THE BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY OLE KULET

Henry ole Kulet was born in 1946. He is a veteran and award winning Kenyan writer known for his novels which capture aspects of environment, culture and experiences of Maasai people. He is an established author for he has written eight novels. Daughter of Maa is a story of quiet village that is stirred by a frenzy of activities by the arrival of a young and pretty community teacher, Anna Walangh. He authored It is possible in 1971, How To became a Man in 1972 and Bandits of Kibi in 1999. In Bandits of Kibi, he created scenes which came out during the Post-Election Violence in 2007 after the disputed elections.

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CHAPTER ONE

SYNOPSIS AND SUMMARIES OF CHAPTERS

SYNOPSIS OF BLOSSOMS OF THE SAVANNAH

The novel begins as Kaelo, his wife, Taiyo and Resian leave Nakuru for Nasila, a rural area in Maasai land. This is as a result of retrenchment of Kaelo who has been working as the manager of Agribix Limited. On reaching Nasila, Ole Kaelo's are welcomed by uncle Simiren's family which consists of four wives and sixteen children. In a move towards settling in Nasila the new home, Ole Kaelo visits his old friend Ole Sumpeyo. It is thirty years since Ole Kaelo left Nasila for Nakuru.

The Kaelo's hold a homecoming party in which they invite members from the five clans aimed at re-linking the Kaelo family to the other villagers. Taiyo and Resian observe that some young men are suspicious of them for they are not circumcised. In an attempt of acquainting the two girls with Nasila culture, Kaelo informs Joseph Parmuat to teach Taiyo and Resian traditional songs and dances. As the young ones spend more time together, a love relationship begins to develop between Taiyo and Joseph but unfortunately due to cultural demands the relationship is restrained.

Unfortunately, there is an attempted rape on Resian and Taiyo. Consequently, an ad hoc group of men is formed to hunt down the culprits. After it is known that Lante and Ntara are responsible for the heinous act, punishment is meted on them. The novel reveals of how females have contributed significantly to the beginning and continuation of FGM through the Olarinkoi legendary story.

Kaelo opens an agricultural shop and enters into business contracts through Oloisudori who is conversant with shady businesses. Oloisudori's aim is to exploite Kaelo. After realizing that Kaelo has beautiful daughters, he chooses to marry one and organize for

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the other one to be married by his friend instead of extorting him. Oloisudori comes in a procession and gives gifts and money as dowry for the young Resian. Since Resian disagrees with Oloisudori and her father's plan, Oloisudori plans to use anesthesia to render Resian unconscious so that he may snatch her for marriage by force. However, the girls craft a scheme of shaming Oloisudori in which they return the gifts Oloisudori had given them earlier.

The couple goes to consult Simiren and Sumpeyo on how to deal with Oloisudori's demands as the girls go to the shop. On their way back, the girls are almost raped by two callous young men. Later on, after Resian refuses to cooperate, Oloisudori gets enraged and slaps her mercilessly. It is Olarinkoi who supposedly saves her by whisking her away before she commits suicide.

Olarinkoi organizes with a pick-up driver so that he whisks Resian away claiming to ensure her safety from Oloisudori and her father. The three have a trek of terror which leaves Resian raped by Olarinkoi in a dark hut in the forest. On regaining consciousness, she finds herself under the care of Nabaru, a nurse who reveals everything that transpired.

Finally, with the help of Nabaru Resian comes face to face with Minik ene Nkoitoi, the activist against FGM in the sheep's ranch. She welcomes Nabaru and Resian warmly.

Resian learns that Oloisudori has advertised in the newspaper for her search. Minik's pivotal role is evident in that in the ranch there are other five hundred girls who have gone through a similar experience just like Resian. On the other hand, Taiyo faces the painful blade of the Olmurunya. While managing the ranch, Minik meets a new challenge in which the powerful in the government are threatening to close the ranch. However, Minik, the foresighted planner ensures the survival of the ranch. Resian learns of the unfortunate death of Joseph Parmuat. He is killed in his mission of saving Taiyo from a group that circumcises her by force. At long last, Resian meets Taiyo at the ranch Oloisudori makes his last heinous kicks by visiting the ranch to demand Resian as his wife. He is told off by Minik. With his company, he flees for his life after his cars are burnt down. The ultimate goal is attained when Minik takes Taiyo and Resian to Egerton
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University where Resian has a chance of studying her dream course.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

CHAPTER 1: THE JOUNERY

As the novel begins, Ole Kaelo is reprimanding loaders for being slow. The couple is relocating from Nakuru to Nasila after Ole Kaelo is retrenched from Agribix Limited where he has been working as the commercial manager. Not long ago Kaelo had denied Taiyo a chance to go to Mombasa to develop her talent. That is why Taiyo sympathizes with the loaders who are receiving strict instructions from her father. The two girls visualize what life in the new environment will be like. The girls are experiencing apprehension. Nakuru town has always bustled with life and they fear the shop that their father aims at starting may not pick.

Taiyo encourages Resian that they should hope for the best. Resian requests Taiyo to plead with their father so that they can join Egerton University. Resian knows her father listens to Taiyo. Through a flash back, the reader learns that Ole Kaelo and his wife Mama Milanoi have lived for twenty two years since they married. Women from Nasila had earlier visited Mama Milanoi at Nakuru and hinted at the hostility expected especially because the daughters are not married. Kaelo has been a hardworking man, a trait that led to his promotion at Agribix Limited. The retrenchment has triggered ambition to work so as to be rich. A few kilometers to Nasila one lorry breaks down but soon it is fixed and the family reach uncle Simiren's homestead where they are welcomed warmly. It is now thirty years since Ole Kaelo left Nasila for Nakuru. In all this time he has been away, uncle Simiren has been representing his elder brother. Elders are not happy with Kaelo's monogamous marriage. Simiren on his part has four wives and sixteen children

CHAPTER 2: NASILA

Life at the rural Nasila is contrasted with that of Nakuru town. Uncle Simiren is a polygamous man. He has four wives and sixteen children. Each of these wives has a house .The girls are introduced to the sixteen cousins by the senior most aunt, and the eldest wife. The children are aged between three and sixteen years and out of the four
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wives, two aunts are pregnant. Resian and Taiyo are allowed to go walking. The girls make the observation that the four aunts are not happy as well and the kids are not contented. Resian outrightly says she is not ready to be a parent and that she will first learn. They are accosted by a tall heavyset young man with thick dark beard and a moustache. Resian orders the man to leave Taiyo alone. According to the man, the girls are not decent for they are uncircumcised. The girls keep the ordeal as a secret. Ole Kaelo visits ole Sumpeyo, a famous cattle trader and a longtime friend who supports FGM. Ironically, even though a close friend, Sumpeyo is malicious and envious of Kaelo especially when he learns of his great business plan. He however warns him to be wary of Oloisudori, a business partner, and advises him to keep his daughters away from him.

CHAPTER 3: STRANGE VISITORS

Ole Kaelo ushers his family into the newly constructed house. The Kaelo's are elated by the new house. In a flashback Mama Milanoi remembers how she was married by Kaelo while she was eighteen and Kaelo twenty four years old. The couple has enjoyed peace generally since then but since she does not have a son, Mama Milanoi feels she has failed Kaelo. In a dialogue, we learn that Taiyo and Resian are afraid of undergoing the act and wish to go back to Nakuru and join university. In a dramatic irony we realize that Kaelo has been hard and cruel to Resian for he expected a son to be born in her place. Although Taiyo does not understand the cause of the hatred, she always defends her sister devotedly even when her mother does not offer any protection. Probably Mama Milano is afraid of ole Kaelo.

CHAPTER 4: HOME COMING CEREMONY

In order to re-link himself to the community ole Kaelo holds a big celebration party which is also made for blessing his home. Members from the five Maa clans: Ilmolelian, Ilmakesen, Ilukumae, Ilaiser and illtarosero are invited. The Kaelo's belong to the Ilmolelian clan. Ole Kaelo's are very actively involved in the preparation of the homecoming ceremony. During the dances, Taiyo is attracted to the manager of music, a young local primary school music teacher Joseph Parmuat but unfortunately they belong to the same clan and forging any intimate relationship is an abomination. A carnival mood is witnessed during the party for the generous Kaelo, has offered plenty
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of foodstuffs.

