

A Handy Study Guide to TALE OF TAMARI by Shimmer Chinodya

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Synopsis

Set in post-colonial Zimbabwe, Tale of Tamari is a moving account about a girl growing up as an orphan. Tamari, the protagonist of the story, is a fourteen year old girl whose parents have died. She lives with her brother, Tsano Kuda, in the house her late parents left behind for them. She also lives with three lodgers, namely **Mkoma Mandla**, **Mdara Zuze** (real name not known), and **Sisi Maposa**. Mkoma Mandla is an employee who is usually smartly dressed. He supports Tamari and Kuda in cash and kind. However he attempts to rape Tamari. Mdara Zuze is a drunkard who comes home late around 3:00 o'clock in the morning. Sisi Maposa is a business lady, selling clothes. She is away from home most of the time. Tamari's greedy paternal uncle, Uncle Banda, is more concerned about the money he can make from the house than looking after her and her brother, Kuda. The fourteen year old Tamari faces the usual struggles of adolescence along with having to care about the problems her greedy uncle creates for her. The story is full of detail about travails(hardships) and injustices of teenage life which any teenager can relate to. The story is told from the third person omniscient point of view.

Chapter 1

Tamari recently lost her mother whose death came three months after her father's death. She arrives late at school and finds her teacher, Miss Ditima, teaching in the classroom. Miss Ditima allows Tamari to enter the classroom. When Tamari forgets to close the door, Miss Ditima teases her: "Have you got a tail?" The whole class laughs at her. To add insult to injury, a fat boy jabs her back with a ruler as she tries to sit on her little desk. Clever, the monitor, makes a quick note in his little book perhaps noting that Tamari came late or that the fat boy harassed the girl.

Tamari is experiencing physical development that is characteristic of adolescence: "She was growing rather too big for her desk. Her uniform was too small for her, too tight at the breast and too short."

Tamari likes mathematics, art, drawing, painting, poetry, music and netball.

When Tamari's mother died, Linda(her friend) and her mother had come to keep her company and to sleep with her at night. Linda laid flowers on Tamari's mother's grave and cried as if Tamari's mother was her own. Linda's compassionate attitude towards Tamari is sharply contrasted with that of some of Tamari's classmates who, Tamari complains, pointed at her and whispered behind her back as if her mothers death was her own fault.

Tamari's mother's people were away across the border in another country. From a distance, they were unable to regularly assist Tamari and Kuda.

There is not much in Tamari and Kuda's house: two old sofas, box size radio, paraffin stove, pots and dishes, two or three blankets. Why? The rest of the furniture had been removed by Uncle Banda who worked in a mine. This highlights the theme of **property grabbing**.

Uncle Banda wants Tamari and Kuda to come and live with him at the mine so that the whole house can be let out to lodgers. Tamari engages herself in a small scale business to eke out a living. She sells fruits, spinach, vegetables, tomatoes, mangoes, cucumbers, eggs, cigarettes and popcorn after school.

The story presents Kuda as a sporty or gamesome youth. He is fond of playing football.

Tamari and Kuda eat sadza and spinach most of the time. They eat dry bread without stork and drink tea without milk. They also don't have enough mealie meal. Kuda urges Tamari to borrow more money from Mkoma Mandla so that they can buy some meat.

Mkoma Mandla brings meat which he roasts and eats with Tamari and Kuda. He addresses Tamari as his sweetheart and little wife. Kuda fears Mdara Zuze may return home early and eat meat with them.

Tamari has a dream in which she sees her mother smiling and not as thin and sad as she had been when she died. Tamari's mother must have died of HIV/AIDS.

Chapter 2

Uncle Banda asks Tamari if the lodgers have paid rent and Tamari responds:

- i. Sisi Maposa is away
- ii. Mdara Zuze paid part of the rent because his wife is sick at home.

Tamari tells Uncle Banda that Mkoma Mandla had settled the water bill when the City Council disconnected water from the house. Tamari asks Uncle Banda for money for examination fees, mealie meal, cooking oil and bread and sugar. Uncle Banda hands her a few notes. Uncle Banda is always in a hurry whenever he visits Tamari and Kuda. Why? He is afraid to miss his bus.

