The Lion and the Jewel

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF WOLE SOYINKA

Soyinka grew up in British-ruled Nigeria. His family was relatively well off; his father was an Anglican minister and the headmaster of a religious school, which meant the family had access to electricity and radio at home. Soyinka studied in Nigeria at a college affiliated with the University of London and he relocated to England after graduation, where he pursued an advanced degree at the University of Leeds. *The Lion and the Jewel* was his second play, and its success allowed him to move to London. Over the next ten years, Soyinka continued to write plays and edit literary periodicals both in England in Nigeria. In the 60s, Soyinka became involved with politics. He was arrested several times and one of his books was banned in Nigeria. He fled to the United States in 1994. Soyinka has been married three times and has five children.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Lagos was a major port city in the area that is now modern-day Nigeria. It saw a great deal of international and western influence from the 16th century on, and became the capital city of British-ruled colonial Nigeria beginning in 1901. The British rulers of the colony promoted public works projects like railways and roads to modernize the land and make farming and industry more profitable. Nigeria became self-governing in 1957 under a parliamentary system and was granted independence as a Commonwealth Realm by the British parliament in 1960. It experienced a civil war from 1966-1970, and continued to experience conflict under a number of military dictators for the next 30 years. It regained a democratic government in 1999, which is modeled after the United States.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Many of Wole Soyinka's plays and novels consider themes that are similar to those in *The Lion and the Jewel*, in particular the difficult relationship between traditional Nigerian culture and western modernization. *Death and the King's Horseman* is one of his best-known plays that tackles this theme. Chimananda Ngozi Adichie is another well-known Nigerian novelist who considers the relationship between Nigerian tradition and globalization and the struggles following Nigerian independence. Her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* takes place during the Nigerian Civil War, which began only six years after *The Lion and the Jewel* takes place.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** The Lion and the Jewel
- **When Written:** 1959
- **Where Written:** Leeds, England
- **When Published:** While the play was first performed in 1959, the script wasn't published until 1962.
- **Literary Period:** Postcolonial African Diaspora
- **Genre:** Drama, Comedy
- **Setting:** Ilujunle, a rural Nigerian village in the late 1950s
- **Climax:** When Sidi reveals that Baroka raped her
- **Antagonist:** Baroka; rapid modernization

EXTRA CREDIT

Bringing Fame to Nigeria. In 1986, Wole Soyinka was the first black African to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Political Activism in the USA. After the 2016 United States presidential election, Soyinka kept a promise he made during a question-and-answer session at Oxford University to destroy his US green card if Mr. Trump won the presidency. Soyinka told a reporter at *The Atlantic* that he'd rather "go in the queue for a regular visa with the others."

PLOT SUMMARY

The play begins as Sidi, the village belle of Ilujinle, enters the square with a pail of water balanced on her head. Lakunle, the western-educated schoolteacher, sees her, runs from his classroom, and takes Sidi's pail. He berates her for carrying loads on her head and not dressing modestly, and she retaliates by reminding Lakunle that the village calls him a madman. Sidi grows angry as Lakunle tells her that women are less intelligent than men because of their small brains. He says that soon the village will have machines to do all the hard work and he describes the beauty of Lagos, which is an entirely modern city. Lakunle refuses to give Sidi her pail of water back until she agrees to marry him and he offers a number of flowery lines that describe his intense love for her. Sidi reminds him that she'd marry him any day if he'd agree to pay the bride price. Lakunle deems this barbaric and refuses. He grabs Sidi and tells her how wonderful their modern marriage will be. When he kisses her, Sidi is disgusted. Though Lakunle insists that he loves Sidi and that kissing is something normal for modern couples, Sidi replies that kissing is only a way to avoid paying the bride price. She calls Lakunle mad.

A group of young villagers enter the square and tell Sidi that

the stranger returned to the village with a **magazine** of images. Sidi excitedly asks if the stranger made Sidi as beautiful as he said he would, and the girls tell her he did. They say that Baroka, the village Bale, is still looking at the images and is jealous of Sidi, though he pretends to be proud of her. Another girl says that Baroka appears in the magazine as well, but his image is very small and shows him next to the latrines. Upon hearing this, Sidi declares that she's more powerful than Baroka and has no reason to marry Lakunle.

Sidi suggests that they dance the dance of the "lost traveler." She assigns parts to the villagers and forces Lakunle to play the part of the stranger. Despite his initial unwillingness to participate, Lakunle throws himself fully into the dance. The rest of the villagers dance while Lakunle performs realistic miming of driving a car, drunkenly wandering through the jungle, and discovering Sidi in the river. Suddenly, Baroka joins the dance and the action stops as the villagers kneel and bow to him. Lakunle tries to leave, but Baroka insists he stay and they continue the dance. Baroka instructs his attendants to seize Lakunle/the stranger, but he then takes pity on the stranger and sets out a feast in his honor. The stranger takes photographs of the village and is especially entranced by Sidi and her dancing. The dance ends when the stranger vomits. Sidi and the villagers chase Lakunle towards the actual stranger so he can translate for them, and Baroka muses that he hasn't taken a new wife in five months.

Later that day, Sidi and Lakunle walk down the road. Lakunle carries a bundle of firewood, while Sidi is engrossed in the photographs of herself in the magazine. Baroka's first wife, Sadiku, startles Sidi. Sadiku tells Sidi that Baroka wants to marry her, which makes Lakunle angry. He tells Sidi not to listen, but Sidi insists that she's very powerful now that the stranger has brought her images to the village. Sadiku insists that if Sidi marries Baroka, she'll be very powerful—when Baroka dies, she'll be the new head wife. Sidi refuses and says that Baroka only wants to possess her beauty and keep it for himself. Sidi opens the magazine, shows the photographs to Sadiku, and laments that nobody ever complimented Sidi on her breasts. She calls Baroka old and leathery. Sadiku is shocked, but she invites Sidi to come to Baroka's for a feast anyway. Sidi laughs and says that the women who attend the suppers become wives or concubines the next day. Lakunle inserts himself into the conversation and says that Baroka is called "the fox" for a reason. He describes how Baroka paid off a foreman to reroute a railway away from Ilujinle, thereby robbing Ilujinle of the ability to modernize. He loses himself in thought and muses about how wonderful Baroka's life of luxury with so many wives must be. Sidi and Sadiku slip away.

In Baroka's bedroom, his favorite wife plucks the hairs from his armpit. He tells her that he's going to take a new wife soon and she plucks the hairs harshly. Sadiku enters the bedroom and Baroka sends his favorite away. Sadiku tells her husband that Sidi refused his offer of marriage because of his age. Angry, Baroka lists his achievements of the past week. He lies down, asks Sadiku to rub his feet, and picks up a copy of the magazine. He suggests that it might be for the best, as his manhood ended the week before. Sadiku cries, and Baroka tells her that she cannot tell anyone of this secret.

That evening, Sidi continues to admire the photographs in the village square. Sadiku enters the square, pulls out a carved **figure of Baroka**, and laughs. She begins a chant of "take warning my masters/we'll scotch you in the end" and dances around the figure. Sidi, shocked, approaches Sadiku and demands to know what's going on. Sadiku swears Sidi to secrecy and whispers in her ear. Sidi is overjoyed and joins in the dance. Lakunle enters the square and watches the women for a moment before deeming them crazy. Sidi suddenly stops and says she wants to taunt Baroka. She decides to go to him, ask forgiveness, and torment him. Sadiku gives her blessing and Sidi runs off.

Lakunle calls the women foolish. Sadiku tells Lakunle he's unattractive and reminds him that he could marry Sidi soon if he paid the bride price. When Sadiku laughs about Lakunle's wish to modernize the village, he insists that she come to school with the children so she can learn to do something besides collect brides for Baroka.

When Sidi enters Baroka's house, he's engaged in a wrestling match with his wrestler. Baroka is annoyed that nobody was there to greet Sidi and keep her out of his bedroom, and he explains that his servants take Sundays off now that they've formed a union. Sidi asks Baroka for forgiveness for her hasty reply. He pretends to not know what she's talking about, throwing Sidi off guard. Sidi asks after Baroka's favorite wife and asks if she was somehow dissatisfied with her husband. Baroka insists he has no time to consider his wives' reasons for being unhappy, which scares Sidi. Baroka asks her to sit down and not make him feel old.

Sidi says that the wrestler will win. Baroka explains that the wrestler *must* win, as Baroka only fights men who challenge him and he changes wrestlers when he learns how to beat them. Similarly, he takes new wives when he learns how to tire the old ones. Sidi tells Baroka that someone brought her an offer of marriage earlier that day and asks Baroka if he'd consent to allow her to marry this man if he were her father. She describes Baroka and answers his questions about her suitor in such a way as to offend Baroka. Baroka throws his wrestler and Sidi celebrates Baroka's victory. The men begin to arm wrestle and Baroka resumes his line of questioning about Sidi's suitor. Sidi insults Baroka's virility. Baroka wins the match again and sends his wrestler away. He sits down next to Sidi and laments how old he's becoming. He asks if Sadiku invented a story for Sidi, saying that Sadiku is constantly finding new women for him to marry.

Baroka pulls out the magazine and an addressed envelope. He

asks Sidi if she knows what the **stamp** is. Sidi does; she says it's a tax on "talking with paper." Baroka motions to a machine in his bedroom and says he wants to use it to print stamps for Ilujinle with Sidi's face on them. Sidi loses herself in this dream, and Baroka explains that he doesn't hate progress, he hates the sameness that progress brings. He tells Sidi that the two of them are very alike and they fit together perfectly. Sidi wonders if she's dumb like Lakunle says she is, but Baroka says she's simply truthful. He insists that the old and the new must embrace each other as Sidi's head falls onto his shoulder.

In the market that night, Lakunle and Sadiku wait for Sidi to return. A group of mummers passes them and Sadiku suggests they've heard about Baroka. She steals money from Lakunle's pockets and pays the mummers. They dance the story of Baroka's downfall, and Baroka is portrayed as a comical character. Sadiku herself gets to dance the final "scotching" of Baroka.

Sidi runs into the market crying. Both Sadiku and Lakunle try to comfort her, but she won't let them. She says that Baroka tricked them and she's no longer a virgin. Lakunle is angry for a moment, but then says he still wants to marry Sidi and no longer has to pay the bride price. Sidi runs away. Lakunle sends Sadiku after her to find out what she's doing. Sadiku returns and says that Sidi is dressing herself like a bride, and Lakunle insists that he can't get married immediately.

The dancers and Sidi re-enter the square. Sidi is beautiful. She offers Lakunle the magazine and invites him to the wedding. He insists that he must be invited, since he's the groom. Sidi laughs and says she'd never be able to marry him after experiencing Baroka. She asks the musicians to play music while she walks to Baroka's house and the dance begins. A young girl dances suggestively at Lakunle, and he chases after her.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Sidi – Sidi is the village belle of Ilujinle. She's very beautiful and is acutely aware of that fact, especially once the stranger returns to the village with a **magazine** of photographs that show Sidi in all her glory. Seeing the photographs makes Sidi obsessed with her own image and gives her an exaggerated sense of her power over men. Both Lakunle and Baroka wish to marry Sidi, but she doesn't act particularly interested in marrying either of them—she deems Baroka too old, and Lakunle insults her by calling her dumb and referring to her as a "bush-girl." However, she indicates that she supports her village's traditional way of life by implying that she'd marry any man, provided he paid her bride price.

Lakunle – Lakunle is the young schoolteacher in Ilujinle. He was educated in Lagos, presumably in a British school, which results in Lakunle's overblown sense of his grasp of English. He wishes to modernize the village and wants Sidi to marry him and be a "modern wife." In keeping with his values, Lakunle refuses to pay Sidi's bride price and instead tries to woo her with flowery language and biblical references. Lakunle speaks about village life and customs as though he finds them abhorrent, though he does seem to enjoy the village's dance performances.

Baroka – Baroka is the Bale (village chief) of Ilujinle. He's known as both the "Lion" because of his strength, and the "Fox" because of his cunning tricks. At 62 he's an older man, but he still performs impressive feats of strength despite his age. He has many wives and concubines, and he marries a new wife every few months. Though Lakunle believes that Baroka is set on preserving his traditional way of life, Baroka believes that progress can be good and necessary. However, he believes that progress must be made on his own terms and that it should not be forced on the village.

Sadiku – Sadiku is Baroka's first wife. She is very loyal to her husband and spends her time acting as a matchmaker to find him new brides and concubines. Her devotion isn't blind and unwavering, however. When Baroka confides in Sadiku that his manhood is gone, she's thrilled to have "scotched" her husband and scored a victory for all women over men. Since Sadiku is Baroka's first wife, traditional values give her a degree of power, and she fears progress and modernity.

MINOR CHARACTERS

The Wrestler – The Wrestler is a man Baroka employs to wrestle him for exercise.

The Favorite – Baroka's current favorite wife.