In the dance Taiyo's talent is brought forth for she is really attracted to the song and dance. We learn that she has always done well in music festivals too. Unfortunately, her father denied her a chance to go for a music extravaganza in Mombasa which would have developed her talent. Lastly, Musanka leads in the blessing section. He calls upon the community to welcome the Kaelo's back home. Kaelo is advised to involve himself in the community affairs and Nasila. He is also advised to take care of his family and children.

CHAPTER 5: DEPRESSED ONE

Taiyo and Resian are distressed. Resian feels Taiyo is taking too long before broaching the issue of their university studies with their father. The issue of FGM makes the two girls have a sleepless night. Taiyo is also disturbed by the cultural law that does not allow her relationship with Joseph Parmuat, the primary school teacher and a music enthusiast. The two girls cry a lot that night. The day before, Joseph had promised to visit her and also coach her in traditional music. The thought of enkamuratani (circumciser) and Olmurunya (circumcising blade) makes Taiyo shudder with dread. In Resian's mind it is clear that enkamuratani and her Olmurunya cannot have their way with her, maybe over her dead body.

Contrastingly Kaelo and his wife enjoy a great night after the day of the great party and blessings. They feel fulfilled for the great achievement, getting welcomed as well as being blessed. In her morning thoughts, Mama Milanoi is at a dilemma, whether to force the girls to undergo the ritual and lose their faith, love and confidence or refuse to yield to the traditions and become a pariah in the Ilmolelian clan. Kaelo authoritatively states his demands; mama Milanoi is to counsel her daughters in preparations for circumcision while he is to ask Parmuat to teach the girls home truths and later enkamuratani to be called to do her part. Mama Milanoi interrogatively reflects on her stand and that of her family. She feels her husband is turning into a deep Nasilian very fast. Afterwards, the Kaelo's visit their agricultural shop. On arriving home, the three
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females welcome Joseph Parmuat delightfully. As the chapter ends, a second male visitor visits the Kaelo's.

CHAPTER 6: OLARINKOI

Kaelo makes a pompous speech introducing Joseph Parmuat. Despite the warning, Taiyo is still infatuated with Joseph and decides to make him a confidante. Resian is critical and dismissive of her father's pompous speech and generally how females are viewed by men. In a defiant mood, Resian expresses her mind on the subject of unfair men towards women. Surprisingly and daringly, she portrays the defiance to her aunt, mother and Resian.

The listeners are deeply embarrassed. Aunt Botorr says Resian has a bad spirit that can only be treated through circumcision. Taiyo's questions who Olarinkoi is and is answered by Joseph by telling a legendary story. Ilarinkon is a legend who was a great fighter who saved the Maa community from being wiped out by an adversary while their morans had gone for a raid. Ilarinkon warriors abused women until one day women discovered how to deal with the problem. Their collective resolution ironically gave birth to enkamuratani who was handed over an Olmurunya. Hence the birth of FGM and therefore according to Joseph, only women can stop the barbaric FGM.

CHAPTER 7: SHADOWY OLOISUDORI

Resian is in an optimistic mood that all will be well especially about their university education. After Taiyo leaves for the shop, Mama Milanoi broaches the subject of FGM. Even though Mama Milanoi supports FGM, Resian is categorical that it has been used by men as a tool of oppression to women. One Edward Oloisudori visits Kaelo's home. Resian is uncomfortable with him for he is immoral. Mother scorns her for talking ill about him. Father returns and due to Resian's nervousness, he calls her names. Kaelo clearly states that all members of Kaelo family must respect Oloisudori and that he should not be denied anything. Resian learns that her father did not give in to the request about joining university.

Joseph reveals that Oloisudori is a shadowy figure; a Jack -of-all-trades. He is also, a poacher, smuggler, robber, extortionist and a hired assassin. He had survived

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numerous jail terms and was now incorrigible. Due to the revelation, the girls fear for their father. When Oloisudori leaves, the countenance of Kaelo and Mama Milanoi changes; they are absent-minded and aloof even though Kaelo insists that everything is in control. Mama Milanoi even burns rice without realizing it.

CHAPTER 8: TROUBLED COUPLE

Oloisudori's cruel demand, to marry Resian and organize the marriage of Taiyo renders Kaelo and Mama Milanoi a sleepless night. Although Kaelo knew Oloisudori's past criminal record, he still falls for his trap due to greed for wealth. Oloisudori's initial plan was to extort money from Kaelo but on noticing his two beautiful daughters he changed his mind. Mama Milanoi suffers great pain and cries for the olden days when demands such as those of Oloisudori would be dealt with accordingly. Mama Milanoi recalls through flashback how women had invoked mass action on men in the past by depriving men food, milk and beating them up while naked. She contrasts those times with the current times when Nasila River is polluted with chemicals. She fears that Oloisudori may kill her daughter. Despite the hard times the Kaelo's are experiencing, the following morning, the members manage to afford smiles as they take tea. Even the entrance of Olarinkoi does not dampen the high spirits embraced by the Kaelo's.

CHAPTER 9: LOVE

Joseph Parmuat begins a routine practice of coaching Taiyo and Resian on traditional

songs and dances and the trio enjoy it immensely. Joseph Parmuat guards against any untoward behavior so as to conserve his integrity. The chapter then says a lot about the Maa Culture on different subjects. He explains different types of loves to the two girls; elangatare and patureishi. Resian boldly asks Joseph to be her patureishi but he explains how it is impossible for that to happen due to Nasila cultural norms. Taiyo and Resian question the rigidity of Nasila culture and traditions. They question some negative practices like F.G.M Joseph clarifies that culture had dropped some negative practices like throwing the dead and the dying to the hyenas, abandoning very old and ill in deserted homesteads. In a flashback, Taiyo accounts for her love to Joseph. It began on the day their father organized a homecoming celebration and since then she has even visited Joseph in his house. Joseph also feels strong love to her but traditions
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shields him from her. They think of falling in love and leaving for a far destination. Taiyo is ready but Joseph is prefers to abide by Nasila culture.

CHAPTER 10: OLARINKOI VERSUS THE RAPISTS

A cloud of apprehension hangs around the couple. Oloisudori does not turn up as he had promised earlier. After procrastinating for some time they find it unbearable. Mother and father leave their home so as to consult their friends; the wife to Simiren and Ole Kaelo to Supeyo, on the issue touching on Oloisudori's callous demand to marry one of their daughters. The two girls go to the shop to have their lunch prepared by the manager, Maiso. On their return journey, they are attacked by two rude young men. On observing the two men, they realise one of the accosters was responsible for the earlier ambush. The two young men are frightening for they are in possession of knobkerries. They attempt to rape them but luckily the girls are rescued by Olarinkoi. The girls cannot thank Olarinkoi enough. The two girls detest the two young men's behaviour. The girls feel terribly shaken. Resian feels she should leave Nasila for university. The incident strengthens Taiyo's resolve as a combatant in a war zone.

CHAPTER 11: CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT

Taiyo and Resian wait for their parent's return to tell them of the near rape ordeal as they were coming from their shop at Nasila. Ole Kaelo is very agitated on hearing that his daughters were assaulted with the aim of being raped. Their father storms out of the house while their mother asks them to go to Simiren's house to have a change of environment.

The girls are heartily welcomed at their uncle's home and that enables them to settle very fast. They get used to the communal and polygamous running of affairs at their uncle's home. They learn very many aspects of Nasila culture, both negative and positive. They are told more about Minik ene Nkoitoi, the Emakererei and their role model by one of Simiren's wives. They are told that she went to Makerere University where she studied veterinary medicine. They admire her opposition of negative Nasila
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culture and say they would like to be like her. Through flashback, it is revealed that Resian's interest in vet medicine began when she and Taiyo accompanied their father to agricultural show in Nakuru and since then, she has admired the profession. Taiyo plans to compose a song with the help of Joseph Parmuat praising Minik and ridiculing three women who still clung on retrogressive Nasilian culture. Later, they are asked to return home by their parents. A party, which their parents also attend, is held for them after which they return home.