Uncle Banda thought that looking after Tamari and her brother had become a nuisance (bother or inconvenience); the only goodness was the fact that he made a bit of money out of it.

Chapter 3

Tamari and other students are playing marimba, led by Mr. Pasi, their bandmaster. They are interrupted by the coming in of Mrs. Shava who whispers something in Mr. Pasi's ear (that Kuda has collapsed). Mrs. Shava later invites Tamari to her office. She tells Tamari that Kuda collapsed on the sports field while playing soccer. Kuda apparently fainted

because he had not eaten anything that morning.

Then Tamari tells Mrs. Shava everything. Mrs. Shava sympathizes with Tamari but she cannot offer her any help because there are just too many orphans at the school.

Uncle Banda visits Tamaris and Kudas home once again in the afternoon. He has come to collect rent from Sisi Maposa. He is impatient to get to the bus station and to the mine before it gets too dark. When Kuda arrives home from playing, Uncle Banda shouts at him: "You should be ashamed of yourself, neglecting your sister when you should be the man of the house"(p. 14) .He also blames him for collapsing at school(Mrs. Shava had phoned him) . He complains that Tamari and Kuda's parents left nothing but troubles. He accuses the two children of being ungrateful and threatens to sell the house and take them to live with him at the mine.

Mkoma Mandla greets Uncle Banda and jovially greets Tamari and Kuda. Uncle Banda shouts at Tamari saying that he doesn't trust Mkoma Mandla paying water bill, buying her(and Kuda) meat and calling her sweet wife. Sisi Maposa arrives late in the afternoon and pays the rent to Uncle Banda after making apologies for not paying rent on time. Uncle Banda warns that if she (Sisi Maposa) fails to pay her rent on time again, he will evict her. He offers Tamari half the money for fees while promising to pay the rest at the end of the month.

After Uncle Banda leaves, Mkoma Mandla and Sisi Maposa cannot help sympathizing with Tamari.

Chapter 4

It is Wednesday, the appointment date for the film crew. The whole school is abuzz with excitement. The crew members are young perhaps in their early twenties. They all wear T-shirts printed with messages in bright colours: SMART PEOPLE SAY "NO", FRIENDSHIP IS BEST. The three crew members each give a speech mostly about how young people ought to behave. Chosen pupils perform for the crew poems, songs, plays and dances. Tamari plays marimba. Tamari and other pupils who perform are given T-shirts. Tamari's T-shirt is bright blue and has a message: RESPECT YOURSELF.

After the performance, the crew calls together a special group of children whose parents or brothers and sisters died of HIV/AIDS. Tamari and Kuda are in this special group. This suggests to us that their parents must have died of HIV/AIDS. The children are asked to talk about themselves, to describe how they live at home, the problems they face and what help they need. A Woman crew member takes notes with a flourish of her pen. Each child who is interviewed is given a package of beans, dried fish, sugar, cooking oil, flour, mealie meal and salt. Tamari wonders if she cannot sneak back and rejoin the queue for a second share. The cameramen films everything. The film comes out later and Tamari is

featured in the film they watch on Mkombe's little TV. Tamari dreams being a famous star about to get married to football hero.

When Tamari's parents died the church people camped at the huge fire outside the little house, cooking, washing up, singing and praying at the cemetery. The deacon who works in a butchery sometimes brings them scrap meat and beans. Another church member who works in a bakery brings them buns. At the church bazaar, women offer them old clothes and shoes.

Kuda belongs to the Boys Brigade(Camping, putting up tents, swimming, fishing, and hunting for wild berries). Tamari attended the Girl's Fellowship Group meeting at the church(singing, praying, dancing, cooking, sleeping in church, running around testifying). Tamari views testifying in the streets as a show off. She enjoys keeping to herself. She suspects that other girls laughed at her behind her back.