The Stranger – The stranger is a photographer from Lagos who stumbled upon Ilujinle sometime before the story starts. He himself never appears in the play, though Lakunle plays his part when the village acts out the stranger's arrival.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

TRADITION VS. MODERNITY

The Lion and the Jewel was written and first performed the year before Nigeria was granted its independence from Great Britain, and the script was published two years after independence. As such, one of the primary conflicts of the play pits traditional Yoruba customs against a western conception of progress and modernity, as represented by the conflict between Baroka and Lakunle for

Sidi's hand in marriage.

Lakunle represents the modern Nigerian man. He wears western clothing, has been educated in a presumably British school, and wants to turn his village into a modern paradise like the city of Lagos. Lakunle doesn't just admire and idolize western society; he actively and loudly despises the traditional customs of his village and the people who support them. This is best illustrated by Lakunle's refusal to pay Sidi's bride price. Sidi indicates that she'd marry Lakunle any time if he'd only pay the price and observe local custom. Lakunle's refusal shows that it's more important to him to convert Sidi to his way of thinking and turn her into a "modern wife" than it is for him to marry her in the first place.

For much of the play, other characters describe Baroka as being directly opposed to modernity and extremely concerned with preserving his village's traditional way of life. Lakunle, in particular, finds Baroka's lifestyle abhorrent. He describes how Baroka paid off a surveyor to not route train tracks through the outskirts of Ilujinle, thereby robbing the village of a link to the modern world that would modernize the village. However, when Baroka himself speaks, it becomes apparent that he doesn't actually hate modernity or progress. While he obviously delights in the joys and customs of village life, when it comes to modernity he simply hates having it forced upon him. He sees more value in bringing modern customs to the village on his own terms. For example, he argues that creating a postal system for the village will begin to bring it into the modern world without entirely upending the village's way of life. Further, when he does talk about modern ideas that were forced upon him, such as his servants forming a union and taking Sundays off, his tone is resigned rather than angry—he sees it as inevitable and annoying, but not bad.

The competition between Baroka and Lakunle for Sidi's hand in marriage brings the conflict between tradition and modernity to life. Baroka wishes to add Sidi to his harem of wives, while Lakunle dreams of having one wife who, in theory at least, is his equal. Both men promise Sidi a different version of power and fulfillment. When Baroka dies, Sidi will become the head wife of the new Bale, a position that would make her one of the most powerful women in the village. Lakunle, on the other hand, offers Sidi the possibility of an equal partnership in which she's not required to serve her husband as is traditional. However, the way Lakunle talks to and about Sidi indicates that agreeing to marry Lakunle and embracing modernity won't necessarily be better for her, as modern science provides Lakunle specious evidence that women are weaker and less intelligent than men. Sidi recognizes that Lakunle's idea of modernity might not improve her life; in fact, it might mean that she would have less power and fewer rights than she would have in a traditional marriage.

Baroka's actions (and the fact that he triumphs in the fight for Sidi's hand) suggest that while Lakunle may be right that Ilujinle will indeed need to join the modern world, modernization and the outright rejection of local custom simply for the sake of doing so are foolish goals that benefit nobody. Instead, Baroka's triumph suggests that progress must be made when and where it truly benefits the village and its inhabitants.

MEN VS. WOMEN

The Lion and the Jewel focuses on the competition to win Sidi's hand in marriage, which makes the play, in a sense, a battle of the sexes. As such, the play asks a number of questions about the nature of each sex's power: why men or women are powerful; how they became powerful in the first place; and how they either maintain or lose that power.

The men who fight for Sidi see her only as a beautiful prize to be won; Baroka and Lakunle value Sidi for no more than her beauty and her virginity. Meanwhile, the men in *The Lion and the Jewel* are valued by others (and value themselves) based on what they can do or have already done. Lakunle, for example, values himself because he's educated and he seeks to bring education, modernity, and Christianity to Ilujinle, and Baroka's value derives from his role as the Bale of Ilujinle and his responsibilities to keep his people safe and build his image by taking many wives and fathering children.

To both Baroka and Lakunle, Sidi is a jewel—a valuable object capable of teasing and annoying the men, but an object nonetheless. Lakunle wants Sidi to marry him so he can better perform modernity by taking a modern wife, one who wears high heels and lipstick. Similarly, Baroka wants Sidi to be his wife and complete his harem. While it's unclear whether or not Baroka will keep his promise that Sidi will be his final wife, she too will be the jewel of his wives. To both men, then, marriage to Sidi is a status symbol and an indicator of their power, virility, and the superiority of their respective ways of life (modern versus traditional). Further, the end of the play suggests that what Lakunle wants from Sidi (a modern wife to make him seem more modern) doesn't even require Sidi specifically; by immediately turning his attention to the next woman who dances at him, Lakunle indicates that while Sidi may have been an appealing prize, he can accomplish his goal of having a modern wife by marrying any woman up to the task. This reduces women in general to objects who must simply play a part in the lives of their husbands.

The idea of reducing people with little power to objects, however, works in reverse as well. When Sadiku believes Baroka's tale that his manhood (virility) is gone, she dances gleefully around a **statue of Baroka** and chants that women have won the war against men. She knows that Baroka's position of power in the village is tied to his ability to perform sexually and produce children, and she believes that when this specific power is gone, the rest of his power will also disappear,

leaving his wives (who are still capable of performing sexually and bearing children) victorious. In this case, when Baroka appears to have lost what gives him power, he's reduced to being represented by an actual object (the statue). However, the play suggests that there's a great deal of difference between Baroka's weakness being represented by an object and the fact that women are literally treated as objects. When Sadiku dances around the statue of Baroka, it's important to note that she cannot celebrate her victory publically. She can celebrate in private and taunt a representation of Baroka, but she cannot taunt Baroka himself. In contrast, Sidi, Sadiku, and other female villagers are teased, taunted, and demeaned to their faces throughout the play. They're grabbed, fondled, raped, and told that they're simple and backwards because they're women. The male characters don't have to privately taunt inanimate objects; their culture, regardless of how they engage with modernity or tradition, allows them to reduce women to objects and treat them as such.

PRIDE, VANITY, AND THE POWER OF IMAGES

As the village belle, Sidi is exceptionally vain. She knows her worth is tied to her beauty, and she wastes no time reminding Lakunle and the other villagers that she's beautiful. However, when the stranger captures Sidi's beauty on film and returns to Ilujinle with photographs, Sidi's vanity grows exponentially. The photographs introduce Sidi and the villagers to the power of images, and the ensuing events of the play explore the power derived from imagery and its relationship to pride and vanity.

After the stranger returns to Ilujinle with the magazine of photographs, Sidi deems herself more powerful than Baroka himself. The **magazine** and the photographs become evidence of her beauty and her power, and they demonstrate the power of images in several different ways. First, Sidi seems to have never seen herself in a mirror before. Because of this, seeing the magazine is the first time that Sidi has the opportunity to interpret her own image herself, rather than interpreting how others see and treat her. This turns Sidi into a Narcissus-like character, obsessed with her own image. While seeing her own image allows her to take possession of her beauty and body, it also blinds her to the fact that others, too, are attempting to control her image and body. For example, while Sidi might misinterpret the particulars of Baroka's interest in her, it's undeniable that the magazine allows him to enjoy Sidi's image without Sidi herself present and it certainly influences his decision to pursue her as a wife.

When the magazine arrives in the village, Sidi isn't the only character who's shown to be vain and prideful. The village girls make it very clear that while Baroka appears in the magazine, it would've been better for him to be left out—the photo of him is tiny and shows him next to the village latrine. By only appearing once, in a small image, and next to the toilets, Baroka's power is greatly reduced. The scorn of the village girls suggests that the image, in some ways, negates the power he has in real life.

Sidi's newfound sense of beauty and power, combined with Baroka's unflattering photo, leads Sidi to the conclusion that his offer of marriage comes from a desire to possess and control Sidi's worth. Sidi isn't wrong, and it can't be ignored that Baroka certainly wants to control her worth and keep her beauty for himself by taking Sidi as a wife. However, he also wants to control her worth by putting her photograph on a postage **stamp**—something that's mutually beneficial for them. By putting Sidi's face on a stamp, Baroka both appeals to her vanity and embraces the power of images. It allows Sidi to enjoy the fame that the magazine brought, while making her even more famous and distributing her image even further. However, it's important to make the distinction that while Sidi will certainly enjoy the fame and recognition that will come from the stamp, fame and recognition are all she'll get. She won't enjoy the economic power from the profits, and she won't be credited with modernizing the village by developing a postal system. Baroka will enjoy both of these things because he ultimately has the power to control Sidi's image and, by extension, Sidi herself.

LANGUAGE, WORDS, AND TRICKERY

The Lion and the Jewel is filled with instances of trickery, particularly surrounding language. Language is the tool by which characters fool one another, create false impressions of superiority, and convince others to support their goals. Thus, language is shown to be a source of power. However, the play ultimately suggests that language is most powerful when used without lies or misdirection, and when it is applied in service of concrete, achievable goals.

Lakunle delights in using big words and flowery language to try to impress Sidi and other villagers. While his grasp of the English language makes him feel powerful, in reality it only makes him look like a fool. For example, when Lakunle describes the custom of paying a bride price as "excommunicated" or "redundant," it becomes obvious to the play's audience that Lakunle doesn't have a complete grasp of English, despite how much he loves and flaunts the language. He uses complicated words because he knows that they are beyond the understanding of his fellow villagers. However, though he expects such language to be impressive, Sidi tells Lakunle scornfully that his words "always sound the same/and make no meaning." This suggests that even if Sidi isn't specifically aware that Lakunle is misusing words, Lakunle's performance still exposes him for the fool he is, and both the characters and the audience laugh at him for it.

Lakunle's attempts to woo Sidi by using language she doesn't understand are just one example of characters engaging in

trickery to try to achieve their goals. Sadiku and Sidi try to humiliate Baroka by tricking him into believing Sidi has accepted his offer of marriage, Baroka himself tricks both women into believing his manhood is gone, and he tricks Sidi into marrying him. All of these tricks are carried out through the use of language; they're verbal tricks rather than physical tricks. Though the success of the tricks varies from character to character, their verbal nature is indicative of the power of language and words to control others.

The play does, however, draw a distinction between tricks that are meant to spur action (like marriage or modernization of the village), and tricks that are meant to create an emotional reaction, such as humiliation. Sadiku and Sidi's attempt to humiliate Baroka by exposing his supposed inability to perform sexually (an emotional trick) is ultimately unsuccessful and makes both women look like fools in the end. Similarly, while one of Lakunle's goals was to convince Sidi to marry him, he seems far more interested in making himself look educated and modern. These tricks with purely emotional goals only work to make the tricksters themselves look silly. Baroka, on the other hand, has concrete goals and he uses a combination of trickery and telling the truth to achieve them. Much of what Baroka tells Sidi seems to be truthful: he doesn't hate progress and, in fact, he wishes to help spur progress by developing a postal system for the village. By using the truth to his advantage and setting comparatively reasonable and concrete, achievable goals (marriage to Sidi and modernization in moderation), Baroka is able to wield actual power over others.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

THE MAGAZINE

The magazines that the stranger brings to Ilujinle feature photographs of the village and its residents, including three full pages showing images of Sidi. While Sidi was the village belle long before the magazine arrived, the magazine becomes the literal source of her power over the course of the play, particularly since it depicts her beauty prominently while insulting Baroka by including only a small picture of him next to a latrine. However, even though the magazine seems to suggest that Sidi is more powerful than Baroka (the village leader), the magazine also turns Sidi into a literal object that can be consumed, used, and distributed by others. The magazine, then, is symbolic of women's existence in Ilujinle; even when women believe they are gaining power, they are still seen as objects to be consumed and controlled by others.

THE STATUE OF BAROKA

The stage directions indicate that the statue of Baroka is well-endowed, which associates the statue with Baroka's power and virility, since he derives power from his ability to have sex with his wives and father children. However, the statue doesn't appear in the play before Sadiku finds out that Baroka's manhood (virility) is gone. When Sadiku uses the statue to mock Baroka's inability to perform sexually, it turns Baroka into a joke and an object. By reducing Baroka to a literal object, the women of the play experience a sense of power and autonomy. This is a sham, however—Baroka is still able to perform sexually, which he reveals when he rapes Sidi. Thus, the statue is indicative of women's place in Yoruba society. Women are treated as living, breathing objects, and the only time they can experience power over men is when the men are reduced to actual objects. However, that power is an illusion.

POSTAGE STAMPS

Postage stamps, specifically the ones that Baroka plans to print featuring Sidi's photograph, are symbolic of the most effective way (at least in Soyinka's opinion) for Africa to modernize. Unlike railways or unions, which Baroka sees being forced on him, stamps and the development of a postal system represent a way to embrace progress and modernity without completely upending or forsaking Ilujinle's current way of life. Stamps are a modern, Western invention, but they're also something that Baroka can use on his own terms. They will allow him to dictate how, when, and how much Ilujinle progresses.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Three Crowns Books edition of *The Lion and the Jewel* published in 1997.