CHAPTER 12: RETALIATION

Ole Kaelo hits the road angry and bitter and complaining to all he meets about the beastly attack on his daughter. He goes to the school where Joseph teaches and

explains the events heading to his anger. Joseph parades all pupils, and sends boys from the Ilmolelian clan to go and call their elder brothers and fathers to an urgent meeting at Oerata plain.
The search party narrows down on Lante son of Kanyira of Ilukumae clan and Ntara son of Muyo, also of Ilukumae clan as the culprits. They decide to embark on a revenge mission to prevent further provocation from the Illukumae clan. The retaliation is done by the young and old men from Iimolelian clan and the sympathizers from Limakesen clan. The search party comes across the two culprits who ran and fall under the feet of two old men begging for mercy. According to Nasila culture, a man is spared of any crime if he hides his head between the legs of an old man. Nevertheless, they are clobbered, slapped and kicked by Kaelo and his men. It is realized after interrogation that one of the offenders was related to Taiyo and Resian for he was son of Mama Milanoi's sisters. A cleansing ceremony is planned and Ole Kaelo is compensated for the trauma he underwent. Ntara Muyo gives Taiyo and Resian each a heifer to remove the shame he caused them. Lante pays two heifers.
Ole Kaelo continue to have mixed feelings about Oloisudori's plan to marry his daughter. He consoles himself that Oloisudori is not an ordinary man. And that his business success depended on him. Thus reasoning, he decides to go along with Oloisudori's plan. He also dismisses negative rumours about Oloisudori assuring himself that his
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daughter was lucky to get such a man. Meanwhile, the girls' visit to the uncle's home has greatly changed their outlook on life. It reduces their overreliance on their parents. They are finally happy that they are getting acceptance in the highly traditional community.

CHAPTER 13: OLOISUDORI'S GRAND VISIT

Oloisudori changes his plans of coming for Resian in two weeks' time and declares he would do so the following day. He would be accompanied by his three friends and wants Resian to cook for them. Ole Kaelo asks Resian to remain at home and cook for them instead of going to help plaster the kitchen of Teiyo Kiti with Taiyo as they had planned. She is not comfortable with the idea saying she fears Oloisudori and that he is like a monster. Her father hears none of her protestation. Resian seeks refuge in the garden. She wonders why she has been chosen and not Taiyo. She finds injustice in the way her father treated her unlike her sister Taiyo. Taiyo sympathizes with her situation. She knows her father biasness in treating his daughters. She thinks that the current demand from his father would make him hate her more. She blames the new culture that her father has immersed himself into as the cause of all her problems. Traditionally, a girl was shielded from men and it was rare for a girl to interact with men. Finally, Resian agrees to cook for the visitors after Taiyo is allowed to do it with her. Oloisudori arrives in a procession of four wheel drive vehicles. He is immaculately dressed and so is his three friends. Taiyo starts sensing that he could be targeting her sister Resian. He gives each of the family members generous gifts including a briefcase to their father. Later after leaving, Taiyo talks to her father to get more information about Oloisudori and his mission in their home but he reveals little. After failing, she plans to ask him to enroll them at Egerton but she does not succeed. Ole Kaelo calls for his daughter Resian. He talks to her pleasantly and tells her he has good news for her. Resian misinterprets this thinking it's about being enrolled at the university. Finding that they are on different pages, he dismisses her and calls for her mother.

CHAPTER 14: THE WEALTHY OLOISUDORI

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Ole Kaelo and his wife visit one of Oloisudori's homes in Naivasha. He wanted them to see the home he is building for their daughter so that they can easily convince her to marry him. Oloisudori compares Resian with one of the legendary beauty in the land and this greatly flatters Ole Kaelo. He also compares her with lord Ngata an English lady who drove a legendary gentleman crazy but the lady finally refused to marry him hence making the gentleman hate women forever. He intends to rectify that by building a palatial home that she would not turn down. Oloisudori is even ready to enroll her as a parallel student at Egerton if she marries him. However, she must undergo circumcision before he can marry her. Ole Kaelo regards Resian lucky and hopes his other daughter would find such a rich man who could give him generous dowry.
Ole Kaelo reminisces his journey with his wife to Oloisudori's palatial home in Naivasha with pleasure. He still remembers with awe the grandeur and magnificence of the house Oloisudori was building for Resian in Milimani area of Nakuru which made him decide that Resian had to be married by Oloisudori come what may. Before parting, they hatch a plan of abducting Resian if she offers resistance and are very happy about it. His wife is not very happy about the idea but has no option. She is unhappy that her daughter would miss a chance of going to Egerton University. Ole Kaelo also seems at conflict but keeps assuring himself that Oloisudori is a genuine man enjoying his own fruits of labour. Later, after a disturbed night, he has a dream in which Resian accepts to marry Oloisudori without any resistance and that raises husband and wife's spirits.
Resian and Taiyo hatch a plan of returning all gifts Oloisudori had given them in his next visit to show him they were not on sale. Resian receives Oloisudori warmly into their home and hands over the carton she and Taiyo had packed all his gifts. This catches Oloisudori by surprise and he is made to believe that the battle has been won. He reveals his plans to marry her and she is shocked by the revelation. They have a nasty exchange of words with Resian telling him that she can only be his wife over her dead body. Resian storms out of the house and confronts her father in his shop at Nasila. Ole Kaelo confirms his intention to marry her off to his friend and says he has no intention of enrolling her to university. She has a nasty verbal exchange after which he slaps her twice. She tells him he better kill her than hand her over to his friend, the monster.
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Their bitter exchange attracts a crowd outside the shop. Resian leaves in hurry and heads to the river where she contemplates committing suicide. Just then, Olarinkoi comes to what seems to be her rescue. She tells her that Oloisudori men are looking for her all over and that he can help her reach Minik's ranch. Resian agrees to the idea and they plan to start off very early the following day.

CHAPTER 15: THE REAL OLARINKOI

After a sugarless breakfast served by a kind-hearted old woman, Resian and Olarinkoi gets into a pick up to start their journey to Minik's ranch. The old woman gives Resian a leso and a blanket to cover herself with. At the beginning, she is very optimistic and happy that finally her salvation has come. Later the hot weather and the bumpy ride makes the journey very uncomfortable while dust, flies, mosquitoes and the fear of wild animals haunt along the way. On the way, Olarinkoi is aloof, he does not communicate with Resian, but this does not bother her for her focus is to reach the ranch and meet

Minik her mentor.
The pick- up stops outside a mud plastered house with a rusty tin roof and Olarinkoi orders her to alight. He orders her to follow her into the desolate house which has two rooms Olarinkoi brings several foodstuffs he had brought with him in the pick-up, rudely gives Resian several instructions on how to cook a meal and leaves in a huff. Soon, she falls asleep and dreams where she meets Minik who promises to enroll her as a student at Egerton University and protect her from F.G.M. Her dream is interrupted by a loud bang on the door by Olarinkoi. He reprimands her for not cooking food and tells her she is his wife. He proceeds to take her by force and a struggle ensues. Resian bites his thumb and in defense, he hits her on the ribcage making her pass out before proceeding to rape her.
When consciousness returns, Resian realizes she was in a bed covered with bloody rags and naked. She begins to have recollection of what happened but cannot go beyond biting Olarinkoi's thumb. She faints again and sees alternating images of both Olarinkoi and Oloisudori. When she regains consciousness, she notices another woman who she had been seeing in her hallucinations in the room. The woman is called Nabaru and is
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the nurse that has been treating her. One evening after she is able to walk on her feet, Olarinkoi's mother comes and admonishes her for biting her son's thumb and abuses her for being uncircumcised. She reveals that she intends to have her circumcised after recovering and that she and Olarinkoi would go to Tanzania to start their marriage. The nurse comes when she is deep in thoughts and tells her that Olarinkoi's mother is an enkoiboni, a prophet and had prophesied that her son would bring one of Ole Kaelo's daughter home, circumcise her and make her his wife. The nurse tells her she has admired her courage and is ready to help her out in whatever plans she has. The news gives Resian a new surge of hope.