Chapter 5

Tamari experiences her first menstrual period at school. She is pursued by boys, led by Fatso, and some girls. Tamari has blood all over the lower part of the dress. Linda urges Tamari to run. Tamari herself wonders what has happened to her. The boys shout: "PREGNANT! PREGNANT!" Linda offers Tamari a stretch of print cloth with which to wrap herself. Clever the Monitor tries to stop the pursuers. The boys pursue Tamari all the way to her home. Sisi Maposa urges Tamari to wash up and later explains to her how she has become a young woman. She threatens to beat up the lingering pursuers with a frying pan. Linda suspects that Tamari hurt herself in the school garden where they were watering cabbages. When Tamari returns to school after the incident, no one dares to point at her or shout at her because Mrs. Shava had ordered that all those who had tortured the girl be sent on punishment, pushing wheel barrow loads of manure in the garden. Linda comforts Tamari: "They(the pursuers) are just jealous because they weren't in the film." (p. 25)

Chapter 6

Tamari walks home from school. There is a heavy rain and she flees home in the down pour. She does not go to her stall on this day. Why?

- i. It is raining.
- ii. She has to study for exams.

On the way Tamari sees mysterious things:

- i. heavy rainstorm/dark cloud
- ii. a dog chained to a tree whimpering
- iii. a grey funeral wagon vaguely shaped followed by two vans full of dark faces.
- iv. a dirge rises briefly from the cars and fades into the distance swallowed by the storm.

Mkoma Mandla attempts to rape Tamari : "He puts both hands on her waist and reaches for her mouth with his. However, Tamari runs into the toilet and locks herself in" (p.27). When Kuda arrives, Tamari asks him to call Mai Linda or the police. Kuda expresses his disappointment at Mkoma Mandla: "We thought you were a friend." Mkoma Mandla is very embarrassed and apologises to Tamari. (P. 29)

Chapter 7

Uncle Banda visits Tamari and Kuda, bringing along Uncle Matope to buy the house in which the two orphans live. If Uncle Matope buys the house, his missus can easily manage his tuckshop which is nearby the house. Uncle Banda is paid one-third (1/3) down and the rest is to be paid in monthly installments over next few years. After Uncle Banda leaves, Tamari takes out her books and tries to read for an impending exam but it was no use:

- i. it was a gloomy afternoon, the sky was covered with dark clouds
- ii. she could not concentrate
- iii. the lead in her pencil broke and her pen dropped globs of black ink(p. 33)

During the exam Tamari abandoned the essay titled 'My Home' in favour of one on what she wanted to be when she grew up(painter or Marimba player).

Chapter 8

Most of this chapter is written in direct speech, capturing the interview between Tamari and the Childline Officer, Mr. Ngwaru. Mrs Shava arranges a meeting between the Childline Officer and Tamari and Kuda. Mr Ngwaru declares that Uncle Banda has no right whatever to sell the house. He knows that :

- i. Kuda and Tamari lost both of their parents
- ii. their uncle is making things difficult for them
- iii. they have no close relative in the country and that their mother's people are across the border in another country.

Mr Ngwaru promises to write to Aunty Loveness or get a lawyer to sort out Tamari's and Kuda's problems. He emphasises the need to keep secret of all the arrangements put in place. Tamari has great respect for Mrs Shava but she wonders why Mrs Shava left her husband to live alone when he ran off with another woman. Mrs Shava goes to hotels every Friday to have drinks and laugh with men and other women. Tamari wonders whether Mrs Shava is happy.

Chapter 9

Aunty Loveness arrives on Christmas day. She had trouble crossing the border:

- i. Her passport expired and there was a problem with her travel documents. She ended up spending two nights at the border.
- ii. The border officials were impatient with her.

iii. She got caught up in a Christmas rush. Buses were few and far between. She had to stand all the way.

iv. The road was gulted and rain-soaked.

Aunty Loveness brings presents for Tamari and Kuda: floral dress and a hat(for Tamari), a shirt and a pair of shoes(for Kuda), dried fish, biltong, potato crisps, sweets and biscuits, letters from cousins and uncles and aunts, money for chicken and rice and eggs. When Aunty Loveness arrives, the Lodgers are in the countryside visiting friends for Christmas.

Mai Linda drops by to check on Tamari and Kuda accompanied by Linda. They bring a pot of curried ox-liver and fresh chips. Aunty Loveness chats with Mai Linda.

She cleans and clears the yard; puts sleeves on the sofas and on curtains; she rearranges the sofas, etc. She chats up the lodgers and the neighbours. She makes sure there is enough food for the children to eat. She visits the Childline offices. She has to help Tamari find a place at a secondary school. The school promises to help Tamari with a small bursary. Childline would help too. Aunty Loveness has to buy new uniforms and blazers and bags, new books and stationery, mathematical instruments and Home Economics kit for Tamari. Shops are crowded with Christmas shoppers.

