

Predict

Will the grandsons treat Okorie with true respect? Why or why not?



Scene II. *The same, the following morning.* 14

BASSI. [*knocking at OKORIE'S door; she is holding a shovel*] Grandfather, wake up. I am going to dig up the farm. You remember the treasure, don't you?

OKORIE. My grandsons were in this room somewhere. They heard what I told you about the Jewels of the Shrine.

BASSI. You are dreaming, Grandfather. Wake up! I must go to the farm quickly.

OKORIE. Yes, woman, I remember the jewels in the farm. But you are too late.

BASSI. [*excitedly*] Late? Have your grandsons discovered the treasure?

OKORIE. They have not, but I have discovered it myself.

BASSI. [*amazed*] You? [*Okorie nods his head with a smile on his face.*] Do you mean to say that you are now a rich man?

OKORIE. **By our fathers' shrine,** I am.

BASSI. So you went and worked at night. You should not have done it, even to **forestall your grandchildren.**

OKORIE. My grandsons would never have found it.

BASSI. But you said that they heard us talking of the treasure.

OKORIE. You see, I suspected that my grandsons were in this room. So I told you that the treasure was in the farm, but in actual fact it was in the

14 Structure: Script

If you were watching the play, what changes would you expect to see onstage for Scene II? What details does the writer provide to suggest such changes?

In Other Words

By our fathers' shrine I promise
forestall your grandchildren make sure
your grandchildren didn't find it

Cultural Background

About 60 percent of Nigeria's 137 million people make their living in agriculture. Nigeria is the world's largest producer of *cassava*, a root crop that is best known in the United States as an ingredient in tapioca pudding.



little garden behind this house, where the village shrine used to be. My grandsons traveled half a mile to the farm last night for nothing. **15**

BASSI. Then I am glad I did not waste my time.

OKORIE. [*with delight*] How my grandsons must have **toiled** in the night! [*He is overcome with laughter.*] My grandsons, they thought I would die in disgrace, **a pauper, unheard of.** No, not now. [*then boldly*] But those wicked children must change, or when I die, I shall not leave a penny for them.

BASSI. Oh, Grandfather, to think you are a rich man!

OKORIE. I shall send you to buy me new clothes. My grandsons will not know me again. Ha—ha—ha—ha! [*OKORIE and BASSI leave. AROB and OJIMA crawl out from under the bed, where for a second time they have hidden. They look rough, their feet dirty with sand and leaves. Each comes out with his shovel.*]

AROB. So the old man fooled us.

OJIMA. Well, he is now a rich man, and we must treat him with care.

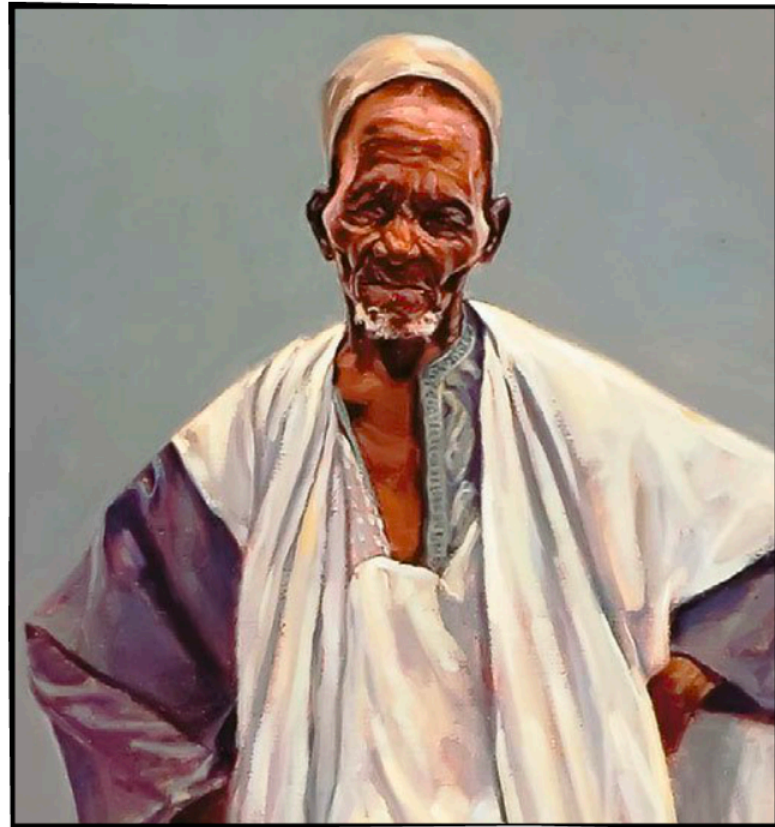
AROB. We have no choice. He says that unless we change, he will not leave a penny to us.

[*A knock at the door.*]

15 Structure: Script

In these lines of dialogue, how does the writer change our understanding of the plot and of Okorie himself?

detail of *Baba Cheap Cheap*, 1998, Tyrone Geter. Oil on canvas, collection of the artist.



▲ Critical Viewing: Character How does this image compare to the way you visualize Okorie?

In Other Words

toiled worked so hard
is overcome with laughter cannot stop laughing
a pauper, unheard of poor and alone



AROB and OJIMA. Come in.

OKORIE. [*Comes in, and seeing them so rough and dirty, bursts out laughing; the others look surprised.*] Look how dirty you are, with shovels and all. “Gentlemen” like you should not touch shovels. You should wear white gloves and live in towns. But see, you look like two pigs. Ha—ha—ha—ha—ha! Oh what grandsons! How stupid they look! Ha—ha—ha! [*AROB and OJIMA are **dumbfounded**.*] I saw both of you a short while ago under the bed. I hope you now know that I have got the Jewels of the Shrine.