CHAPTER 16: HELP

Resian has a life full of torment at Olarinkoi's home from insects, reptiles as well as from the old enkoiboni. The Enkoiboni has a lot of bitterness directed to the well – to – do in the society such as Oloisudori. Nabaru informs Resian she is under a lot of pressure from Enkoiboni to have her recover so that she can undergo the initiation ritual. Resian pleads with her to take her to Emakererei's ranch which Nabaru agrees to.
When her health improves a little bit, Resian starts venturing out of the homestead. She keeps the company of some two young women who were married early. Olarinkoi reappears after disappearing for several days and tries to ask for forgiveness from Resian and even assures her that he would never molest her sexually again. He discloses that they plan to have her circumcised in two days' time so that he can marry her. After the revelation, Resian realizes that her only hope is in Nabaru. She waits for her eagerly but does not come that evening. She has a dream in which she fights the enkamuratani who wants to circumcise her, enkoiboni and when she is about to attack Nabaru, her dream is cut short by somebody calling out her name. Resian at first is unable to stand to open the door for Nabaru but after great effort, she reaches the door and opens it before collapsing. Nabaru administers some medicine through her mouth and she regains consciousness. The two women escape from the advancing enkoiboni, Olarinkoi and the enkamuratani. As they walk to the main road to board a lorry, they experience a big challenge, the heavy rain. Olarinkoi catches up with them as the lorry is about to leave, exchanges assaulting words with the two women before leaving him standing in the rain.
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Finally, they reach the sheep ranch were Minik ene Nkoitoi is the manager, and the place where she so longed to go. Resian is very grateful for Nabaru's sacrifices to save her from Olarinkoi saying that only God could repay her for her love and kindness. Three motorbikes catch up with them as they wait for their lorry to cool down. One of the riders is Minik who also recognizes Resian having seen her picture in the papers which

advertised her disappearance and promised a big reward to whoever would find her. Minik orders the driver to take her to the farm so that they can talk more. Resian is now towards the end of a torturous journey; homestretch as the lorry heads to the station.

CHAPTER 17: THE PROMISE

Resian finds Minik sitting on the veranda of her spacious house. She is awed by her presence for she reminds her of her high school Principal. She welcomes Nabaru and Resian into her glamorous and elegant house. After bathing, she tells Minik the events leading to her present state. She discloses she has always admired Minik, wanted to meet her and wanted to study veterinary medicine which Minik herself did at Makerere University. She also tells her that she would like to join her in the fight against FGM. Minik observes that some cultural practices like F.G.M and emuata had outlived their usefulness and should cease being part of Maa's culture. Nabaru promises to join Minik in fighting the practice Minik also promises to have Taiyo and Resian enrolled at Egerton University, their lifelong dream. She also promises Resian a scholarship and gives her a fully furnished house and a job in the ranch for the duration she would be studying at the university

CHAPTER 18: SISTERS' REUNION

On her fifth day in the ranch one mid-morning, a vehicle that Minik had sent on a rescue mission comes in the ranch. Minik goes to see the girl's condition and later sends for Resian. Resian is gripped by anxiety and apprehension on finding Minik angry. Minik is angry at the new culture brought by wealth where men would like young girls and forcefully circumcise them hence lowering their esteem. She narrates the case about the girl. She tells Resian the girl's rescue was not easy for the home where she was circumcised was heavily guarded and after luring the guards, they were able to rescue
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her but unfortunately, the man who assisted in rescuing the girl was speared to death by the thugs. She tells Resian that the rescued girl was her sister and the killed man was Joseph Parmuat a teacher.
Through recollections, Taiyo remembers how her mother lured her to accompany three women promising they would take her to Resian. When they got to Esoit village she was abandoned in a smoky hut and in the morning was forcefully circumcised. After that she went through several hallucinations. Resian goes to her room and the sisters hug and kiss passionately. The reunion of the two girls is very emotional. Taiyo slowly recovers with the help of Minik, nursing care of Nabaru and counseling by a teacher. Taiyo fully recovers, she and her sister discuss their dark past events. They blame their mother for accepting to agree to everything their father said. They vow not to be subservient to their male counterparts. They also blame women for the perpetuation of F.G.M arguing that if all women said no to the practice, men would do nothing about it. As the chapter comes to a close, Taiyo is advised to accept what has happened to her and move on. She is also advised to ensure in future her children do not go through a similar experience. The three ladies agree that if they stand by their position the primitive culture would end.

CHAPTER 19: DREAM FULFILLED

Minik calls for Taiyo and Resian later in August that year. She discloses that the contents of the two envelopes she has are about their admission in Egerton University. The girls are elated by the news. Minik organizes a farewell party for the girls. She invites many workers and girls to come and celebrate with the girls. The girls from Intapuka-e-Maa sing a song that seeks to empower and energize them in their resistance of outdated cultural practices. In the song, they condemn F.G.M and envision themselves as great professionals just like men in the nation. As they sing, Oloisudori comes in a convoy of vehicles to demand to be given either Resian or Taiyo arguing that he has already paid enough to have them both. Minik tells him to leave the place for he would have none of the girls.

Oloisudori starts insulting Minik calling her a spinster who lost a chance to get married

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and now masquerades as an FGM crusader. Oloisudori orders his men to take Resian by force and a vicious fight ensues between the ranch's workers and Oloisudori's men. Oloisudori's convoy is burnt to the ground and he and his men ran for their lives after a thorough clobbering.

On 5th September the following day, Resian and Taiyo are full of happy sensation as they climb the four wheel drive vehicle belonging to Minik to go to Egerton University, their Nirvana. They think of ways to repay Minik for her kindness but all in all agree that it is well that ends well.

CHAPTER TWO
CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISATION

A character is a fictitious personage created by a novelist in order to convey an idea. Characterization is the process of selecting suitable characters that suit specific roles by the novelist. Characters are of many types: main, minor, shadow, protagonist, antagonist depending on their role and significance. With themes and style, they form the basic triangle in literary work. The three questions answered by the three basic aspects are what, how and who. The question answered by character and characterization is “who”. In this novel, the protagonist, the character every reader would wish to be like, is Resian. The family of Kaelo is a key family; Kaelo, Mama Milanoi and Taiyo. Close people to this family like Oloisudori, Olarinkoi, and Joseph Parmuat are equally key characters in this novel. There are still other characters that help in anchoring thematic concerns, the plot and style and they include: Simiren, his wives especially Yeiyoo Botorr and yeiyoo-kiti, Ole Supeyo, Nabaru, Minik, the enkamuratani and enkoiboni.

Parsimei Ole Kaelo

He is the husband to Mama Milanoi and father to Taiyo and Resian. He is a retrenched 20
commercial manager of Agribix Limited Company situated in Nakuru.

Strict

As the bread winner of the family and a senior officer at the work place Kaelo develops a strict character. As the novel begins, he is reprimanding the loaders of a lorry (p.1). He denies Taiyo permission to travel to Mombasa with other young men and women to attend an extravaganza. He thinks Taiyo’s exposure to music extravaganza would make her a harlot (p.45). Taiyo tells Resian they hurry to the lorry before father spoils their day with his sharp tongue (p. 5). He also denies Resian a chance to go to the university saying her education is enough yet his aim is to enjoy the money (p.207). He terms Resian as stupid and myopic for insisting on going to school. (p.207). His daughters fear to report the heinous incident when they are accosted by a callous young man (p.20). When he is away, the house is joyous and comfortable. (p.35). The moment Resian sees him, she becomes clumsy and breaks a glass (p.40). During the homecoming ceremony, he sends a corrosive glance at Taiyo when Joseph approaches her. (p.48). When their father comes at the sitting room, Taiyo and Resian disappear to the kitchen (p.69)

Commanding/ short tempered

He commands the loaders violently (p.1).Taiyo knew the sting of her father’s tongue. (p.1)When a lorry breaks down during relocation, he fuses, curses and mutters expletives (p.10).When Resian becomes clumsy and almost breaks the glass he winces, grimaces and struggles to control himself (p 40).When mama Milanoi shows her dilemma about whether the girls should be circumcised or not, Kaelo commands, “You must immediately start counseling the girls”(p.61). After Supeyo fails to take him to Oloisudori, he gets very annoyed. He shouted in a thunderous booming voice (p.46). On

learning that her girls were accosted he takes a sword and froths trembling (p.147).He furiously pursues the men who had accosted his daughters (p.159).

Hateful

He detests Resian from the moment she is born. When she shows early signs of maturity he declares to himself “the earlier we disposed of her, the better” (p.10). This 21
clearly shows his disregard to his own blood. Mama Milanoi attests that Kaelo had scolded and bullied her like half-witted child (p.29). He wonders where in the world they fetched that awkward, overblown, stupid Resian. (p.40). When they make an accident with Resian at the door he curses, “Have you run amok?”(P.96). This is a disregard of the delicate emotional little girl. He brutally slaps Resian for not co-operating with Oloisudori (p.209) He gets dowry from Oloisudori without even informing his daughters (p.209).This is great disregard to Resian for she is the one expected to be in the marriage yet he does not inform her that he has picked dowry.