Uncle Banda has a negative attitude towards Aunty Loveness. Why?

i. She arrives out of the blue and takes charge of things.

ii. From the time his late brother married he had seemed to ignore him.

iii. She had refused him, her brother in law, to hold and kiss her on the wedding of Tamaris late father and mother. This was against the custom.

iv. She was chatting up the lodgers and the neighbours and trotting to the Childline Offices. Uncle Banda feared that Aunty Loveness would be told about his plan to sell the house.

Chapter 10

Aunty Banda arrives at Tamari and Kuda's home. She is very upset with her husband's behaviour. She bursts into tears and is calmed down by Aunty Loveness. She discloses that her husband, Uncle Banda, has not been home for a week. She suspects Uncle Banda is staying with another woman. She complains that Uncle Banda is not paying school fees for the children or buying food. He has left his wife to look after the children. This is irresponsible of him. Aunty Banda thinks Aunty Loveness is better off single. She says "Marriage is nothing but problems for many people." Aunty Loveness thinks otherwise: "There are many married people who are happy" (p. 43) . Aunty Banda advises Tamari to be patient when choosing a man to marry. Tamari feels sorry for Aunty Banda. She feels Aunty Banda, Aunty Loveness and herself are somehow in the same boat. Aunty Banda advises Tamari not to mess up with boys and men. Tamari wonders why boys and men are so nasty. However, she believes Clever is an exception. Why?

- i. He bravely struggled to protect her from bullies.
- ii. He smiled sweetly at her and always lent her a pen or a pencil when she lost or misplaced hers.
- iii. He had a handsome smile and was liked by girls.

Tamari thinks she should allow Clever to hold her waist at the sports field or bring him a boiled egg but fears other boys and girls may say against this.

Chapter 11

Tamari participates in a cross country. She feels weak and almost faints. Clever, who is chasing stragglers and runaways, catches up with her. He assures Tamari he won't take down her name. He helps the weary Tamari to walk, Tamari leaning on his shoulder. She lets Clever put his hand on her waist to support her, but immediately pulls away from him. Then she hears an impish boy's voice shout: "Clever! Clever! Tamari! Tamari! PREGNANT PREGNANT PREGNANT!" Clever advises Tamari not to mind the boy shouting and wonders why the boys treat her like that. Tamari regains energy and starts running and wants to finish the course.

Tamari and Clever withdraw and sit together on the terrace at the sports field, sharing peppermints and watching the track and field events. Clever asks for Tamari's photograph. Tamari says she has a photograph which was taken while she was young and in nappies. She jokes that Clever's mother will think the infant Tamari in the photograph is Clever's child. Clever tells Tamari that he does not have a mother either. His mother died after being bitten by a poisonous snake while weeding a groundnut field. Linda advises Tamari not to end up in a love affair with Clever. Tamari feels embarrassed.

Chapter 12

There are political and socio-economic problems in the country:

- i. insecurity
- ii. rising prices of food and fuel
- iii. political unrest .

Thugs sent by Uncle Banda terrorise Tamari, Kuda, Aunty Loveness, and the Lodgers around midnight. A brick is thrown through a window pane followed by a hose-pipe pushed through the smashed window. A burning match flows down from the window and sizzles on the wet floor. Then comes a warning: "Next time it will be paraffin." The police arrive three hours later only to find the thugs long gone. They were faced with challenges: "There was only one truck at the station and most of the staff had gone off to man roadblocks and streets in anticipation of a countrywide stayaway and mass action against rising fuel costs" (p. 52) . Only two came, a woman and a man. During the investigation

Mdara Zuze mentions Uncle Banda as the prime suspect. The thugs left match boxes with names on them, which links Uncle Banda to the attack.