AROB. We, too, have something to tell you.

OKORIE. Yes, yes, “gentlemen.” Come, tell me. [*He begins to move away.*] You must hurry up. I’m going to town to buy myself some new clothes and a pair of shoes.

AROB. New clothes?

OJIMA. And shoes?

OKORIE. Yes, grandsons, it is never too late to wear new clothes.

AROB. Let us go and buy them for you. It is too hard for you to—

OKORIE. If God does not think that I am yet old enough to be in the grave, I do not think I am too old to go to the market in town. I need some clothes and a comb to comb my beard. I am happy, grandchildren, very happy. [*AROB and OJIMA are **dumbfounded**.*] Now, “gentlemen,” why don’t you get drunk and shout at me as before? [*growing bolder*] Why not laugh at me as if I were nobody? You young **puppies**, I am now somebody, somebody.

OJIMA. You are a good man, Grandfather, and we like you. ¹⁶

16 Structure: Script
What do you learn about Okorie, Arob, and Ojima from the dialogue and stage directions in this part of the script? Why do you think they behave this way?

In Other Words

dumbfounded amazed, surprised
puppies foolish boys

Cultural Background

Nigerian traditional clothing was made from dyed cloths. Nigerian women wore fabric wrapped around the head (*gele*), a blouse (*buba*) and a traditional dress (*kaba*). Men wore a long, wide robe (*agbada*), pants tied at the waist (*sokoto*) and a round cap (*fila*).



OKORIE. [*shouting excitedly*] Bassi! Bassi! Bassi! Where is that silly woman? Bassi, come and hear this. My grandchildren like me; I am now a good man. Ha—ha—ha—ha!

[*He limps into his room. AROB and OJIMA look at each other. It is obvious to them that the old man **has all the cards** now.*]

AROB. What has come over the old man?

OJIMA. Have you not heard that when people have money, it scratches them on the brain? That is what has happened to our grandfather now. ¹⁷

AROB. He does not believe that we like him. How can we convince him?

OJIMA. You know what he likes most: someone to scratch his back. When he comes out, you will scratch his back, and I will use his big fan to fan at him.

AROB. Great idea. [*OKORIE coughs from the room.*] He is coming now.

OKORIE. [*comes in*] I am so tired.

AROB. You said you were going to the market, Grandfather.

OKORIE. You do well to remind me. I have sent Bassi to buy the things I want.

OJIMA. Grandfather, you look really tired. Lie down here. [*OKORIE lies down and uncovers his back.*] Grandfather, from now on, I shall give you all your breakfast and your midday meals.

AROB. [*jealously*] By our forefathers' shrine, Grandfather, I shall take care of your dinner and supply you with wine and clothing. ¹⁸

17 Language

Money can't literally scratch someone's brain. Think about Okorie's behavior at this moment. What do you think this expression means?

18 Structure: Script

What does the writer's word choice in this stage direction suggest about Arob's motive for helping his grandfather?

In Other Words

has all the cards is the one who is in control



OKORIE. God bless you, little sons. That is how it should have been all the time. An old man has a right to live comfortably in his last days.

OJIMA. Grandfather, it is a very long time since we scratched your back.

AROB. Yes, it is a long time. We have not done it since we were infants. We want to do it now. It will remind us of our younger days, when it was a pleasure to scratch your back.

OKORIE. Scratch my back? Ha—ha—ha—ha. Oh, go on, go on; by our fathers' shrine you are now good men. I wonder what has happened to you.

OJIMA. It's you, Grandfather. You are such a nice man. As a younger man you must have looked very well. But in your old age you look simply wonderful.

AROB. That is right, Grandfather, and let us tell you again. Do not waste a penny of yours any more. We will keep you happy and satisfied to the last hour of your life. ¹⁹

[OKORIE appears pleased. AROB now begins to pick at, and scratch, OKORIE'S back. OJIMA kneels near the bed and begins to fan the old man. After a while a slow snore is heard. Then, as AROB warms up to his task, OKORIE jumps up.]

OKORIE. Oh, that one hurts. Gently, children, gently.

[He relaxes and soon begins to snore again. OJIMA and AROB gradually stand up.]

AROB. The old **fogy** is asleep.

OJIMA. That was clever of us. I am sure he believes us now.

19 Identify Emotional Responses
Visualize this scene. What do you see and hear Arob, Ojima, and Okorie doing? Write the images in your chart. How do they make you feel?

In Other Words

fogy man



[They leave. OKORIE opens an eye and peeps at them. Then he smiles and closes it again. BASSI enters, bringing some new clothes, a pair of shoes, a comb and brush, a tin of face powder, etc. She pushes OKORIE.] 20

BASSI. Wake up, Grandfather.

OKORIE. [opening his eyes] Who told you that I was asleep? Oh! You have brought the things. It is so long since I had a change of clothes. Go on, woman, and call those grandsons of mine. They must help me to put on my new clothes and shoes.

[BASSI leaves. OKORIE begins to comb his hair and beard, which have not been touched for a long time. BASSI reenters with AROB and OJIMA. Helped by his grandsons and BASSI, OKORIE puts on his new clothes and shoes. He then sits on the bed and poses majestically like a chief.]

End of Scene II



20 Structure: Script/ Identify Emotional Responses

What important information does the writer reveal in these stage directions? As you visualize the action, how do you feel about Okorie?

Wooden comb
from Nigeria



Monitor Comprehension

Confirm Prediction

Was your prediction valid? If not, why? What happened that surprised you?