Hardworking

Kaelo remembers how while young he worked himself to the bone preparing for his future (p.8). He believes the way to the stars is hard work (p.8). Hard work had seen him through the ranks from a clerk to the coveted position of a manager (p.9). He succeeds in whatever he puts his hands in (p.29). He goes to Nakuru to work and returns to Nasila with wealth (p.38). While organizing for the homecoming event, he wakes up at cock crow. Mama Milanoi informs Yeiyo-Botorr that Kaelo is hard-working and that Taiyo resembles him (p.76).

Sexist

A sexist person is that who discriminates on grounds of sex. Right from the time Resian is born, he detests her for she is not male. It is unfair for a child is always innocent. In this case she did not participate in her birth. He uses abusive language on Resian most of the time. He instructs Joseph to coach her girls on traditional dances. Resian argues that if they were males their father would not have got them a trainer. It had been his prayer to get at least three boys (p.9).

Chauvinistic/egocentric

Taiyo is his pride. When she is born, Kaelo proofs his fatherhood (p.10). But when he gets the second girl, he is disappointed. He detests Resian since then (p.10). When he sees Joseph talking to her daughter, he refers her to Mama Milanoi’s daughter (p .48) yet we know she belongs to both her father and mother but since he considers the gesture embarrassing he does not wish to be associated with her. He talks to her 22
daughter through their mother (p.69).this is because his gloated manly feeling cannot allow him to address a young girl. He stays for long time without relaying critical information like the intention by Oloisudori to marry one of his daughters (p.114). Since she is a woman and her decisions are not necessary, he first weighs the issue independently.

Enterprising

His mentor is Ole Supeyo (p.20) who is a serious businessman in cattle trading. He owns a pick up for business (p.22). Plans to open the shop at the onset of rains (p.24). He is about to sign a four-year’s contract with the government through Oloisudori. (p.24). His mother-in-law is happy to get a son in law who is a businessman (p.28).

Greedy

Even after being warned by Supeyo against the corrupt Oloisudori, Kaelo insists on dealing with him due to financial gains. He views the warning as envy on the part of Supeyo (p.26). Because of greed, he becomes a sycophantic follower of Oloisudori. This makes him mention reckless statements like “There is nothing that he ought to be denied in this home” (p.98). He chooses to deal with Oloisudori the criminal due to greed (p.109). He wishes to deal with the wealthy. (p.109). He does not care the means of getting wealthy (p.111). He takes dowry for his two daughters even when they want to join university (p.111).

Modern
He tells off his brother when elders send him to tell him to marry other wives and get more children and sons. He says polygamy is archaic. He has only one wife and two daughters even when men have many wives and many children. He builds a modern stone house for his family with red tiles (p.27). His shop in Nasila is also furnished tastefully to attract high-class customers.
Traitorous
Though a parent to Resian and Taiyo he betrays them. He does not provide parental love as he ought to. He does not support university education for his daughters and he supports their early marriage. He also supports their FGM so that he can receive dowry
23
and safeguard his businesses.
Patriotic
During the homecoming ceremony, he swears never again will he Live away from Nasila nor abandon its culture (p.40). The twin sub clans of Ilmolelian Itoorasha Kiheji and Lelema will always be like two chambers of his heart. (p.40). He calls Joseph to train Taiyo and Resian Maa dance and culture (p.121).
Alienated
He had got detached from Nasila life for many years. He has to hold a homecoming ceremony. (p.37). It is now thirty years since he left Nasila for Nakuru. He seems to embrace more of the modern culture than the traditional one. This makes him embrace the likes of Oloisudori
Perfectionist/ Meticulous
He made sure that their furniture was loaded as fittingly as possible so that it does not break on the way (p.14).He organizes a homecoming party without fault (p. 37). He includes guests from all the five clans (p 37).
Ironical
When elders send Simiren to tell him to be polygamous, he dismisses polygamy as archaic yet later he encourages FGM on her daughters (p.13), which is equally a negative traditional cultural practice.
Stoic
Even when he is retrenched, he goes about the sudden news without physically showing he is beaten. He views the new change as an inevitability (p.7). When Resian runs and leaves Oloisudori at home on reaching the shop, Kaelo attempts not to show his great fury to the girl. When asked about university studies he answers stoically, “I decided I am not sending you there” (p.207).
Stubborn
He stubbornly denies his daughters a chance to study at the university. Taiyo comments ‘You know the stubbornness of father’ (p. 4).
24
Sycophantic
When Oloisudori visits, Kaelo stands in order to please him. (p.177). He seems to be worshipping riches and wealth.
Jealous
He is hurt because Simiren is more appreciated and considered as the cultural leader of the Kaelo’s (p.9).
Dependable/Trustworthy
Ole Supeyo trusts him. He would entrust him to count his money (p.4). Milanoi’s parents find him a dependable protector (p.29).
Corrupt
He is well versed with the murky business of the underworld. (p.23). He is about to sign a four-year’s contract with the government through the help of the corrupt Oloisudori (p.25).
Foresighted planner
Mama Milanoi expresses this fact on (p.29) in a flashback. He planned homecoming

ceremony meticulously (p.37). He tells Joseph that he had planned his future life when he was young (p.70).
Responsible
Mama Milanoi attests to the fact that Kaelo is responsible (p.28). She says since he married her he has always provided for the family.
Loving
Mama Milanoi confirms this trait (p.29). He calls her 'Lanoo-ai-nayorr" an intimate expression (p.30). Taiyo is his favorite daughter (p.111).
The role of Kaelo is to anchor the themes of patriarchy, culture, FGM, greed among others. He is useful in development of other characters especially Taiyo, Resian, Mama Milanoi and Oloisudori. The writer uses him to create flashbacks and his retrenchment helps in developing the novel's plot.
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Taiyo
She is sister to Resian and daughter to Kaelo and Mama Milanoi.
Intelligent
She understands her father well (p.1). For example she knows when he is not in the right mood to be spoken to. She knows he does not like having his plans delayed. She observes intelligently that "culture and traditions are never static but by being dynamic, culture sheds off aspects that are irrelevant" (p.127).
Sympathetic
She sympathizes with the loaders who are receiving stern instructions from Kaelo her father. (p.1) She had made it her duty to mop her young sister's tears, sooth her anger and gently reassure her when shaken (p.34). At the homecoming ceremony she sympathizes with the old man who struggles with meat with little success (p.50). She later comes to know he is Ole Musanka, a religious leader. She brings alternative soft food to him.
Bold/ Daring
To the knobkerrie carrying young man she demands. "Let go of my hand." She vows to fight F.G.M even when Nasila culture and her father promote it (p.88). She declares openly to Joseph that she has fallen in love with him. "She does not give a hoot about it." (p.129). She boldly visits Joseph's house even when it is a risky affair (p.130). She thinks boldly that their relationship with Joseph must remain even if it means relocating to Tanzania and becoming people of undefined culture (p.136). The attack by callous young men strengthens her resolve (p.143).
Loving
She loves Joseph. This is even after being warned against having a relationship with him by the father (p.71). She is infatuated and makes him a confidante. She says "If by loving you I offend the sensibilities of Nasila then let me offend them and face the consequences of doing so." (p.133). She sacrifices to go and see Resian so that Resian may eat when her mother lies to her that Resian has gone on a hunger strike (p.272).
Emotional
26
At the time they are leaving Nakuru for Nasila, Taiyo sheds tears (p.6, p.2). This shows the intimate relationship she has had with this town. She is not ready to let go of the town. She could also be afraid of relocating to a rural town. She is not willing to part with her boyfriend from Nakuru, Lenjir (p.3). When she realizes her relationship with Joseph Parmuat is highly hindered by traditions, she weeps herself dry (p.56).
Responsible
She holds Resian's cheek and registers that she has been devoted to her sister since they were in nursery school (p.34). She takes a lot of time before broaching the issue of going to university for she seeks an apt opportunity (p.54). Kaelo tells Joseph that the girls are intelligent but require cultural studies (p.70). She responsibly and carefully prepares delicious meals (p.75). She advises Joseph that they keep a clandestine relationship and then reveal it later so as not to hurt Papaai (p.134). She advises Resian

not to be left alone in the house with Oloisudori (p.197).