Morning Quotes

Lakunle: You could wear something.
Most modest women do. But you, no.
You must run around naked in the streets.
Does it not worry you... the bad names,
The lewd jokes, the tongue-licking noises
Which girls, uncovered like you,
Draw after them?

Sidi: ...Is it Sidi who makes the men choke
In their cups, or you, with your big loud words
And no meaning?

Related Characters: Lakunle, Sidi (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 3

Explanation and Analysis

Lakunle is chastising Sidi for wearing traditional Yoruba clothing, which exposes her shoulders and is therefore immodest in Lakunle's eyes. This illustrates that Lakunle, though presumably a native of Ilujinle, has a very different idea of what is appropriate than the rest of the village does. He wants Sidi to dress a certain way—a way that is not how the rest of the village dresses. Notably, this passage shows that Lakunle's association with modern norms does not necessarily mean that he believes that women should have more options available to them. Here, Lakunle's ideal is more restrictive to women than the village's current norm.

Sidi responds to Lakunle by attacking the way he speaks as a British-educated person. The language he uses, while impressive in his eyes, doesn't impress the rest of the villagers, and it specifically doesn't impress Sidi, the object of his affections. Rather, she and the villagers "choke in their cups" when he speaks, as the language makes him look silly instead of educated. Significantly too, Sidi doesn't seem at all interested in treating what Lakunle has to say as anything but offensive nonsense. An overall theme of the play is that "progress" should not be made unless it's actually helpful, and Lakunle's idea of progress is not helpful to Sidi.

> For that, what is a jewel to pigs?
> If now I am misunderstood by you
> And your race of savages, I rise above taunts
> And remain unruffled.

Related Characters: Lakunle (speaker), Sidi

Related Themes:

Page Number: 3

Explanation and Analysis

Lakunle responds to Sidi's assertion that the village views Lakunle as a madman because of his education and his love of progress and modernity. Here, he deems his education the "jewel." This shows how much he values a modern, British, Western conception of education and learning. In contrast, the villagers are the "pigs" who, in Lakunle's eyes, simply don't understand why education is so important.

It's significant that he uses the word "jewel" to describe his education, since Sidi is the "jewel of Ilujinle." That Lakunle repurposes her epithet to glorify himself hints at the fact that he sees Sidi as an accessory to his greatness, rather than a person who is valuable in her own right. Though Lakunle is likely a native of Ilujinle or a village like it, notice that he raises himself above the villagers. This shows again how much importance he places on modernity and progress, as he obviously believes that his love of progress makes him better and less "savage" than the villagers.

> Well go there. Go to these places where
> Women would understand you
> If you told them of your plans with which
> You oppress me daily.

Related Characters: Sidi (speaker), Lakunle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 5

Explanation and Analysis

Lakunle has just described the wonders of the modern city of Lagos, where modernity and Western ideals are widely accepted. In her reply, Sidi indicates that she feels oppressed by Lakunle's insistence on modern ways of life. This is important, since throughout the play Lakunle characterizes modernity as something that would offer Sidi freedom, while demonizing traditional customs and calling them barbaric. Sidi's language, as well as the outcome of the play, however, show that Lakunle's idea of modernity is indeed oppressive when it's forced upon a person or a village, while tradition can bring types of freedom that Lakunle doesn't appreciate. Sidi also turns Lakunle's condescension back at him by suggesting that women who appreciate his plans are less wise than village women, since they don't understand that his ideas are oppressive.

> Wasted! Wasted! Sidi, my heart
> Bursts into flowers with my love.
> But you, you and the dead of this village
> Trample it with feet of ignorance.

Related Characters: Lakunle (speaker), Sidi

Related Themes:

Page Number: 6

Explanation and Analysis

Lakunle attempts to convince Sidi to marry him by promising to "open her mind" and using flowery and poetic language. Sidi deems Lakunle's use of language nonsense, which illustrates the unfortunate fact that Lakunle is very out of touch with the village and the village's beliefs and customs. Lakunle's language is therefore ineffective in wooing Sidi, a traditional village girl. Further, he isn't just ineffective; he insults Sidi and the rest of the village by referring to them as "the dead" and calling them out on their "ignorance."

All of this begins to develop Lakunle's character as someone who cares more about sounding impressive than actually being impressive or effective. Throughout the play, he's teased by villagers who find his insistence on language like this either funny or threatening. His reactions to these situations show that he would rather impose modernity on the village through force and berating the villagers than by meeting the villagers where they are. Essentially, he refuses to see them as anything but ignorant.

> A savage custom, barbaric, out-dated,
> Rejected, denounced, accursed,
> Excommunicated, archaic, degrading,
> Humiliating, unspeakable, redundant.
> Retrogressive, remarkable, unpalatable.

Related Characters: Lakunle (speaker), Sidi

Related Themes:

Page Number: 7

Explanation and Analysis

Sidi reminds Lakunle that she'd be happy to marry him if he pays the bride price as is required by local custom, and Lakunle immediately and loudly launches into this string of words to describe the custom. His choice of words makes it obvious to any English speaker that Lakunle himself doesn't have a full grasp of the English language—"excommunicated" makes absolutely no sense in this context, and "remarkable" makes it seem as though he has some respect for the custom, which is the opposite of what he's trying to convey. Lakunle's use of language again makes him look foolish. Though he appears educated to the villagers (Sidi's reaction makes it seem as though she doesn't know the definitions of most of these words, though she grasps Lakunle's intended meaning), the audience or reader will see that Lakunle's education isn't as great as he thinks it is. Furthermore, even though Sidi doesn't have Lakunle's education, she consistently sees through his pretentions, which suggests that modernity is not giving him the power he believes it does.

> Ignorant girl, can you not understand?
> To pay the price would be
> To buy a heifer off the market stall.

Related Characters: Lakunle (speaker), Sidi

Related Themes:

Page Number: 8

Explanation and Analysis

Lakunle continues to speak negatively about the tradition of paying a bride price. What he says here is ironic in the context of other things he has said about the kind of marriage he wants and the kind of wife he wants Sidi to be. While he doesn't want Sidi to work for him in the same way that tradition would ask of her, what he wants would put Sidi in a similar position. Though Sidi wouldn't have to perform as much manual labor, what Lakunle wants is a wife to show off and perform the part of the perfect Western wife. He wants her to wear lipstick and high heels, and he'd like to parade her around the city for all to see. Sidi would still be an object or an animal, just one to be looked at rather than one who is supposed to work.

> It's never any use.
> Bush-girl you are, bush-girl you'll always be.
> Uncivilized and primitive—bush-girl!

Related Characters: Lakunle (speaker), Sidi

Related Themes:

Page Number: 9

Explanation and Analysis

Sidi refuses to marry Lakunle without a bride price and she is offended when Lakunle kisses her. Lakunle sees kissing as a proper Western custom, while Sidi sees it as rude and unclean. This sets up several conflicts. First, it pits Lakunle,

who represents progress and the Western world, against the traditional customs of the village. Then, Lakunle's language shows how ineffectively he communicates with the object of his affection. Though he'd previously raised Sidi up above the other villagers by insisting that she understands him, with this he insults both Sidi and the rest of the village. This makes clear that Lakunle is out of touch. It also suggests early on in the play that he doesn't care as much about Sidi as he'd like the audience to believe.

You are dressed like him
You look like him
You speak his tongue
You think like him
You're just as clumsy
In your Lagos ways—
You'll do for him!

Related Characters: Sidi (speaker), The Stranger, Lakunle

Related Themes:

Page Number: 7

Explanation and Analysis

Sidi and other villagers surround Lakunle and chant this at him to try to convince him to act the part of the stranger in the dance of the lost traveler. With their chant, the villagers turn Lakunle fully into an outsider. It's obvious that, though he exists among the villagers, they see him as a foreigner and not one of them. This begins to create the sense that modernity (as represented by Lakunle) and tradition (as represented by Baroka and the village) are in direct opposition to each other. Furthermore, the estrangement between Lakunle and the village in this passage points to the possibility that modernity and tradition cannot peacefully coexist and that Lakunle's and Baroka's ideas will never find common ground. This is a conflict that Baroka resolves later in the play when he tells Sidi that he's going to print stamps for the village and bring modernity, but on his own terms.

Noon Quotes

My name is Sidi, and I am beautiful.
The stranger took my beauty
And placed it in my hands.

Related Characters: Sidi (speaker), Sadiku, Baroka, Lakunle, The Stranger

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 20

Explanation and Analysis

Sadiku has just asked Sidi if she'd agree to marry Baroka, and Lakunle angrily responded by referring to Sidi by Biblical names. In her reply, Sidi insists that Lakunle use her real name, which shows that the photograph has given her a sense of autonomy and the power to assert her personhood. Sidi places her beauty, as revealed to her by the stranger, above both Western ideals (the Bible) and traditional images of power (Baroka). While this is definitely an empowering moment for Sidi, it's important to note that Sidi has this reaction to the magazine and the photographs because she's exceptionally vain. Though it's shown to be a positive thing for her here, her vanity and her beauty will lead to her downfall later in the play by giving her a false sense of her own power.

Baroka merely seeks to raise his manhood
Above my beauty
He seeks new fame
As the one man who has possessed
The jewel of Ilujinle!

Related Characters: Sidi (speaker), Baroka

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 20

Explanation and Analysis

Sidi tells Sadiku and Lakunle that Baroka only wants to marry her because her worth has appreciated with the photos taken by the stranger. Though Sidi is entirely correct that Baroka wants to possess and control her, and the photographs likely played a role in this decision, what's most telling about Sidi's words here is how she conceptualizes herself. Though the photographs allow Sidi to act as an independent person in charge of her life (something that the play would likely characterize as a masculine practice),

she also talks about herself like she's an object. By referring to herself as the "jewel of Ilujinle," she participates with the men in her own objectification. She conceptualizes herself as a valuable trophy that men can win or lose, not as a person who can make her own decisions and dictate the course of her own life.

> They are lies, lies. You must not believe everything you hear. Sidi, would I deceive you? I swear to you...

Related Characters: Sadiku (speaker), Baroka, Sidi

Related Themes:

Page Number: 23

Explanation and Analysis

Sidi laughs and refuses Baroka's request (through Sadiku) that she join him for dinner, saying that all women who dine with him become wives or concubines the next day. Sadiku's response suggests her loyalty to Baroka, since she is defending his reputation and doing his bidding. Her loyalty is entirely understandable; his position as the Bale of Ilujinle is what gives Sadiku her power in the first place. This moment, however, foreshadows two tricks. First, when Sadiku asks Sidi if she would deceive her, Sadiku seems to rhetorically suggest that she is an honest person, but she quickly turns to spreading Baroka's secret and to suggesting that Sidi trick Baroka, which undermines her own claim to honesty. Indeed, even if Sadiku isn't consciously tricking Sidi, this interaction is all part of Baroka's trick to get Sidi to marry him, which he pulls off by tricking Sadiku into unknowingly deceiving Sidi. Thus, though Sadiku seems as though she wouldn't purposefully attempt to deceive Sidi, she does unknowingly trick Sidi into marrying Baroka.

> Voluptuous beast! He loves this life too well
> To bear to part from it. And motor roads
> And railways would do just that, forcing
> Civilization at his door.

Related Characters: Lakunle (speaker), Baroka

Related Themes:

Page Number: 25

Explanation and Analysis

Lakunle described how Baroka paid off a surveyor to reroute a railroad away from Ilujinle. When Lakunle speaks about Baroka, he turns Baroka into a caricature of the greedy African chief, intent on keeping his traditional way of life and securing his wives by rejecting modernity outright. Lakunle, in other words, is suggesting that Baroka is denying the villagers something essential in order to secure his own personal gain. This passage doesn't reveal much about Baroka, though—when Lakunle speaks like this he only gives the sense that he himself is someone who is so caught up in pushing modernity that he's blinded to the merits of tradition and the complexity of other people's motives and values. Lakunle fights for a way of life that completely rejects any traditional customs in favor of modern ones, which the play shows is an ineffective and condescending goal. Therefore, by taking this position and loudly evangelizing it at every chance, Lakunle is only made to look like a fool.

Night Quotes

> Like the foolish top you think the world revolves around you... fools! fools! it is you who run giddy while we stand still and watch, and draw your frail thread from you, slowly, till nothing is left but a runty old stick.

Related Characters: Sadiku (speaker), Baroka

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 32

Explanation and Analysis

Sadiku dances around a statue of Baroka as she privately celebrates that Baroka's manhood is gone and women, consequently, have won. This suggests that, while men might have the majority of the power, men's power is directly related to their ability to perform sexually and father children. This is something that diminishes with age in most cases, which adds an element of tenuousness to the idea of male power and gives an opening for women to gain power even within traditional structures.

While Sadiku's monologue attempts to profess the rise of female power in the traditional patriarchal society, the staging suggests otherwise. Sadiku offers an image of men as spinning tops, powered by women, whose motion (or power) will eventually run out. However, onstage the statue of Baroka remains still, while Sidi is the one giddily spinning

around it. Thus, Sidi's actions are symbolically at odds with her words, suggesting that the female power she asserts might not be so straightforward.