Uncle Banda is arrested and detained at a police station. He suspects that the thugs he sent must have betrayed him. He regrets listening to Uncle Matope. This implies that the idea of hiring the thugs must have originated from Uncle Matope. Uncle Banda even suspects that Uncle Matope must have told the police about the money they had exchanged. He also suspects Mkoma Mandla and threatens to hire thugs to beat him up. "There were plenty of them willing to earn their money this way these days." (p. 53)

Aunty Loveness pleads with the Magistrate to let Uncle Banda free, but the Magistrate insists that the case can be withdrawn only and only if Uncle Banda offers to leave the house and the children alone. According to the magistrate Uncle Banda has committed a serious crime:

- i. The rights of minors have been abused.
- ii. There has been illegal sale of property.
- iii. People have been threatened and harassed.

He says that the law must take its due course. Uncle Banda is later committed to a prison in the City. Tamari, Aunty Loveness and Aunty Banda visit him in prison. Uncle Banda wishes he was out of prison to see his wife give birth to a baby boy.

Chapter 13

Two weeks later only Aunty Loveness and Tamari visit Uncle Banda again. Aunty Banda does not visit him this time. Why?

- i. she does not have money .
- ii. there are few buses and combis because of the fuel crisis gripping the country.

Aunty Banda and Tamari bring Uncle Banda food. Uncle Banda says he has only one week to return the money he received from Uncle Matope for the house. Tamari feels sorry for Uncle Banda. Uncle Banda plans to sell his sofa to raise money to return to Matope. He asks Aunt Loveness to send Tamari with a message to his wife (message of the plan to sell the sofa and the bed to raise money to pay back to Uncle Matope.

Tamari sets out for the mine. At the market place she sees the following things:

- i. an elderly woman moaning or singing a dirge.
- ii. a madman whose body had not known water or soap for a decade.
- iii. dishevelled street kids patrolling the market place, inhaling some intoxicant stored in plastic milk packets.
- iv. early women arriving to set up their stalls.

Tamari travelled in a combi overcrowded with passengers. She sees the land once miles

of rich wheat, maize, cotton, and tobacco now occupied by new farmers and studded with little grass huts and cattle and goats after it had been divided up after independence. She did not have difficulty reaching Uncle Banda's house because she had been there when her parents were alive. Tamari tells Aunty Banda the plan to sell the sofa and the bed. The latter starts weeping, wondering how she will do without a bed, a sofa and her husband losing a job and a house. What will she do with the little boy on the way? Tamari once again feels sorry for her.

Chapter 14

Aunty Loveness's days were outnumbered (two weeks to go). She had to make sure that:

- i. the problem of the house was sorted out.
- ii. Tamari and Kuda were taken care of: school fees, uniforms, food to eat, clothes for them.
- iii. the issue of Uncle Banda was concluded, whether he would respect his word.

She had to get her papers extended on that side of the border. The immigration officers offered her three options:

- i. she should apply for a birth certificate and local passport.
- ii. she should bring with her papers and a close relative to vouch her identity.
- iii. she should bring her niece to the office and see the Immigration Officer to try and argue her case.

Aunty Loveness chose the third option. She brought Tamari with her to the Immigration offices. They find long queues: The queue snaked through the office buildings and spilled onto the street (p. 64).

While on the queue they see the following:

- i. a young man in flimsy T-shirt and jeans smoked incessantly and every now and then coughed piercingly and spat onto the thin grass.
- ii. a bent woman about thirty or fifty went up and down holding out a little plate to beg for coins.
- iii. two women near the door sang a church hymn in a foreign language.
- iv. on the street at the end of the queue, two drunks sharing a quart of beer argued about petrol, politics and presidents.

Aunty Loveness and Tamari arrived around 9:00 o'clock in the evening and were served around 11:00 o'clock the following morning. They were initially served by a kindly man who patiently listened to their case. They were later referred to his senior, a lean tired-looking woman who spoke without looking at them.

Tamari fell ill i.e caught a fever. She felt like she did during cross country. Tamari was taken to a clinic by Aunty Loveness. Linda, her mother and her father came to see her at

home. The nurses advised her to stay at home and take a lot fluids. In the evening the lodgers (Sisi Maposa, Mkoma Mandla and Mdara Zuze) came to see her. Some church members came to sing and pray. Mdara Zuze gave Tamara bitter traditional medicine in a mug. Aunty Loveness feeds Tamari with beef soup. Tamari sleeps and sees many faces (in her dream) all telling her not to worry.