Alienated

She feels estranged for she has never visited Nasila before in her lifetime therefore she lacks basics of Nasila culture (p.70). She chooses to fall in love with Joseph even when the culture does not allow. This is because she is ignorant and alienated of the culture. She finds it hard to cope with Nasila culture at first. During the dance she takes a lot of time watching for she has no dancing skills of Nasila dances. She has to be trained traditional dances and culture by Joseph.

Stubborn

She stubbornly puts up a spirited struggle but later the battle is lost. This is when she insists on attending an extravaganza at Mombasa but her father denies her permission (p.2). She stubbornly falls in love with Joseph (p.133).

Sociable

While in Nakuru, with Resian they always stand at the window every Sunday before they go to church (p.2). With Resian, they discuss petty issues like they observe that two out of four aunts are pregnant (p.18).Together with Resian they mingle with women folk and girls of Nasila and learn a lot (p.36).

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Optimistic

She hopes that the new shop will succeed. She says Nasila is an Agricultural area and fertilizer and other inputs will be in high demand (p.4). She hopes one day they will go to Egerton University (p.4).

Assertive

She tells the young man who accosts them “We are not the kind of women you have in mind.” (p.19). With Resian, while in the ranch they declare never to be subservient to their male counterparts (P.277).

Hardworking

On arriving in their new house at Nasila, Taiyo works to exhaustion even when Resian is just reading books (p.32).

Flexible

With Resian, they adapt to Nasila’s lifestyle and easily get used to welcoming impromptu visitors like Olarinkoi (p.35).

Her role in the novel in the novel is essential in developing the character of Resian. It is through her that we understand the character of Resian as assertive and committed to female empowerment.

Resian

She is sister to Taiyo and daughter to Kaelo and Mama Milanoi.

Inquisitive/ Keen

She inquisitively questions the chances of her father’s new shop picking up (p.3).She questions on the rivalry and apprehension between the four houses of her uncle. (p.16). She interrogates and observes that Kaelo’s cheerfulness has decreased after meeting Oloisudori (p.120). She questions Olarinkoi’s sincerity about taking her to the ranch (p.217).

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Critical

She questions why her father sought Joseph to be their teacher of culture “Why not a girl” (p.73). She observes that the arrangement is favoring men. That Joseph is to prepare them to be suitable wives to their husbands (p.73). When mother tries to explain FGM to her, she dismisses it as a myth created by men to oppress women (p.90). She critically observes FGM to be useless in the current times (p.91). She fails to see any difference between the ancient Ilarinkon from the current Ilarinkon (p.91). She questions the intruding tendency by Nasilan’s into their house (p.91). She initially questions the significance of Kaelo – Oloisudori relationship (p.98).

Firm/ Determined/ Resolute

Even when told of their new shop she clearly says she does not want to work in the

shop but to go to Egerton University. She does not just want to go to a university but Egerton University where she will take veterinary science and become a veterinary doctor (p.4). When she is told by Taiyo that she will have a right to have as many children as she wishes she answers immediately saying, “I don’t want to be a parent. At least not in the foreseeable future (p.18). She adds, “I want to study.” She resolves to face the callous Oloisudori firmly (p.200). Even when she is beaten and denied a chance to join University by her father, she does not lose hope but still focuses on going to the university (p.211).She reminds herself when the lorry breaks down before reaching the ranch that she will not allow other people to sway her from her charted course (p.256). It should be noted that Resian’s decision to go to Egerton University began when with Taiyo and her father visited agricultural show. From that time she stuck to the goal till came to fruition.

Bold

On reaching Nasila, with Taiyo they manage to walk around even when they are not familiar with the environment (p.17). She asks her mother directly into her eyes, ‘what is the purpose of FGM today?” (p.90). She openly and boldly says she will not allow early marriage to occur in her life (p.129). She does not easily agree when told by her father that she is to wait for Oloisudori and three guests to cook for them (p.171). She comes up with a risky plan of humiliating Oloisudori (p.195). She is most attracted to bold
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personalities like Minik and Prof. Wangari Maathai (p.250). Nabaru confirms to us that Resian is a brave girl (p.253). Resian inspires the old lady Nabaru with her boldness so that she walks a long distance to organize for a lorry to take them to the ranch. Dr. Minik congratulates Resian for being firm and boldly resisting FGM (p.264).

Assertive

When they are accosted with Taiyo by knobkerrie welding young man she hisses, “Leave my sister alone.” (p.19). She strongly declares that she would rather live in the noisiest place than near a vagabond with intention of mutilating her (p.33). She feels Joseph’s lessons are taking her to the Stone Age era (p.72). She detests Joseph’s teachings on culture and insists she will be taught universal content at the university (p.73). Mama Milanoi thinks of her as a hard nut to crack for she knew her rights (p.118). She knows Oloisudori will not have a walkover on the issue of marriage (p.118). She observes that Nasila culture must soon shed off F.G.M and assertively notes that there are no two ways about it” (p.128).

Aggressive

She bites the thumb of Olarinkoi when he attempts to rape her (p.22). In a dream, she tells the old enkamuratani that she will never circumcise again. She twists her hand that is holding the Olmurunya mercilessly (p.245). She descends on the mono eyed witch like a ferocious leopard and disfigures her face. She batters her mono eye (p.245). Resian hits the witch on the head like a snake. The witch sprawls flat on the ground (p.245). All these happen in a dream.

Resentful

She instinctively detects the absence of love from her father. She grows sullen, bewildered and resentful (p.10). She resents Oloisudori’s ill-motive and therefore tells him off when he visits and insists that she should serve him (p.205). She resentfully asks what is wrong with being born a woman. (p.205). She contemplates suicide after her plan to go to the university is cancelled by her father (p.210).

Remorseful

When she becomes clumsy and almost breaks the glass she apologizes to her father
30
(p.40). When chided by her mother against using rude words towards Oloisudori and yeiyo-botorr, she apologizes (p.94). When she learns Oloisudori is heart she says sorry (P.95).

Visionary/ Ambitious

She has a dream of being called Dr. Resian Kaelo (P.94). She is always reading books

so as to keep her ambition alive (p.135). When Kaelo tells her with finality that she is not joining university, she screams like one possessed with demented spirits (p.209).

Observant

She observes that her uncle's four houses have rivalry and apprehension amongst themselves. She observes that two of the four aunts are pregnant (p.18). She interestingly observes that there is always a scramble for girls to marry in Nasila (p.128). She observes that the doors are well locked (p.138). Lastly, she observes that the term children always referred to girls in the Maa culture (p.175).

Pessimistic

At time she lacks hope. This is partly contributed by her father who disliked her right from her birth. Mama Milanoi observes that Resian is in a pessimistic mood most of the times (p.29). She hopes for the worst in their new house and requests Taiyo to plead with father so that they can go to university for studies and security (p.33).

Persuasive/ Persistent

She persuades Taiyo to plead with Kaelo her father to take them for university studies (p.5).

She does not change her stand. She always asks Taiyo whether she has talked to father about their university education (p.89). She persuades the young man accosting them not to harm them, (Taiyo & Resian) (p.18).

Sarcastic

"Wiser indeed!" jeered Resian. (P.72).She mocks her father's words that Joseph will teach them. When asked by her father why she has left her guest (Oloisudori) alone in the house, she sarcastically answers, "I left him at home enjoying his tea and pancakes"

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(p.206).

Jealous

She fears Taiyo's attraction to Joseph may lower her attention to her (Resian) (p.49). She declares to hate anyone who comes in between her and her sister (p.49). She is not ready to be abandoned by Taiyo as she falls in love with Joseph (p.72).

Lazy

In their new house, even when there are many duties to be done, she chooses to read a book (p.32). She tosses into the bed and declares that, "my body belongs to me.' (p.33). Kaelo comments that she is lazy like an overfed lizard after comparing her with the industrious Taiyo (p.64).

Defiant

She said in a defiant voice that she has no problem with adding knowledge but not traditional knowledge (p.76). Resian does not wish to please male counterparts (p.77). She is mad at Olarinkoi who is always doing nothing in the house (p.77).

Optimistic

She constantly hopes that one day she will join university (p.89). She imagines herself already admitted at the university and walking majestically (p.89).

Secretive

She agrees that they should not inform the father about the incident when they are accosted by a callous young man (p.20).