For though you're nearly seventy,
Your mind is simple and unformed.
Have you no shame that at your age,
You neither read nor write nor think?

Related Characters: Lakunle (speaker), Sadiku

Related Themes:

Page Number: 37

Explanation and Analysis

Lakunle berates Sadiku for doing nothing with her life besides being Baroka's wife and chief matchmaker. Once again, Lakunle either refuses to see or is genuinely unable to understand that Sadiku enjoys a great deal of power in her position as head wife. She likely wouldn't possess that much power in the modern system that Lakunle advocates, mostly because the polygamous system enables her to act as a matchmaker and control whom Baroka weds, while a monogamous system would deny her that ability.

Lakunle also continues to place a great deal of importance on Western modes of learning and education. Instead of acknowledging that Sadiku knows how to pound yams and grind pepper, as Sidi acknowledged in the beginning of the play as valuable skills, Lakunle only sees that she doesn't know how to read. This continues to pit modernity against tradition and sets the play up for its resolution in which the two find a happy medium.

Ah, I forget. This is the price I pay
Once every week, for being progressive.
Prompted by the school teacher, my servants
Were prevailed upon to form something they call
The Palace Workers' Union. And in keeping
With the habits—I am told—of modern towns,
This is their day off.

Related Characters: Baroka (speaker), Lakunle, Sidi

Related Themes:

Page Number: 38

Explanation and Analysis

Sidi enters Baroka's house unannounced because it's the servants' day off. Though Lakunle has consistently described Baroka as being in direct opposition to modernity and progress, in this passage Baroka doesn't seem angry at having to comply with his servants' demands to unionize and have days off. Instead, he seems merely resigned, though possibly annoyed. However, the fact that Baroka isn't angry or upset that he's being forced to accept this facet of modernity indicates that Baroka isn't the enemy of modernity. This moment begins to develop the plausibility of Baroka's belief that modernity isn't always a bad thing. Instead of rejecting all signs of modernity outright, he simply wants to be an active participant and have decision-making power in how Ilujinle modernizes. In addition, he wants modernity only when it actually benefits the village.

Did she not, perhaps... invent some tale?
For I know Sadiku loves to be
All-knowing.

Related Characters: Baroka (speaker), Sidi, Sadiku

Related Themes:

Page Number: 48

Explanation and Analysis

Baroka insists that Sidi has been talking to Sadiku, but Sidi denies this accusation. The audience sees here that Baroka is fully aware that Sadiku gets her power from the way she uses language to manipulate people. He knows that she's notorious for inventing stories, which hints at the fact that Sadiku's story might not actually correlate with her increased power and that Sidi's trick (which was inspired by Sadiku's story) might not work as she intends. In this passage, Baroka proves himself to be as sly as his reputation suggests. Though he is calling Sadiku out on her tricks, he's also trying to trick Sidi by suggesting that Sadiku is trying to trick her. The many layers of tricks throughout the play show that trickery is a primary mode through which people seek power, and that tricks can be a successful method for accomplishing goals, as long as the player of tricks isn't outsmarted.

To think that once I thought,
Sidi is the eye's delight, but
She is vain, and her head
Is feather-light, and always giddy
With a trivial thought. And now
I find her deep and wise beyond her years.

Related Characters: Baroka (speaker), Sidi

Related Themes:

Page Number: 49

Explanation and Analysis

Baroka has asked Sidi if she's behaving as a good village girl should, and Sidi assures him that she is. With his reply, Baroka tries to flatter Sidi. It's obvious that Sidi is exceptionally vain, and her vanity blinds her to some of the nuance of what's going on around her. However, by calling Sidi deep and wise, Baroka compliments Sidi and also throws her off balance, since she never expected to have this particular conversation with Baroka or to be complimented on any aspect of herself besides her looks.

On another level, Baroka implies that Sidi's depth comes from her willingness to follow traditional customs and see the value in them. He proposes that Sidi is wise because she rejects Lakunle's insistence on progress for progress' sake, and instead chooses to embrace tradition and the parts of modernity that she finds useful. Not coincidentally, if Sidi were to take his praise at face value, it would suggest that she should marry Baroka, who embodies tradition.

I do not hate progress, only its nature
Which makes all roofs and faces look the same.

Related Characters: Baroka (speaker), Sidi

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 52

Explanation and Analysis

Baroka tells Sidi of his plans to create a postal system for the village with stamps featuring Sidi's photograph on them. This refutes Lakunle's insistence that Baroka is directly against modernity, and suggests that he only hates progress when it happens simply for the sake of progress. Baroka suggests here that modernity is a good thing when it directly benefits him or the village, though that doesn't stop him from lamenting the fact that modernity inevitably entails things progressively becoming more the same. This shows, too, that Baroka takes great pride in the day-to-day activities and customs of the village. Those activities presumably would be gradually phased out were the village to modernize, causing the village to lose what makes it special and unique. Overall, Baroka humanizes himself here and shows himself to be a caring person, not the backwards villain that Lakunle made him out to be. However, it's worth noting that this quote can be read, too, as a subtle threat. If Sidi's power comes from her beauty, then Baroka is suggesting that modernity could undermine that power by making all "faces look the same."

The old must flow into the new, Sidi,
Not blind itself or stand foolishly
Apart. A girl like you must inherit
Miracles which age alone reveals.

Related Characters: Baroka (speaker), Lakunle, Sidi

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 54

Explanation and Analysis

Baroka explains to Sidi that he and Lakunle have a lot to learn from each other, and that progress and modernity must coexist in order for society to experience success. With this, Baroka shows that he's not the backwards, selfish man that Lakunle thought he was. Baroka is actually interested in helping his people and embracing modernity where he sees an actual benefit to doing so. He also makes an underhanded jab at Lakunle with this, as Lakunle certainly both blinds himself to the positive aspects of tradition and stands apart from it.

Finally, this is also dripping with sexual innuendo. Baroka sees that his marriage to Sidi and the consummation of that marriage represents the union of tradition and modernity. He insists here that it's necessary for Sidi to marry him to allow Ilujinle, and Nigeria as a whole, to develop successfully.

Dear Sidi, we shall forget the past.
This great misfortune touches not
The treasury of my love.
But you will agree, it is only fair
That we forget the bride-price totally
Since you no longer can be called a maid.

Related Characters: Lakunle (speaker), Baroka, Sadiku, Sidi

Related Themes:

Page Number: 60

Explanation and Analysis

Sidi has just revealed to Sadiku and Lakunle that Baroka raped her and she's no longer a virgin. Lakunle makes it very clear that he doesn't value Sidi for any of the reasons she values herself. For him, the fact that she's no longer a virgin simply makes his goals easier to accomplish, as that gets rid of the need for either the bride price or convincing Sidi to marry him without one. It shows that he views the fight for Sidi's hand in marriage as a purely logistical one.

This also shows how self-centered Lakunle is. It never even occurs to him that Sidi might not want to marry him, and it certainly never crosses his mind that she might want to marry Baroka. This illustrates how he views women as mostly unthinking, silly objects. He can't conceptualize that Sidi would choose to marry Baroka, if only because he can't conceptualize that Sidi is capable of making her own decisions.

A present from Sidi.
I tried to tear it up
But my fingers were too frail.

Related Characters: Sidi (speaker), Lakunle

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 63

Explanation and Analysis

When Sidi returns to the village square after preparing herself for her wedding, she offers Lakunle a copy of the magazine as a gift. Sidi indicates that she wasn't physically strong enough to destroy the magazine and the photographs of herself in it. The fact that Sidi couldn't tear it up is a metaphor for the fact that Sidi ended up being unable to control her image—in fact, others were able to use it to control her. Even though the photographs made Sidi feel beautiful and powerful when she first saw them, they ultimately took her power away by opening her up to Baroka's manipulation.

By giving the magazine and her photographs away, Sidi forfeits control of her own image to both Baroka and Lakunle. Though the village (and Sidi with it) will ultimately prosper from the stamps that feature Sidi's image, the fact that she couldn't control how her image was used suggests that modernity isn't always predictable, and further, isn't always good for everyone.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

MORNING

Sidi, dressed in traditional broadcloth and balancing a pail of water on her head, walks through a clearing near Ilujinle's schoolhouse. Students in the school recite the multiplication table as the young schoolteacher, Lakunle, notices Sidi and comes outside. He's dressed in a too-small western suit and tennis shoes.

By beginning the stage directions with a description of the differences between Sidi and Lakunle's styles of dress, Soyinka sets up the idea that Ilujinle is a place where Western ideas and traditional customs converge. The setting of the school indicates that the modern ideas have an advantage.

Lakunle tries to take the pail of water from Sidi and spills water on himself in the process. Sidi and Lakunle tease each other and Lakunle tells Sidi that she shouldn't carry loads on her head because doing so will squash her elegantly long neck. Sidi reminds Lakunle that he told her only yesterday that he'd still love her no matter what she looked like.

When Lakunle tries to take the pail, he makes a fool of himself by spilling. It also suggests that he doesn't value traditions, such as a woman carrying water on her head. Sidi's reply tries to assert her autonomy and value outside of her body, and it also sets up the romantic relationship between the two.

Lakunle changes the subject. Motioning at Sidi's breasts and bare shoulders, he tells her that a "grown-up girl" must cover her shoulders so that the men of the village don't ogle her. Sidi, annoyed, tells Lakunle that she can't tie her broadcloth any higher or tighter and still be able to use her arms. Lakunle says that "modest women" cover themselves, and asks if it bothers Sidi to hear the taunts from men. Exasperated by this, Sidi reminds Lakunle that the village calls him a madman with his "big loud words and no meaning," while nobody says anything of the sort to her.

Lakunle makes it very clear that he despises the local style of dress. It's not just primitive; it's immodest and in his eyes, reflects poorly on Sidi's character. Sidi's reply suggests that though the village may be modernizing, it is still a place where traditions are followed--Sidi's dress doesn't elicit the lewd reaction Lakunle thinks it should, while Lakunle's wholehearted acceptance of modern dress and ideas is alienating to the villagers.

After a moment, Lakunle recovers himself and declares that he will rise above the taunts from the "savages" of the village. This angers Sidi and she threatens to hit Lakunle, who responds airily that such a reaction from a woman is only natural, as women have smaller brains than men. Sidi becomes even angrier and she asks him where he gets these ideas. Lakunle refuses to engage, saying the argument will go over Sidi's head anyway. He grabs her, holds onto her, and implores her to not be angry with him specifically, since scientists say that women have small brains and are the weaker sex, not him.

Lakunle doesn't just despise the customs of the village; he despises the villagers themselves. Further, he doesn't seem to hold Sidi in very high regard, even if he is romantically interested in her. By refusing to actually engage with Sidi and treat her as an equal, he turns Sidi into an object. It crystallizes the idea that he only values her for her looks and the thrill of the chase.

Sidi throws Lakunle off of her and asks if women who pound yams and plant crops with babies on their backs are truly weak. Lakunle only says that soon the village will have machines to perform those tasks, and Sidi accuses him of turning the world upside down. Lakunle clarifies that he only means to transform the village, and that he means to start with Baroka, the village Bale (leader). Lakunle refuses to tell Sidi why he means to go after Baroka specifically.

Sidi evidently finds the life of women in the village to be worthwhile and deserving of respect. She sees that it requires strength and dedication to perform these feminine tasks, and Lakunle's reaction suggests that he doesn't see value in these tasks. He values women because he sees them as beautiful, not because he values what they can do.

Sidi asks Lakunle where his crazy thoughts come from. He describes the city of Lagos, where ideas like his are commonplace. Sidi tells him to go to Lagos where the women won't find his ideas oppressive. She declares that she's leaving and asks for her pail, but Lakunle refuses to give it to her unless she swears to marry him. He takes Sidi's hand and emotionally tells her that she understands him. Sidi is confused, but Lakunle goes on to promise that he'll open her mind.

Lakunle wants to teach Sidi just like his students and bring her fully into the modern era. This desire only adds to the power he already holds over her as a man. Sidi again shows that she finds the customs of the village reasonable, while those that Lakunle embraced from Lagos, while modern, are stifling and oppressive.

Sidi declares that she endured enough of Lakunle's nonsense the day before. Lakunle loudly takes offense to having his ideas called nonsense. He tells Sidi that his heart is bursting with love, but the villagers, including Sidi, are trampling his heart with their ignorance. Completely baffled, Sidi asks Lakunle why he even stays in the village. Lakunle says that he has faith and again implores Sidi to pledge her love to him so that he can "stand against earth, heaven, and the nine Hells."

Here, Lakunle intends for his language to sound impressive and make him sound smart, but it only makes Sidi confused and makes Lakunle look like a fool. He also insults the villagers (and Sidi by extension) by calling them ignorant. This begins to suggest that he won't be successful in wooing Sidi, as he's incapable of paying her a real compliment.

