mama Martina: *“...but you know nothing, NOTHING.” (Page 27)*

ANALYSIS OF THE STORY'S CHAPTERS



Chapter One: Mabala

This chapter talks about the early life of Mabala in the city of Dar es Salaam and the idea of starting a new life in the village. Mauja goes to Morogoro first to find the shamba and then Mabala promises to follow her later.

Summary of the chapter

Mabala was born in Dar es Salaam when Dar es Salaam was still a small town. His parents came from Tabora but they moved to Dar essalaam before Mabala was born.

He grew up in Dar essalaam. He went to Primary School and finished Standard 8 in 1961. He got a job as a clerk for 25 years. He finally became a chief clerk.

In his life, he had two problems.

(1)He was not careful with his money. He liked to spend money carelessly. He had no savings. He did not have a farm or a house for the future. He married Mauja in 1975 and they lived a happy life and spending. In 1979, Mauja gave birth to a baby girl, Martina. Now Mabala realized that he had to save money for the future. He tried to save money but the prices of things were up.

(2)The second problem of Mabala was his stubbornness. He was stubborn and obstinate. Although he had a good and kind heart, he did not change his mind. Even his wife knew that you can waste your time arguing with him because he can't change his mind easily. Maybe this was because Mabala was the only child of his parents.

(3)Mabala's third problem was that he has never lived in the village and he has never cultivated a farm. He doesn't know anything about hard work. He just listens to the radio and read books about the village. So, he