Resian's role in the novel as a protagonist is critical. The author uses her to drive central themes like FGM, female assertiveness and determination. She compliments Taiyo her elder sister and a confidante. She also immensely develops dialogue as a style as well as the plot of the novel.

Mama Jane Milanoi

She is the wife to Kaelo and mother to Taiyo and Resian.

Meek/ Submissive

She says she did not resist Kaelo's marriage for traditions did not allow any resistance

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(p.2). She prays God to open her womb so that she can bear a son for Kaelo (p.29). When she is taken to her new house she exclaims, "Father of all creation!" (p.30). When

Taiyo requests her to allow Joseph Parmuat to come and coach her on traditional dances, she fears saying “that’s your father’s territory.” (p.56). She fears to broach the subject of circumcision of her daughters. (p.61). She is disturbed by Resian when she (Resian) uses harsh words on Oloisudori (p.94).She knows very little about her husband for he is a man (p.95). She honors her husband’s visitor and his friends (p.179). She burns rice as she is afraid of Kaelo after Oloisudori has just left (p.104).

Religious

Before embarking on their journey to Nasila, she leads in prayers. Kaelo first spotted her at a church service at Nasila (p.9). She is to join women in ancestral prayers and songs of praise, a prayer for exhorting God to open women’s wombs so that she can bear a son for Kaelo (p.29).

Cautious

She cautions Taiyo and Resian against strangers who might take advantage of their unfamiliarity with Nasila. (p.17). She wishes to care for her children although she fears Nasila people for their intolerance (p.30). She is torn between her love for Nasila culture and that for her daughters as well as her dutiful role of a faithful and obedient wife. (p.61). That is why she takes the subject of FGM cautiously.

Loving

She loves and cares for her daughters. She is worried by the FGM that is to be conducted on them (p.61). On learning that Oloisudori intends to marry one of her daughters she cries with pain. (p.113). Like a woman in labour, the story about selling Resian to Oloisudori highly hurts her (p.193).

Evasive/ Elusive

She avoids the girls’ demand to be taken to university (p.8). Even when the girls make this request she lingers.

Mama Milanoi as a character is important in addressing the issue of women
33
subjugation by men in the patriarchal Maa community. The novelist uses her to demonstrate how women occupy a lowly position in the family. Dialogue and flashback as stylistic devices are used by the novelist through her. She is also used to address the issue of religion in the novel.

Traitorous

Her daughters expect her to voice their requests to their strict father but she disappoints them on the issue. The girls also expect the mother to side with them on the idea of FGM so that they do not undergo the cut but instead she supports their circumcision and keeps quiet about the arranged marriage of her daughters and Oloisudori even when she notes the gender disparity and the girls’ relentless desire to acquire university education.

Uncle Simiren Kaelo

He is the younger brother to Kaelo, uncle to Taiyo and Resian and brother in-law to Mama Milanoi.

Responsible

For thirty years, Parsimei Ole Kaelo has been away and during this time Simiren has acted as the head of the Kaelo family (p.11). “He ran all kinds of errands for his brother” (p.12). He purchases livestock for him (p.12). He also sells cattle for him (p.12). He participates in the construction of Kaelo’s two buildings (p.12). He always passes any critical information to him and keeps him updated on what is happening in Nasila. An apt example is when elders show displeasure in his monogamous state (p.13).

Humble/peaceful

“There had never been any rivalry between him and his brother ever since they were young” (p.12). He has always accepted his position to be subordinate (p. 12). Even when he has four wives and sixteen children while his brother has only one wife and two children he remains humble (p.12). When Ole Kaelo returns to Nasila, he humbly expects that Kaelo will take up his role as the eldest brother (p.12) When Kaelo gets enraged after he(Simiren) relays elders’ concerns to him(Kaelo) on their stand on

polygamy, he does not argue with his brother (p.13).
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Hospitable
He jovially welcomes the Kaelo's; his brother's family, back home from Nakuru where they have stayed for around thirty years.
Traditional/Conservative
He represents his brother during ritual and practices such as girls' initiation, boys' circumcision etc. (p.11, 12).
The novelist uses Simiren to show the positive aspects of the Maa culture. Humility, generosity, responsibility and hospitality are emphasized. He makes it possible for Kaelo to have a smooth transition to Nasila before and during the migration.
Yeiyo-Botorr
She is the first wife of Simiren, and aunt to Taiyo and Resian. She is accorded more roles in the family and has an obligation of leading the co-wives. In Simiren's house, she is the eldest wife of the four wives.
Conservative/Superstitious
She thinks of Resian as a mad girl when she speaks ill about the lazy Olarinkoi. She cannot bear an argument about female freedom and assertiveness (P.77). She believes Resian has a bad spirit because she is not circumcised (p.78).Yeiyo-botorr is used by the novelist to lay ground for polygamy in a Maa family. She is used to show cohesion in a traditional polygamous family.
Responsible
She introduces the other women to visitors (p.16).
Sincere
When she finds Taiyo and Resian doing house chores she genuinely praises them (p.76).
Soin Ole Supeyo
He is a respected elder of Ilmolelian clan, a longtime friend to Ole Kaelo as well as his mentor.
Honest
He honestly tells Ole Kaelo how much corrupt Oloisudori is and warns him sarcastically
35
against him (p.26). He advises Kaelo to be careful with Oloisudori (p.26). He also warns Kaelo against Oloisudori's immoral behavior by telling him to ensure he keeps his daughters away from him (p.26).
Sarcastic
He uses sarcastic remarks on Kaelo aiming at hurting him. "Supeyo said, scornful smile twisting his lips." (P.26)
Emakererei/ Minik ene Nkoitoi
She is a doctor of veterinary science, manager of a big ranch and a crusader against FGM. She is the mentor to Taiyo and Resian. She is the manager of a ranch and a veterinary expert.
Bold
Though she is hated very much in Nasila, she champions freedom of females and crusades against F.G.M and early marriages (p.62. She boldly tells Oloisudori that none of the girls would leave the ranch (p.283). She looks boldly into Oloisudori's eyes (p.283).She visits Ole Supeyo's homestead to persuade him not to circumcise his daughter (p.22).She orders Oloisudori to leave the ranch for his own safety and the safety of his expensive machines (p.283). She refuse to comply with his demand to be given either Resian or Taiyo.
Authoritative
She orders the driver to take delivery notes to the office (p.254). Resian observes that Dr. Minik Nkoitoi has an authoritative aura like of a principal in a high school (p.259). She authoritatively makes it clear that Oloisudori and his group did not have a right to receive any invitation letter to the party (p.282). She advises Oloisudori to leave the ranch in an angry tone (p.283).

Generous/ Helpful
She helps Resian and Taiyo get admission letters to Egerton University. She gives Resian a house and a job in the Ranch and saves Taiyo from her circumcisers. She holds a party for the two girls before they go to the university (p.280).
Educated/liberated
Mama Milanoi says she had gone to Makerere University in Uganda (p.61). She
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manages a vast ranch which requires a lot of expertise.
Loving/ Warm
She holds Resian on her shoulder and speaks to her calmly (p.259). She chooses to address Nabaru instead of Resian directly. (p.262). She develops a warm relationship with Resian (p.267).
Convincing
She convinces Nabaru that FGM is wasteful to females and Nabaru changes her position towards FGM (p.263).

Sympathetic
She feels sad when she sees a traumatized girl; she feels bitter bile sizzle inside herself and burn in her heart (p.269).
Courteous
The narrator comments about her courteous character when she calls the girls for the admission letters (p.279).
Minik is important to the novel for she is the agent of education, female empowerment as well as crusader of women freedom. Without her, the novelist cannot address the central issue of FGM in the novel. The last section of the novel takes place at the ranch and therefore she contributes significantly to plot development.
Edward Oloisudori Loonkiyaa
He is a close friend to Ole Kaelo and a jack of all trades.
Immoral
Supeyo warns Kaelo to keep his daughters away from him terming him as a randy he goat. His initial plan was to extort Kaelo but on noticing the two girls he changes his mind. (p.112). Resian certainly felt the fingers of his lifted hand graze the fullness of her breast (p.93). While in Kaelo's house, Oloisudori's eyes drop from face to Resian's bosom (p.203). Kaelo is advised to keep off his daughters from him.
Cunning
He brings gifts to the girls without telling them he is also paying their dowry (p.179). He entices Resian and Taiyo's parents by taking them for a visit in his own homestead (p.
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186). Ole Kaelo had even earlier reported to Oloisudori that girls are reporting at the University but instead he plans to marry them (p.187). He ensnares Taiyo and Resian like antelopes (p.192). He schemes a plan of grabbing Resian to be his wife (p.200).
Corrupt
Supeyo states clearly that Oloisudori's corrupt nature is known by everybody in Nasila. Joseph refers to him as a monster (p.100). He also describes him as a shadowy figure (p.100) and extortionist (p.101). He takes part in hunting elephants and rhinos (p.236).
Authoritative
He authoritatively asks where Kaelo is (p.92). He authoritatively states that Resian is his wife (p.204) and that only death can part them (p.204).
Cynical/ Sarcastic
He tells Kaelo, that he is interested in his girl, Resian and his friend is interested in Taiyo bluntly (p.110). He instructs that only Resian should cook for him and three guests (p.69). He tells Kaelo, "I would like to relieve you of your two daughters (p.110).