Angry again, Sidi tells Lakunle that his words sound the same but mean nothing. She reminds him that she'd be happy to marry him any day, provided he pays the bride price for her. She asks him if he wants the village to think she wasn't a virgin and had to shamefully marry him without a price. Lakunle spews a string of words to describe the custom of paying a bride price, including "excommunicated" and "redundant" along with "humiliating" and "degrading." When Sidi asks saucily if he has more words, Lakunle replies that he only has the Shorter Companion Dictionary.

Lakunle looks even more foolish as the reader/audience realizes that though he loves the English language, he evidently doesn't have a complete grasp of it. Sidi's insistence on the bride price shows that she believes her worth comes primarily from her virginity, as marrying Lakunle without the bride price would be shameful and indicate that she wasn't a virgin. She's trying to use the traditional system to improve her own situation.

Sidi tells Lakunle to pay the price, and Lakunle again shouts more words to describe the tradition of the bride price. He tells Sidi that he doesn't want a wife to simply serve him and bear children—he wants a life companion, a friend, and a partner. Sidi pretends to have lost interest and inspects her necklace, but tells Lakunle again to pay the bride price. Lakunle tenderly tells Sidi that paying a price would be no different than buying a cow at the market. He describes that when they're married, they'll eat off of breakable plates and sit at a table, and they'll walk together on the streets. He says that Sidi will wear high heels and lipstick, they'll frequent nightclubs, and that they'll kiss. He kisses her.

This is a sharp turn for Lakunle. He goes from calling Sidi simple to telling her that as a married couple, she'll be his equal. This shows that Lakunle uses modernity and progress where it suits him, though not necessarily across the board. He seems far more interested in the idea of having a modern marriage than the reality of having a marriage that would make Sidi an equal. Sidi's reaction suggests that she understands this on some level. She sees that there's more for her to gain from the traditional system that places monetary value on her.

Backing away with disgust, Sidi states that she hates kissing. She deems it unclean and asks if Lakunle is being rude to her by making the kissing sound. Lakunle sadly tells Sidi that she's a "bush-girl" and always will be, and says that kissing is part of "civilized romance." Sidi lightly corrects him and says that it's a way to cheat and not pay the bride price. Lakunle offers some poetic lines about romance. Sidi simply stares at him for a minute before telling him that she's beginning to understand why the village calls him mad. She says that Lakunle will surely ruin his students.

Again, Lakunle's attempt to behave in a modern way and draw Sidi into a modern relationship backfires because Sidi doesn't place value on modern practices like kissing. Sidi in fact finds the practice of kissing repulsive, particularly since it doesn't benefit her. Lakunle looks like a fool to Sidi again when he uses such poetic language, as well as the term "bush-girl." He continues to alienate his object of affection.

Sidi and Lakunle hear people coming. Sidi asks for her pail of water so the villagers won't tease her. A group of young people enters the clearing. The young women are extremely excited and tell Sidi that the stranger with the "one-eyed box" came back to the village. Sidi asks if he brought the images, and one of the girls says that he brought a **book** that shows pictures of the entire village. Sidi excitedly asks if the girls saw the book and if it truly made her look beautiful, like the stranger said it would.

Sidi must regain her water bucket or risk looking like she's actually interested in Lakunle's modern ideas, something that presumably would make the villagers call her *mad. The appearance of the magazine begins to introduce the power of images to the characters. Sidi hasn't seen herself yet, but she's going to finally get the opportunity to see her beauty for herself and control it.*

One of the girls says that the **book** surely makes Sidi look beautiful, and that Baroka is still looking at the images. The girl tells Sidi that there's a photo of Sidi on the cover, and one that spans two pages in the middle that shows Sidi from head to toe. The girl tells Sidi that it looks like the sun is her lover in that photograph. One of the other girls says that Baroka is pretending to be proud of Sidi, but that he's actually jealous.

Despite Lakunle's mysterious contempt for Baroka (which stems from Lakunle's love of the modern and his belief that Baroka is in direct opposition to progress), the fact that Baroka seems proud of Sidi because she's bringing fame to the village suggests that Baroka might not be as against modernity as Lakunle believes he is.

Sidi asks if Baroka's photo is in the **magazine** as well, and one of the girls says with contempt that while his image is in the book, the photo of him is very small and next to the latrines. It would've been better if he hadn't been in the book at all. Sidi excitedly asks the girl to swear that it's true, and the girl does.

The way the girls talk about Baroka's photo suggests that there's no other way for a viewer of the magazine to tell that Baroka is a powerful person in real life. Sidi, on the other hand, looks very powerful in the magazine as the cover girl and with a two-page spread inside.

Sidi declares that the images of her mean that she's more powerful than Baroka. Lakunle petulantly declares Baroka a "devil among women" and deems it divine justice that a woman is more powerful than he is. Sidi tells Lakunle to be quiet and suggests that she has no reason to marry him now, as marrying a schoolteacher would hurt her newfound fame. Lakunle looks stricken, but Sidi happily reminds Lakunle again that she's more famous than Baroka thanks to the images. She asks how many "leaves" of the **magazine** her own image occupies and forces Lakunle to count them. When he does, she leaps around and cheers for her own beauty and the stranger. The crowd joins in her cheers.

Sidi suggests that the images are powerful enough to make the power dynamic in the magazine manifest in real life, affording her power she's never had before. We already see that Sidi finds this power intoxicating, as threatening to not marry Lakunle and forcing him to count the "leaves" she occupies is a way for her to clearly assert her power over him. This suggests that even if the photographs don't directly instantiate the power they suggest, the fact that they make Sidi feel powerful has real life effects.

Sidi suggests that they dance the dance of the "lost traveler." She moves through the crowd and divvies out parts. Four girls are assigned to play the wheels of the traveler's car, a young boy will play a python, and Sidi struggles to find someone who will be able to appropriately play the drunk stranger. She turns to Lakunle and assigns him the part, which Lakunle refuses by saying he's never been drunk. Sidi says that Lakunle's father drank enough for Lakunle. Lakunle tries to escape to teach a geography lesson, but Sidi wildly says that it's a holiday now that the stranger is back—the students aren't in school anymore.

Lakunle tries to use progress and modernity to escape the dance, which is a vital part of traditional village life. However, Lakunle encounters the problem that modernity (in the form of the traveler with the magazine) is still a novelty for the village and therefore Lakunle's beloved school is canceled. Again, this shows that Lakunle doesn't embrace all modernity—he only uses modernity and progress when it suits him.

The group drags Lakunle towards the center of the clearing as he states that the dance is idiotic and he has more important things to do. Sidi and the villagers surround Lakunle and chant that Lakunle looks, speaks, thinks, and is clumsy like the stranger, and so he'll do for the part. After six or seven times through the chant, which grows progressively louder and faster, Lakunle agrees to participate.

The chant mimics Lakunle's own words when he calls Sidi a "bush-girl." It's similarly scathing, which suggests that the villagers themselves, like Lakunle, only selectively embrace modernity when it's novel or interesting.

Lakunle enthusiastically positions the cast throughout the clearing as parts of the jungle. He directs the four girls who will play the wheels of the car. While Lakunle performs realistic miming, everyone else truly dances. The girls dance the car driving and then breaking down. Lakunle inspects his "wheels" and pinches the girls as he does so. One bites him back. Lakunle grabs his "camera" and sets off through the human jungle, taking swigs from his imaginary flask as the snake and a monkey dance at him and scare him.

Lakunle's enthusiasm suggests that his harsh words about the villagers and the "idiotic" practice of dancing don't actually express his true thoughts. As he acts the part of the stranger, he treats the female villagers as literal objects by pinching them. This shows that he has no problem actually treating women as objects, just like he thinks of them as objects.

Lakunle as the stranger hears a woman singing and in his drunken state, thinks he has heatstroke. He tosses his imaginary bottle at the sound and hears a scream. He peers through the forest, whistles, and pulls out his camera to find the perfect shot. In the process, he falls into the river. The woman screams again and Sidi comes out from the trees, barely covered. She runs away and returns with the dancers playing the jungle, reformed as villagers. They grab Lakunle and lead him to the center of the clearing.

The image of Sidi bathing in the river is powerful enough to pull the stranger out of his drunken stupor, which certainly only increases Sidi's vanity. The support of the villagers shows that a traditional way of life provides support and protection when necessary. Notably, the village acts menacingly towards modernity (as symbolized by the stranger) that they didn't ask for.

Baroka enters and the dance abruptly stops as everyone kneels and respectfully greets him. Lakunle tries to sneak off, but Baroka calls him out. Lakunle greets Baroka with "good morning," which doesn't please Baroka. He asks Lakunle if they're feuding, and Lakunle claims they aren't. Baroka goes on to say that the dance was in full swing until he arrived, right on cue. Lakunle says that surely the Bale of the village doesn't have time for such nonsense, but Baroka says that his life would be dull without the "nonsense."

Baroka is offended by Lakunle's choice to use modern language rather than address him with traditional greetings. Regardless of what the magazine might suggest about Baroka's power, the village's reaction to his arrival indicates that the power he holds in the real world hasn't suffered.

Baroka suggests that they resume the dance and commands his attendants to seize Lakunle. Lakunle is perplexed, but Baroka accuses him of stealing the "village maidenhead." Lakunle nods and steps back into his role as the stranger. The villagers threateningly surround him and throw Lakunle down on his stomach. Baroka decides to take pity on the stranger and calls off the mutinous villagers. He sets out a feast in the stranger's honor, and the stranger photographs everything. Sidi dances wildly and he takes a number of photographs of her. The stranger drinks the local village brew until he has to leave to vomit. As Lakunle runs away, the dance ends.

Baroka's willingness to participate in the dance begins to suggest that he and Lakunle might share some similarities with each other. Further, his actions show that he doesn't necessarily hate modernity, since he threw a feast in honor of a man who represents nothing but modernity. Sidi knows that she's powerful because of her beauty, and she uses that to garner the attention of the stranger.

Lakunle returns and Sidi happily tells him that he was a perfect stranger and should've been a jester instead of a teacher. Baroka asks where the village would be without Lakunle's wisdom. Sidi is barely listening. She rallies her friends to go find the real stranger and his photographs, and tells Lakunle he must come to translate for them. Sidi and the villagers chase Lakunle as they all run away. Baroka, now alone, sits down and takes out his copy of the **magazine**. He admires the photos of Sidi and says to himself that he hasn't taken a wife in five months.

Baroka's language continues to develop the idea that he doesn't think modernity and progress are entirely bad; he understands that Lakunle's insistence on progress and education is doing good things for the village. When Baroka takes out his magazine, it begins to develop the idea that magazines hold power because they're easily distributed. He can consume Sidi's image without Sidi herself present.

NOON

Sidi walks down the road followed by Lakunle, who is carrying firewood for her. Sidi is engrossed in the photographs of herself in the **magazine.** Sadiku, Baroka's first wife, is coming towards them on the road and she startles Sidi. The women greet each other and Sidi excitedly shows Sadiku the photographs, pointing out the gloss of the pages. Sadiku tells Sidi that she has a message from Baroka and suggests they speak privately. Sidi offhandedly says to ignore Lakunle, and Sadiku says that Baroka wants to marry Sidi.

Finally, Sidi actually gets to see the photograph of herself. Her vanity means that she's more than ready to participate in distributing the images, thereby spreading the photo that stands as proof of her beauty (and power) to the entire village. Notice here that while carrying firewood is something that Sidi would traditionally do, she's allowing Lakunle to do it for her—the images give her an exaggerated sense of her own importance.

Lakunle drops the wood and begins calling Baroka greedy and a trickster. Sidi asks Lakunle to be quiet, but Lakunle only drops to his knees, grabs Sidi's hands, and begins to kiss them. He invokes the names of women from the Bible and implores Sidi to not listen to Baroka. Sidi snatches her hands back, tells Lakunle that her name is Sidi, and says that she doesn't need Lakunle's funny names since the stranger put Sidi's beauty right into her hands.

Here, Sidi mimics Lakunle and is cherry picking which parts of modernity suit her (in this case, photography rather than the Bible). Lakunle's language again makes him look silly rather than worthy of Sidi's affection. Notice too that Sidi didn't simply get control of her own beauty—a man gave it to her. This shows that she's not fully in control of her image.

Sadiku asks Sidi if she'll agree to be Baroka's "jewel." Sidi tells Sadiku that she won't fall prey to Baroka now that she's famous, which makes Lakunle smile. Sadiku tells Sidi that Baroka has promised that Sidi will be his last wife. This means that when he dies, Sidi will be the senior wife of the new Bale, and until then, she'll be the favorite. Sadiku says it's a life of luxury and one that she herself has led for the last 41 years.

Notice here that it's not only the men who reduce women to objects; the women also talk about each other as though they're objects. However, by accepting Baroka's offer of marriage Sidi would be afforded a great deal of power. Though Lakunle has indicated that a modern marriage would also give Sidi power, his other language suggests otherwise.