Sadistic
When Resian tells him off he laughs sadistically. (P.205). Resian tells Oloisudori that he is stark mad for thinking she is her wife. In response to this, Oloisudori laughs softly. This shows he derives pleasure from her displeasure.
Oloisudori is essential in the novel for he helps in creation of the theme of materialism / greed. The author uses him to create irony as a stylistic device.

Joseph Parmuat

He is a teacher in primary school and trainer of Taiyo and Resian on traditional dances. He is in love with Taiyo but traditions restrain the relationship.
Bold
He openly tells Taiyo and Resian that he will join them to fight FGM even when the environment is not friendly (p.88). He describes himself as a fish that had jumped out of water… on verge of death" This is when his relationship with Taiyo inclines to intimacy (p.136).
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Dependable
Mama Milanoi corrects Kaelo's thinking by informing him that Joseph is the finest and dependable young man of Nasila (p.48). She does not disappoint Taiyo's parents (p.132).
Loving
On meeting Taiyo, he falls in love with her. He promises to visit her the following day and also coach her on traditional dance if allowed by Taiyo's father.
Cautious
In dealing with Kaelo's two girls, he is cautious of Nasila culture and respects his parents. (p.122). He is alert so that with Taiyo they do not begin a clandestine relationship (p.123). He fears the condition of Intoiye nemengalana in the girls. He cautiously weighs whether to fall in love with Taiyo and break his cultural law (p.137). He fears that the uncircumcised Taiyo may be wild and untamable.
Responsible
While dealing with Taiyo he always ensures that Resian is available (p.124). He follows Kaelo closely to ensure the old man was safe during the errands of pursuing his girls' molesters (p.159). He helps in the rescue of Taiyo from her circumcisers although he dies by being speared to death in the process.
Intelligent/Informed
He observes that Maa culture has already shed off some traditional practices like throwing of the dead and the dying to hyenas, abandoning very old and terminally ill people to animals." (p.128). He observes how Nasila culture is violent once its sensibilities are violated (p.132).
Patriotic
Although there is a strong wave of marrying Taiyo who is uncircumcised, he sticks to his culture. He strongly feels that "Nasila culture was the father and mother that nurtured." (p.137). in this case he views the culture as that which nourishes the members of the community. He resolves to decline her love (p.136).
39
Educated
In his house shelves are neatly packed with books. (P.131). He is a primary school teacher in Maasai land, an area with low education index.
Joseph Parmuat's role is important in the novel. The novelist uses him to anchor the theme of culture. He also helps in the emancipation of women through his sacrifice towards Taiyo's education.
Old Ole Musanka
He is the old man who leads in blessing ceremony of Kaelo's during the homecoming ceremony.
Religious
He leads in blessings of the religious section of the Kaelo's homecoming function (p.51).

He blesses Taiyo and prophetically says she will be a mother of the next leader of Nasila (p.52).

Wise

He uses proverbs in his conversations. He describes Kaelo as a tiny strand of hair that had been blown to show the insignificance of Kaelo compared to Maa culture (p.51). He interprets Maa culture to the crowd (p.52). “Home is Maa, Home is Nasila, home is family and home is children” (p.52).

Conservative

He warns Taiyo and Resian not to follow the teachings of Emakererei. He curses Emakererei the wasp, “may she go down with the setting sun!” (p.52).Ole Musanka is an important character in reinforcing the theme of religion as well as culture. His age and position as an elder as well as a prophet make him stand a better position in religion and culture. He also signals future and hope in Taiyo through his prophecy.

Patriotic

He advises Maa elders to cut loose the strings of alien culture from Ole Kaelo (p.52).

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Olarinkoi

He is the young Maasai man who stays at Kaelo’s home. He is a suspicious character and through him the novelist employs suspense.

Intruding

He intrudes into the affairs of the girls while in the house of Ole Kaelo (p.74). He is not known by the Kaelo’s yet he keeps coming to Kaelo’s house.

Indifferent

He directs his attention to the girl’s parents and not the girls (p.75). While escaping with Resian, they travel for a very long distance in silence (p.127).

Lazy

He is always dozing off at the sitting room or idling somewhere else (p.77). He does not bathe and stinks terribly (p.240).

Secretive

He occasionally brings bundles of food to Kaelo’s (P.79). He knows the prophesy which states that he should marry Resian and keeps quiet about it as he waits for the opportune time. Protective

He protects Resian from committing suicide after her father beats her and denies her a chance to go for University studies (p.210). He rescues the girls from molestation by two young men

Mysterious

Joseph says Olarinkoi is a mystery (p.80) and only four men know about him. But the four always contradict in their facts about him (p.81).For example one says that he comes from Polonga, 200 kilometers from Nasila (p.80).

Abusive

He uses caustic language (p.211). He uses very abusive language on Resian even after she is emotionally unstable (p.217). He calls Nabaru a filthy woman for escaping with Resian (p.249).

Rough/Violent

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On the day he abducts Resian, he goes drinking and comes late in the night kicking the door roughly (p.221).

Beastly/bitter

He rapes Resian while drunk (p.221). He promises to do something nasty to Nabaru in case she returns after taking Resian to the ranch. (p.249). He strongly believes that

Nabaru and Resian will be followed by a curse (p.249).
Olarinkoi is important as far as suspense is concerned. The author uses him to create suspense. He is used in the development of F.G.M as a theme as well as exploring the theme of violence.

Nabaru
She is the old woman who takes care of Resian after she regains her consciousness after the rape ordeal done by Olarinkoi.
Caring/Helpful
She encourages and cares for Resian until she regains her health (p.225). She promises to give Resian account of what transpired when she lost her memory (p.231). She is the enkabaani who informs Resian of great secrets and even the prophecy (p.232). She saves the life of Resian. (p.236). She also becomes her confidant (p.237) so that the two share a great deal.
Bold
She travels a long distance in a rough terrain at night to search for a lorry to ferry Resian to the ranch (p.253).
Independent minded
She thinks it is none of enkoiboni's business to want to circumcise Resian while her parents were still alive (p.238). Her role is vital in showing the possibility of a female helping a fellow female in overcoming challenges of FGM. The author uses her to develop dialogue as a major stylistic device in the novel.
Olarinkoi's Mother
She is the old woman prophetess/enkoiboni
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Scary
She looks like a witch and has ill motives (p.227). She has a single, red rimmed eye that resembled a monster which is partly stone and partly human (p.227).
Cynical/Wicked
She shows mockery and disregard to Resian. She abuses her for biting her son's thumb. She calls her names for being uncircumcised. She says Resian is not yet a woman because she is not circumcised (p.228). She shamelessly uncovers Resian's stomach to check whether she is pregnant (p.235).
Sarcastic
She remarks sarcastically, "We have been trying to feed you from your bed with a silver spoon." This is not true for Resian was always treated roughly by the witch. (p.228). She laughs sarcastically. She mocks her for her father has money (p.228).
Contemptuous
She has contempt for the rich corrupt people in the society (p.236). She feels political leaders and wealthy people in the country are responsible for the unequal distribution of resources.
In the novel, she represents women who are responsible for being stumbling blocks to their fellow women in the society. She is used by the writer to bring out the theme of women as enemies of themselves.
Lebutu/ Lorry Driver
Meek
He politely asks for more work from Dr. Minik (p.254). On their way to the ranch he uses polite language to address the two ladies. He is contrasted with the other driver whodrives a pick up earlier in the novel carrying Olarinkoi.