Sidi refuses. She says that Baroka only wants to marry her because the stranger increased her worth with the photos. She insists that Baroka wants to have her as property, that he wants little more than to be famous for possessing the "jewel of Ilujinle." Sadiku is bewildered and asks Sidi if she's sick. Sadiku turns suddenly to Lakunle and accuses him of driving Sidi mad. Lakunle runs a little ways away and calls Sadiku a hag.

Sidi understands that in this situation, modernity in the form of the photos gives her the power to refuse both traditional and modern marriages. However, she still objectifies herself by referring to herself as the "jewel of Ilujinle." Sadiku sees this as a direct result of Lakunle's insistence on modernity, which directly threatens the traditional system of Ilujinle.

Sidi instructs Sadiku to return to Baroka and tell him that she won't marry him. Sidi opens the **magazine** and points at the photographs, saying that she never realized before how old Baroka is. She runs her fingers over the pages, saying that she never noticed how smooth her skin is, and nobody ever complimented her breasts. Lakunle tells Sidi that he would've, but it wasn't proper. Sidi ignores him and continues to describe her beauty compared to Baroka's advanced age. She calls him leathery and "the hindquarters of a lion." Sadiku gasps.

Sidi demonstrates her intense vanity, which the power of images has exaggerated. While it's indicated that she's always been vain, seeing her own image makes her feel as though she has the power to exist outside of both traditional and modern systems. This is illustrated by her insult to Baroka's age, which is a direct insult to tradition.

Sadiku finally asks Sango (a Yoruba god) to help Sidi, saying that an angry god is surely possessing her. She begins to leave but turns back again a moment later. Sadiku says that if she won't marry Baroka, he at least requests her presence that night for a small feast in her honor. Sidi laughs and says she knows all about Baroka's suppers. Sadiku says that whatever Sidi's heard is all lies, but Sidi asks if it's true that every woman who eats with Baroka becomes a wife or a concubine the next day.

Baroka has evidently been successful in the past in tricking women into becoming wives and concubines through appealing to their pride and vanity with these suppers. Here, Sidi's pride saves her from this fate for the time being. Sadiku's comment about Sidi being possessed by a traditional Yoruba god is somewhat humorous, considering that Sidi is actually being influenced by the photographs (and, symbolically, by modernity).

Lakunle asserts himself again and says that Baroka is called "the Fox" for a reason. Though Sadiku tells him to be quiet, Lakunle says Baroka is known even in surrounding towns for being a trickster. He asks if the women have heard about how Baroka stopped the construction of a railway through Ilujinle. Sadiku says it's all hearsay, but Sidi asks Lakunle to explain.

Remember that Sadiku as the first wife of Baroka has a lot to gain from supporting him and his beliefs. The traditional system that allows for polygamy (and is in direct opposition to modern things like the railroad) is what keeps her in power and allows her to live her "life of luxury."

Lakunle gestures towards where the track was supposed to be constructed. Prisoners enter to cut through the jungle, and their foreman sets up camp. The foreman consults the map and instructs the prisoners in where to cut down the forest. Lakunle explains that they marked the line of the tracks, which would have brought Ilujinle modernity, fame, and civilization. Baroka's wrestler, upon seeing the prisoners working, looks horrified and fetches Baroka.

Notice here that Lakunle mentions specifically that the railroad would've brought Ilujinle fame. Supposedly, Sidi's photographs in the magazine also brought Ilujinle fame, which introduces the possibility that modernity doesn't have to happen in only one way. There are multiple ways the village can modernize, despite what Lakunle says.

Baroka takes in the sight and leaves the surveyor to his work. Soon the surveyor and the prisoners hear fearful noises coming from the jungle. Baroka appears with a young woman bearing a gift for the surveyor of cash and food. The surveyor consults his map several more times as Baroka adds more items and money to the pile of gifts. Finally, the surveyor realizes that he made a mistake and the tracks never should've been so close to Ilujinle. He and Baroka drink wine together and the surveyor and his prisoners pack up and leave.

By scaring the surveyor and his work crew, Baroka suggests to the surveyor that there might be negative consequences for laying the railroad so close to Ilujinle. Though the reasons for Baroka's insistence on maintaining his traditional way of life remain unclear, this shows that he'll go to great lengths to maintain it.

Lakunle shakes his fist and declares that Baroka loves his life too much to allow the village to modernize. He says that by rerouting the tracks, Baroka secured his animals, wives, and concubines. Lost in thought, Lakunle remarks that Baroka does have quite a selective eye for women. As Sidi and Sadiku slip away, Lakunle muses on the life of luxury Baroka leads with all his beautiful women. Lakunle wonders if he envies Baroka, but decides he doesn't. He states he stands for modernity and wants Sidi to be his soul mate. He finally notices that Sidi is gone, yells for her, and rushes after her with the firewood.

Again, Lakunle is insisting that there's little room for compromise in regards to progress and modernization; he believes that the tracks would've immediately meant that Baroka lost control of his wives and concubines. This continues to illustrate that Lakunle sees no middle ground or room for compromise. For him, modernity must happen on his terms and on his schedule.

In his bedroom, Baroka lies in bed with his current favorite wife. He's wearing only baggy pants. Baroka's wife is plucking hairs from his armpit, which Baroka finds enjoyable. His wife asks if she's helping, and Baroka tells her she's being too gentle still. When she says that she'll have time to learn, Baroka tells her she has no time, as he plans to take another wife and the honor of plucking his armpits is reserved for the newest wife. The favorite plucks the next several hairs sharply. Baroka sits up angrily and deems his favorite vengeful.

The staging of this scene begins to develop Baroka as exactly the way Lakunle describes him: a womanizer, anti-progress, and living the life of luxury as facilitated by his many wives. He's also quick to anger when those around him don't behave perfectly. Notice too that at this point, the favorite doesn't have a name. She's an object; the lack of a name denies her full personhood.

Sadiku enters the bedroom and bows to Baroka. Baroka asks if she's brought balm for his armpit and sends his favorite away. Sadiku explains that Sidi refused to marry Baroka. Baroka is unconcerned. He says they all refuse at first and he asks why Sidi refused. Sadiku explains that Sidi thinks Baroka is old.

Baroka has obviously engaged in this song and dance before; he speaks like someone confident that Sidi will come to her senses and agree to marry him. He thinks that he's very powerful and will certainly be able to sway her.

Baroka angrily jumps up, incensed that a young girl would say such a thing. He asks Sadiku if it's possible and lists his achievements of the last week: winning a log-tossing match, hunting leopards, and climbing the silk-cotton tree to break the first pod. He asks Sadiku if any of his wives think his "manliness" is failing, saying that all of them are tired long before he is. He states that Sidi would tire too, if he had the chance to show her how great age is. Baroka lies back down on the bed and asks Sadiku to soothe him.

Baroka continues to appear self-centered and vain as he lists his accomplishments. His accomplishments illustrate what makes men powerful in Yoruba society: strength, hunting skills, and the ability to perform sexually and father children. Notice too that he situates himself as a teacher when he mentions showing Sidi how great age is. This phrasing allows him to give himself power.

Sadiku sits down and begins to tickle Baroka's feet. Baroka grabs a **magazine** from under the bed and opens it to look at the photos of Sidi. With a sigh, he compares some of the photos in the magazine before flinging it away. He says that maybe it's for the best that Sidi won't marry him. Sadiku, curious at this, asks Baroka to repeat himself. He continues that the laughter would've been awful if Sidi had agreed to marry him and his "purpose" failed. Sadiku says she doesn't understand. Baroka admits that his "manhood" (virility) ended last week, and he hoped that a virgin would restore his manhood. Shocked, Sadiku moans and cries.

The way that Baroka acts and phrases the admission that his virility is gone works as a way for Baroka to give up power to Sidi and the other women around him. He admits that he thinks Sidi has power as a virgin, and he evidently is willing to accept the power structure as presented by the photographs (Sidi as powerful, Baroka as decidedly not powerful).

Suddenly, Baroka sits up and tells Sadiku that she's the only one he's told about this since she's the oldest and most faithful of his wives, and he instructs her to tell no one. Sadiku tenderly returns to Baroka's feet. Baroka sighs and muses that he's growing increasingly irritable. He says he's only 62, while his grandfather fathered two boys at the age of 65 and his father had twin girls at 67. Baroka laments having to give up his wives so early in life.

If a reader takes Lakunle's characterization of Baroka as fact, this whole thing begins to look very suspicious. Baroka is known as "the fox" and has a reputation as a trickster, particularly when it comes to his wives. Notice though that Sadiku seems to take Baroka's confession at face value.

Baroka exclaims that many women's hands have caressed his feet, some clumsy, some too dainty. He says that Sadiku's hands, however, are the best and he calls her the queen of all his wives. Baroka falls asleep suddenly.

Baroka confirms that Sadiku enjoys a great deal of power as the first wife. Again, what gives her this power is the polygamous and traditional societal structure of Ilujinle.

NIGHT

Later that evening, Sidi stands by the schoolhouse and admires her photographs in the **magazine**. Sadiku furtively enters the village center with a bundle. She pulls out a carved **figure** of Baroka, studies it, and laughs. She sets it down as Sidi stares. Sadiku addresses the figure, asking if his wives "scotched" him. She cackles and describes how she scotched Baroka's father years ago with her youth and strength. She says that women will always consume men. She laughs again and says that men run wildly while women just stand, watch, and draw the life from men.

Sidi continues to demonstrate her vanity. She's becoming increasingly Narcissus-like as she focuses on her own image and becomes blinded to the rest of the world. The statue of Baroka would've once functioned as a representation of Baroka's power and manliness, but now that his virility is gone, it's reduced to simply being an object. The powerlessness of the real person robs the statue of power, as well.

Still laughing, Sadiku starts a chant of "take warning, my masters/We'll scotch you in the end" and dances around the **statue** of Baroka. Sidi approaches and scares Sadiku. Sadiku tells Sidi that this time of victory is not a good time for her to be scared to death, and Sidi asks what battle Sadiku won. Sadiku says that it's not just her who won—*all* women won. She resumes her dance and chant and Sidi stands perplexed. Sadiku asks Sidi to join her and not ask questions, but Sidi grabs her and refuses to let go until Sadiku tells her what's going on.

Sadiku evidently isn't as faithful to her husband as Baroka thought she was, which begins to complicate their relationship. Sadiku has obviously done a great job tricking Baroka into believing her to be faithful to him alone, when her monologue indicates that she's actually faithful to women as a whole and not at all to her husband.

Sadiku makes Sidi swear silence and whispers in her ear. Sidi's eyes go wide and she asks why Baroka asked her to marry him, and Sadiku whispers in Sidi's ear again. Sidi laughs and says she's suddenly glad to be a woman. She cheers for womankind and the two women take up Sadiku's chant and dance around the **statue**.

Here, Sadiku actively disobeys her husband by sharing his secret with Sidi. Sidi joins Sadiku's dance because she sees that Baroka's downfall means that Sidi herself is truly powerful now, as she can say no and avoid marriage to Baroka.

Lakunle enters the village center, watches Sidi and Sadiku for a moment, and then declares that the women are going mad even when the moon isn't full. Sidi and Sadiku stop dancing. Sadiku fixes Lakunle with a disapproving stare and tells him to leave. She says that she and Sidi are going to perform a ritual and if Lakunle stays, he'll be the sacrifice. Lakunle taunts her again and calls her a hag. When he tries to assert how masculine he is, Sadiku laughs and asks if Lakunle is truly a man if Baroka isn't a man anymore. Lakunle understands what Sadiku means and looks shocked. Sadiku tells Sidi to keep dancing and ignore Lakunle, since only real men are endangered by watching the ceremony.

Sadiku is emboldened with the knowledge that women are triumphing over men. Lakunle's snide remark about women going crazy shows again how little he thinks of women as a group. He shows that he finds them silly and easily influenced. It implies that women can't celebrate something because they want to; they must be influenced by some outside force and not be in full control of their own emotions.

Sidi suddenly tells Sadiku to stop. She says that she wants to accept Baroka's invitation to the feast so she can mock him. She says she'll ask forgiveness and ask for a month to think about his proposal. Sadiku seems doubtful and says that Baroka will know she didn't keep his secret. Sidi says that she wants nothing more than to see Baroka humiliated. Sadiku warms up to the idea and tells her to torment him and to use her "bashful looks." Sadiku suggests she go with Sidi, but Sidi brushes her off. Lakunle, looking horrified, begs Sidi not to go. He says that Baroka will see right through the plot and will beat Sidi, but Sidi gleefully sings a goodbye and runs off.

Sidi exposes her youth, vanity, and (false) sense of power by suggesting this trick. Notice too that Sidi's goal is an emotional one only. She doesn't want to affect real change in anyone's life or in the community, she only wants to make Baroka feel *a certain way. This is consistent with the play's gendered view of goals. The men want concrete things, while the female characters' goals are emotional.*

Lakunle calls Sidi foolish and reprimands Sadiku for not being able to keep a secret, insulting her age in the process. He threatens her if anything happens to Sidi, but Sadiku only laughs and says that Sidi can take better care of herself than Lakunle would ever be able to. She walks around Lakunle, studying him, and tells him he's unattractive. Lakunle refuses to take the bait.

Age is evidently an appropriate insult to throw at women, given that Lakunle insults Sadiku's age throughout the play. This creates a double standard for the sexes. Men's age doesn't matter, while women's age or youthfulness is of the utmost importance.

Sadiku tells Lakunle that his betrothed is currently eating with Baroka. Lakunle seems pleased that Sadiku called Sidi his betrothed, but he quickly corrects her that they're not technically engaged yet. Sadiku laughs and asks if Lakunle has paid the bride price, and Lakunle instructs her to mind her own business. Sadiku suggests that Lakunle take a farm for one season to earn the money, and then wonders if the dirt will be too smelly for him.

Lakunle acts as though he's fully enjoying the thrill of chasing Sidi. Sadiku understands that Lakunle feels as though he's better than the villagers and their way of life. She suggests that Lakunle is silly for insisting on a modern method of marriage; she sees it as simply making things more complicated.

Lakunle again tells Sadiku to leave him alone. Sadiku laughs and says that it's true then that Lakunle means to modernize the village so that the bride price is a thing of a past. She says it's a good way of getting out of paying the price, but it'd be easier to just pay it. Lakunle states that within two years, the village will be completely transformed: women will stand with men, a road will pass through, and women will cook in saucepans. He continues, saying that in Lagos people build factories while in Ilujinle people play silly games. Lakunle says that Ilujinle must modernize or be forgotten.

Again, Lakunle wants Ilujinle to be famous like Lagos is, but the way he talks about it shows that he believes there are only a couple options for how to do this. He continues to ignore the fact that the magazine is already bringing Ilujinle fame. Notice, too, that in Lakunle's fantasy, women are still responsible for cooking—they just cook in saucepans instead of traditional cookware. This continues to develop the idea that Lakunle's goals don't actually afford women more power.

Sadiku, looking terrified, tries to walk away, but Lakunle follows her and continues his tirade. He tells Sadiku that she needs to come to school with the children since she doesn't read, write, or think. He accuses her of doing nothing but collecting women for Baroka.

Lakunle continues to devalue Sadiku's role in the village and the power she enjoys. While he sees Baroka as a tyrant for marrying so many young women, he ignores that Sadiku is powerful because she facilitates these marriages.

In Baroka's bedroom, Baroka and his wrestler are wrestling. Sidi enters Baroka's house and yells the traditional greeting. Baroka hears her but chooses to ignore her in favor of the task at hand. Sidi comes into Baroka's bedroom and is surprised to see Baroka and the wrestler. Baroka asks if Sadiku isn't home, and Sidi answers that nobody greeted her. Baroka sighs and remembers out loud that today is Sunday, the day that his servants take a day off now that they've formed a union.

Baroka's tone of voice indicates that he's annoyed rather than angry that his servants have formed a union. This runs counter to what Lakunle has said about Baroka. Baroka is obviously not entirely against modernization and progress, it seems more like he just finds some aspects of progress annoying.

Sidi asks if Baroka's wives also get the day off. Baroka says that the "madness" hasn't yet reached his wives, and he asks again if anyone greeted Sidi. He asks specifically about his favorite wife and Sidi, fascinated by the wrestling match, absentmindedly replies that she noticed the woman's stool and embroidery when she came in. Baroka muses that his favorite is surely sulking and asks if she left her shawl. Sidi confirms that the shawl is on the stool, and Baroka sighs that the shawl means his favorite will return this evening, even though he wanted to escape her for a number of days. When Sidi asks why, Baroka explains that the favorite abused his armpit.

Progress is obviously annoying and foreign to Baroka if he's referring to it as "madness." The fact that Baroka is still fixated on the favorite's painful armpit plucking shows that he tends to fixate on small faults. It also sets the stage for him to take another wife; it's obvious that he's growing tired and annoyed with the favorite. Sidi's interest in the wrestling match indicates that men's worth comes from physical strength, and it's an effective way to inspire female interest.

Sidi seems disappointed by this explanation, and Baroka asks what more a woman could do to him. Sidi hastily agrees that there's nothing worse that a woman could possibly do, but suggests that young wives might be too forward at times. Baroka brushes this off and says that wives don't behave that way in his house.

Baroka speaks as though his wives are kept tightly in hand in his household. It's unclear how true or effective this is, given that Sadiku is out sharing Baroka's secrets with Sidi and Lakunle even though she was expressly forbidden from doing so.

The wrestling match continues and Sidi remains fascinated by it, though she suddenly remembers why she came in the first place. She kneels and tells Baroka that she comes "as a repentant child." Baroka feigns confusion and Sidi explains that her answer to the Bale's question was thoughtless. Baroka continues to act confused and says he only asked for her to join him for dinner. Sidi is caught off guard and asks if Baroka didn't ask for something else. She finally says that she just wants to make sure the Bale invited her to his home.

The stage directions make it clear that Baroka is tricking Sidi and purposefully trying to keep Sidi off balance. He has all the power here, as he calls into question the reason she's in his home in the first place. This is crystallized when Sidi uses Baroka's title at the end of this exchange—it's a very obvious way of showing Baroka that she respects and understands his power and status.

Baroka asks if Sidi thinks he's offended that she entered his bedroom without being announced. When Sidi reminds him that he called her a stranger, he simply replies that his bedroom should be private. When Sidi looks hurt, Baroka calls her his child and tells her she takes offense too quickly. Sidi curtseys to Baroka, though she doesn't look at him.

Baroka continues to keep Sidi off balance by criticizing her emotions. He also keeps Sidi subordinate by referring to her as a child. This creates a sense that their relationship is defined by their age, and that Baroka is superior because of his age.

Sidi remembers her purpose again and adopting a mischievous tone, says she thought the favorite was a "gentle" woman. Baroka says he thought the same, and Sidi asks if the favorite was dissatisfied with Baroka. Baroka incredulously asks Sidi if she thinks he has time to consider why women are annoyed at any given moment. This again scares Sidi and hurts her feelings and seeing this, Baroka gently tells Sidi to sit down and not make him feel like a crotchety old man. He explains that he doesn't let anyone watch his exercises.

Even though Baroka is hurting Sidi's feelings by keeping her off balance, he blames her *for making* him *feel old. This keeps shifting the power towards Baroka and away from Sidi. Baroka also speaks as though he's far too important to consider women's feelings at all. He's obviously self-centered, particularly when it comes to women and his wives.*

Watching the men wrestle, Sidi offers that she thinks the wrestler will win. Baroka asks her if she *wants* the wrestler to win. Sidi hesitates before offering a riddle in response. Baroka pretends to be confused and turns back to his opponent and Sidi seizes the opportunity to make faces behind Baroka's back. She says again that she thinks the wrestler will win, and Baroka explains that the wrestler has to win. Baroka compliments his opponent's strength and says that he wrestles new opponents when he learns to beat old ones, and takes new wives when he learns to tire the old ones.

Sidi's actions here mirror Sadiku's dance around the statue of Baroka. Neither woman can taunt Baroka to his face; they must tease him either using a stand-in or behind his back. When compared to the way that Baroka is systematically destroying Sidi's sense of power, it's obvious that men have far more power than the women of Ilujinle. Baroka can call Sidi a child to her face; the women couldn't dream of doing such a thing.

Sidi asks Baroka if he's experiencing a time of change right now, and Baroka replies that he doesn't know. Sidi paces away from the wrestling match and back, telling Baroka that a woman brought her a message that afternoon of a "go-between" (suggesting an offer of marriage). Baroka asks if this is unusual and says he's happy for her. He says she must have many suitors, and Sidi says that this particular offer came from a man who is very well to-do.

Here, both Baroka and Sidi herself objectify her and turn her into an object for men to win. This shows again that Sidi (and Ilujinle women in general) are made to fully participate in the system that denies them power. Sidi speaks as though she doesn't have the power to outright accept or deny these suitors.

Pacing and making more rude gestures behind Baroka's back, Sidi asks Baroka if he'd pay the bride price to this man if Baroka were her father. She offers an aside to the audience that many would believe Baroka was her father anyway.

Again, Sidi can allow the audience to share her secret as she makes fun of Baroka, but she can't actually tease Baroka to his face.

Baroka asks if the man is rich or repulsive. Sidi says he's rich, but old. Baroka asks if the man is mean, and Sidi says that she's heard stories that this man is very generous to strangers, but the man's wives say that he enjoys ground corn and pepper because he doesn't want to pay for snuff. Baroka throws his wrestler over his shoulder angrily and bursts out that the price of snuff has nothing to do with anything. Sidi celebrates Baroka's wrestling victory and ignores his outburst, while Baroka continues to say that people are slandering him.

The façade is broken as Baroka throws the wrestler; his outburst betrays that he knows Sidi is talking about him and not another man. This makes it clear to everyone involved (Sidi, Baroka, and the audience/reader) that this is a power of wits, and both sides are attempting to trick the other and win. Snuff would also be a modern commodity, and Baroka's refusal to buy snuff supports Lakunle's view of him.

The wrestler pulls out a low bench and sits on the floor. Baroka sits down as well and the two begin to arm wrestle on the bench. Composing himself, Baroka says that he knows the ways of women and he offers Sidi a hypothetical situation in which as a child, he himself learned to love "tanfiri" (the aforementioned ground corn and pepper), but as an old man, he found his desire for the tanfiri insatiable. He asks Sidi to consider how bad it would look for a man like him to be constantly consuming the tanfiri in public, and suggests that purchasing a "dignified" snuff box would make the habit look better. He reminds Sidi that this is only a hypothetical situation to illustrate how mean women can be. Sidi, however, is still dancing and has obviously paid no attention to Baroka's monologue.

Baroka's hypothetical situation (which is, of course, true) shows a perfectly reasonable thought process: Baroka wants to look like a leader and be worthy of respect. Notice, though, that the way to gain that respect is by embracing the modern snuffbox (and the status it connotes) to conceal his traditional (and presumably, not well-received) tanfiri habit. This suggests that Baroka understands that modernity can be a good thing and can create positive change and achieve a concrete goal, but it also suggests that his selective embrace of modernity is most useful in concealing and enabling his natural tendency towards tradition.

Embarrassed, Sidi stops dancing when she sees Baroka eyeing her with confusion. She tries to recover and says that this time the wrestler will surely win. Baroka returns to Sidi's suitor and asks if he's kind, fierce, and wise. Sidi answers that he's kind to his animals and has a number of leopard skins, but she notes that those are readily available in the market. She says the man is very clever.

All of Sidi's replies are underhanded insults to Baroka, which illustrates again the fine line she has to walk in order to insult him to his face. Notice, though, that he's certainly aware that she's insulting him and he's allowing it. This becomes evidence that this is all part of his plan, and he's tricking her.

Baroka, seeming desperate, asks if the man is still fathering children. Sidi says that he used to, but he hasn't had any children for the last several years. Baroka suggests that the man is frugal, but Sidi giggles and wonders if he's neglecting his wives. As Baroka slams his opponent's arm down on the table, he says that Sidi sounds like she's been listening to Sadiku, which Sidi denies.

Though Sadiku is supposedly Baroka's favorite, it's obvious here that some of her habits irk him. This also suggests further that he's aware that the women are attempting to trick him; now Sidi must figure out how to appropriately convince Baroka that she hasn't spoken with Sadiku.

Baroka acts annoyed and accuses Sidi of making him lose his wrestler. He sends the wrestler to find a gourd of food, sits down on the bed, and laments that he's becoming an ill-tempered old man. He tells Sidi he wanted to surprise her with his invitation for dinner and asks again if she's been talking with Sadiku. Sidi again denies that she spoke with Sadiku, and Baroka asks if Sadiku possibly made something up. Sidi insists that Sadiku told her nothing except that Baroka begged her presence for dinner.

Again, it's Sidi's fault for angering Baroka and causing him to win the wrestling match. This, paired with Baroka's lament that he's getting old and crotchety, is another attempt to unbalance Sidi, poke at her emotions, and make her feel responsible for Baroka's age and strength.

Sidi's use of "beg" seems to anger Baroka and he accuses her of taunting her elders. He explains that she shouldn't listen to women like Sadiku, as they scheme and play matchmaker for him whether he asks them to or not. He laments that he can't ask after any young women in the village without Sadiku inserting herself, and the women inevitably end up in his bed. Sidi says Baroka's life sounds rough.

Finally, Baroka calls Sidi out on what she's actually doing (taunting him). When he says that Sidi shouldn't listen to Sadiku, it takes on another layer of meaning and suggests again that he's aware of the tricks they're playing. It foreshadows that Sidi shouldn't *have listened to Sadiku, as Sadiku herself was tricked.*

Baroka nonchalantly replies that he accepts his life without complaint and only dislikes the "new immodesty" of women. He asks if Sidi is still behaving like a village girl, and Sidi insists that she is. Baroka looks Sidi up and down and wonders out loud how he could've ever thought that she was vain and silly. He says he thinks she's quite mature and wise as he pulls out the **magazine** and an addressed envelope.

In Baroka's eyes, being a good village girl is attractive, which is in direct opposition to how Lakunle sees Sidi and the village girls. Baroka flatters Sidi and her vanity by calling her mature and wise for adhering to the village customs and rejecting Lakunle's ideas of modernity.

Baroka hands Sidi the envelope and asks Sidi if she knows what the **stamp** is. Sidi says she does and shares that Lakunle gets letters from Lagos with stamps. Baroka looks disappointed that Sidi knows and asks her if she also knows what the stamp means. Sidi proudly says that it's a tax on "the habit of talking with paper." Baroka says it's obvious that she's been learning from Lakunle.

This instance is the one time when it truly seems as though Baroka isn't fully in control of the situation. Sidi seems to be stealing his thunder with her knowledge of postal systems. This opens up the possibility that modern knowledge can provide women some power.

Baroka goes to a strange machine in the corner of his room and calls Sidi to look at it. He explains that the machine doesn't work yet, but when it's fixed, it will allow him to print **stamps** for Ilujinle. Sidi is in awe. Baroka asks her what she thinks of the image on the stamp (a bridge). He goes on to describe the images on other stamps: palm trees, groundnuts, bronze figures. He laments that no stamps show people, and asks Sidi to imagine stamps with her own image on them. Sidi loses herself in the daydream and sits down on Baroka's bed, holding the **magazine** but not looking at it.

Baroka is obviously quite skilled at flattery. He knows that the best way to flatter Sidi and bring her to his side is to appeal to her vanity by using the photographs to accomplish his own goals. By doing this, he also suggests that modernity isn't a bad thing, but that it must be used to help people. The stamps will also allow the village to experience a sense of pride in their people by using a photograph of their village belle.

Baroka asks Sidi if it's too much to ask for her beauty to grace the mail of Ilujinle. He paces the length of the room and explains that they'll start with making **stamps** for the village only. Turning to Sidi, Baroka says that people invent all sorts of stories about his hatred of progress and modernity, but he only wants to do what's best for his people, and the stamps will improve life in the village. Baroka continues to say that he doesn't hate progress; he just hates that it makes everything look the same. Walking back to Sidi, he sits next to her on the bed and asks her if she too finds "sameness" boring and revolting. Sidi can only nod.

Finally, Baroka confirms what's been suggested throughout the play: he doesn't see modernity as an entirely negative thing. He only hates progress for the sake of progress. This also shows that, though Baroka is definitely a womanizer and leads a luxurious life with beautiful women to serve him, he also cares deeply for the welfare of his village and his wives. He's also finally turned the tables fully on Sidi; she no longer is in control of anything.

Baroka says that he and Sidi both have sensitive souls, and says that though they're a generation apart in age, their thoughts fit together perfectly. He says their first "union" will come when they make the **stamp** with her face on it, and he will worship Sidi's beauty. He asks Sidi if she likes the idea, but Sidi slowly says that she can barely understand as his words sound like Lakunle's. She wonders if she's as dumb as Lakunle tells her she is and looks miserable.

"Union" takes on several meanings. It describes the literal union of Sidi's face with the stamp, it becomes a sexual innuendo, and it also alludes to a union of progress and tradition. Sidi specifically struggles to understand that final meaning; her fears that she's as dumb as Lakunle told her she was show that she hadn't considered that progress and modernity could truly coexist.

Baroka assures Sidi that she's not dumb, just "straight and truthful." He says that he and Lakunle are really very alike and must learn from each other. Baroka says that "the old must flow into the new" rather than fight each other. Sidi says that Baroka's words seem wise, and Baroka continues to speak about the necessity of embracing both old and new. He says that people think his life is only one of pleasure, but he insists that he works hard for his people. Sidi lays her head on Baroka's shoulder.

Though it's increasingly obvious that Baroka is trying very hard to woo Sidi, the stamp machine is evidence that Baroka does truly want to do things that will help his people, even if he personally finds them abhorrent. This turns him into a relatively selfless character, unlike Lakunle.

A group of dancers composed of several women chasing a masked man cross the room twice to the sound of drumming and shouting. Later that evening, Lakunle and Sadiku stand in the market waiting for Sidi, watching vendors hawk their wares. Lakunle paces and looks worried and angry, while Sadiku looks content. Lakunle insists angrily that Baroka killed Sidi. He says that he'll drive Sadiku out of her home for plotting with Sidi to mock Baroka.

Lakunle never fell for Baroka's trick in the first place, and he sees the women's actions as the height of foolishness. Now that we've heard Baroka speak for himself, it's evident that both men hold each other in respectful regard and are aware of the power that the other holds. As the women are left out of this, they pay the price.

As people pass, Lakunle continues to search the crowd for Sidi. When the wrestler passes, Sadiku greets him. After their exchange, she looks confused. Lakunle laments Sidi's fate in Baroka's dungeon and vows to rescue her. Sadiku and Lakunle hear mummers (street performers) and Sadiku suggests that they heard the news of Baroka's lost manhood. Lakunle chastises her for spreading Baroka's secret.

The wrestler wandering through the village alone indicates that Baroka and Sidi are alone together—a troubling possibility for one who wanted to thwart Baroka. Sadiku continues to prove herself unfaithful, as she reveals that she has purposefully spread Baroka's secret.

Sadiku seems unconcerned and reaches her hand into Lakunle's pocket, asking if he has money. He jumps away from her, but she insists he pay the mummers for a performance. She says the mummers will expect him to pay for a performance since he's a schoolteacher and possesses "foreign wisdom." The dancers pass through again while Sadiku successfully grabs money out of Lakunle's pocket. She offers the money to the mummers who drum thanks to her. She gestures that Lakunle gave them the money and they drum thanks to him, which annoys Lakunle.

Sadiku is extremely confident that women have won the war against men, and she'd like to continue celebrating her victory. She also suggests that Lakunle, as basically a foreigner because of his education, has a responsibility to keep the local traditions alive. This indicates that modernity will be responsible for either the death or preservation of these traditions.

The dancers dance the story of Baroka's downfall. Baroka is portrayed as comical and only tolerated by his wives. Sadiku watches the dance excitedly and joins in to dance the final "scotching" of Baroka. When the story is finished, the dancers dance away while Sadiku continues alone. Lakunle enjoyed the dance despite his annoyance. Sadiku walks happily back towards Lakunle, who tries to look unhappy about the performance. Annoyed, Sadiku shouts "boo" at him and dances at him. She says men used to love her smooth dancing. Lakunle says that he hopes Baroka kills her for this trick.

Sadiku's celebration is becoming more and more public as she grows confident that Baroka is truly "scotched." The dancers' portrayal of Baroka is indicative of how the villagers and his wives see him, or how Lakunle would like to think everyone sees him. It turns him into a caricature rather than showing that he's a three-dimensional figure.

Sidi runs into the market square, sobbing. She violently throws herself on the ground next to a tree. Sadiku kneels next to her and asks Sidi what's wrong, but Sidi pushes her away. Lakunle, looking triumphant, tries to take Sadiku's place. He offers to kiss Sidi's tears away but Sidi pushes him away too. Lakunle declares that Baroka must have beaten Sidi and tells the women that he warned them this would happen. Sidi keeps crying as Lakunle says he'll take Baroka to court for beating Sidi.

Lakunle is initially delighted that Sidi was punished for trying to exert too much power over the men around her. He sees that he gains power as she loses power. Notice that Lakunle wants to go through official Western *channels to get revenge rather than whatever traditional systems might be in place. He continues to value Western ideas above traditional ones.*

Looking up, Sidi calls Sadiku and Lakunle fools and says that Baroka lied to Sadiku about his manhood. She says that he told Sidi "afterwards" that he knew Sadiku wouldn't keep his secret to herself, and he knew that young women would try to mock him for it. She yells that she hates him. Lakunle looks distraught and asks if Sidi escaped, insisting he can take the truth "like a man." Sadiku asks Sidi if she's still a virgin, and Sidi bursts into tears and shakes her head no. Lakunle invokes the Lord, but Sadiku says it's too late to pray and tells Sidi it happens to "the best of us."

Remember that Sidi isn't just suffering the emotional hurt of being tricked by Baroka; her worth as a woman in Ilujinle comes entirely from her beauty and her virginity, which guarantees that she'll fetch a bride price upon marriage. Now that Sidi's virginity is gone, even the beautiful photographs of her can't give her power. Sadiku's offhand comment suggests that this happens often, confirming Lakunle's initial fears.

Lakunle asks the heavens to strike him dead and insists he no longer wants to live. He quickly decides that the wish to die is cowardly, and says that his love is selfless. He stands over Sidi and says that they'll forget the past. He says what happened won't change his love, but they can skip the bride price now that she's not a virgin. He offers Sidi his hand and shooting a glance at Sadiku, says that they'll all swear to keep this a secret. Sidi incredulously asks Lakunle if he'll really marry her. Puffing his chest, Lakunle says he will, and Sidi runs away.

Lakunle seems to think he's doing Sidi a favor by reminding her that she no longer will receive a bride price. However, his gallantry and dramatic monologue only make him look silly and out of touch as he diminishes Sidi's emotions. He continues to think only about himself and modernity, instead of taking into account Sidi's emotions and desires.

Sadiku wonders what Sidi's doing. Lakunle, looking after Sidi, says that she's going home and asks Sadiku to follow and find out what she's doing. Sadiku follows Sidi while Lakunle insists to himself that he's a fool, but he obeys "his books." Music begins far away as Lakunle recites that "man takes the fallen woman by the hand" and remarks on his good fortune now that the question of the bride price is resolved.

Lakunle still sees Baroka's trick as entirely too convenient for his own goals. Lakunle's books would refer to the Bible, which he uses here to justify marrying Sidi even though she's not a virgin. He sees that he's "saving" Sidi, which gives him power and also places him alongside westerners who sought to "save" colonized peoples with Christianity.

Sadiku returns to Lakunle and says that Sidi is packing her things and oiling herself like a bride. Alarmed, Lakunle says that there's no need to rush the wedding—he has to ask Sidi to marry him, and then he has to hire a number of people to facilitate the festivities. Sadiku says that she told Sidi the same thing, but Sidi only laughed and said to "leave all that nonsense to savages and 'barbarians.'"

Now that it appears as though Lakunle is going to accomplish his goal of marrying Sidi, he doesn't seem nearly as excited about it. Sidi's use of "barbarian" mimics the way that Lakunle uses language throughout the play. However, in this case she's referring to Lakunle as the barbarian.

Lakunle insists that he can't be single one day and married the next with no time to prepare. Hearing the musicians he wonders how they found out about the wedding so quickly. He wonders what evil he committed to deserve a marriage like this. As the musicians and dancers enter the square, Lakunle yells at them to go home, since nobody's getting married.

Lakunle's lack of excitement transforms into him feeling punished for something by marrying Sidi. However, notice that it's a very self-centered conclusion that Lakunle believes Sidi is going to marry him.

Sidi enters the square, dressed beautifully and carrying a bundle and the **magazine**. The crowd goes silent in awe of her beauty as she approaches Lakunle and hands him the magazine. She says her fingers weren't strong enough to tear the magazine up and she tells the crowd it's time to go. Turning back to Lakunle, she tells him that he's invited and can come too. Lakunle, in awe of her beauty, says that of course he's invited since he's the groom.

Sidi is still beautiful and commands attention, but this time she indicates that she's not in control of her beauty or her image when she says she couldn't physically tear up the magazine. By giving Lakunle the magazine, she fully gives up any power she enjoyed from the photographs. The images proved to possess power beyond her control.

Sidi looks surprised and asks if Lakunle really thought she'd marry him after sleeping with Baroka. She asks how she could possibly choose a younger man after experiencing the wonders of an older man. Lakunle tries to stop her, but Sidi shoves him to the ground and says that Baroka gave her the strength of his age. She says that when Lakunle is 60, he'll certainly be long dead.

Sidi chooses tradition over modernity by choosing Baroka. Baroka showed her that tradition can truly be fulfilling, while Lakunle represents that progress is fast moving and ever changing (hence his death by age 60). Tradition gives her something to rely on, while modernity offers no such comfort.

Sidi kneels before Sadiku and asks Sadiku to bless her fertility. Sadiku does and accepts Sidi's offered bundle. Sidi stands, turns to the musicians, and asks them to sing her to Baroka's home. The musicians take up a festive song and everyone in the market dances. A young woman teases Lakunle and dances suggestively in front of him. He chases her. Sadiku tries to block his way, but Lakunle evades her and continues to pursue the girl. Sidi and the musicians sing and dance.

The fact that Lakunle so quickly turns his attention to another woman suggests that his modern view of marriage is something that any woman willing to marry him can fulfill. It shows that it mattered more to him to convince Sidi to agree with him than it did to actually marry her. It also stands as a final confirmation that women are objects to be chased and possessed, not full people.

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