Chapter 15

Tamari lies on the sofa fully awake (her dreams have gone) .Aunty Loveness is holding her head in her lap. Tamari knows she is surrounded by possibilities. Aunt Loveness continues to feed her on soup.

A little bird sings at the window. It urges Tamari to take care of Tamari. Tamari realizes she will have to take care of Kuda as everyone else has looked after her.

Characters and Characterisation

Characters

Tamari, Tsano Kuda, Uncle Banda, Aunty Banda, Aunty Loveness, Fatima, Miss Ditima, Mrs. Shava, Childline Officer, Mr. Pasi (marimba band master), students, Clever the Monitor, M'dara Zuze, Church people, Sports Master, Linda, Mai Linda, Linda's father, Mkoma Mandla, the Nurse, the Magistrate, the thugs, the film crew, Sisi Maposa, Uncle Matope, the fat boy who jabbed Tamari, the little bird, Tamari's customers, the police, immigration officers, Fatso the Bully, the pursuers, the border officials, a clerk at immigration offices, etc.

Characterisation

1. Tamari

- i. She is resourceful. She does a small scale business to eke out a living
- ii. She is sympathetic. She sympathises with Aunty Banda on the occasion when Uncle Banda spends two weeks with another woman. She also sympathises with Aunty Banda when Uncle Banda is in prison.
- iii. She is sociable. She is a member of Girl's Fellowship at the church. She has friends, Linda and Clever, the Monitor.
- iv. She is responsible. She takes care of her brother, Tsano Kuda.
- v. She is compassionate. She visits Uncle Banda in prison.
- vi. She is assertive. She refuses to sleep with Mkoma Mandla.
- vii. She is unforgetful. She still remembers visiting Uncle Banda with late mother.
- viii. She is calm. She does not respond angrily to Uncle Banda's greedy behaviour.

- ix. She is thoughtful. She thinks about whether Mrs. is happy with being single.
- x. She is suspicious. She suspects that other girls whisper or talk behind her back.
- xi. She is dishonest. She wants to discreetly rejoin the queue so that he can receive some more presents from the film crew that visited her school.

2.Uncle Banda

- i. He is greedy. He takes a lion's share of the rent lodgers pay, giving Tamari a very small fraction of it. He also tries to sell the house for sheer greed for money.
- ii. He is unreasonable. He needlessly shouts at Tsano Kuda for collapsing on the playing field.
- iii. He is promiscuous. He indulges himself in an extra-marital sex affair.
- iv. He is irresponsible. He does not pay school fees for his child and buy food for his family. He fails to give good care and support to his own brother's children.
- v. He is regretful: He regrets listening to Uncle Banda to send thugs to terrorise Tamari and the people with whom she resided.
- vi. He is suspicious: He suspects that Mkoma Mandhla, Uncle Matope and the thugs reported him to the police about the thugs' attack.
- vii. He is cruel: He sends thugs to attack Tamari and Kuda and other occupants of their house.
- ix. He is intolerant: He threatens to evict Sisi Maposa for late payment of rent.

3. Kuda

- i. He is helpful. He helps his sister in cooking and washing dishes.
- ii. He is greedy. He does not want M'dara Zuze to partake in the meat Mkoma Mandla brings.
- iii. He is sociable. He is a member of the Boys Brigade.
- iv. He is sporty or gamesome. He is fond of football.

4. Mkoma Mandla

- i. He is generous. He lends Tamari money to start a small scale business.He shares his meat with Tamari and Kuda. He pays water bills for Tamari's and Kuda's house.
- ii. He is abusive. He attempts to rape Tamari.
- iii. He is apologetic. He apologises to Kuda after his attempt to rape Tamari."He muttered I am sorry and went out banging the door."

5. Linda

- i. She is empathetic. At the funeral of Tamaris mother she cried as if she was mourning her own mother.
- ii. She is supportive. She supports Tamari when she is chased and teased by the bullies e.g. she gives Tamari a print cloth with which to wrap herself. She urges Tamari to run faster. She comforts Tamari after she is tormented by pursuers.
- iii. She is compassionate. She and her mother visit Tamari and Kuda on Christmas and when she is ill.

6. Clever the Monitor

- i. He is helpful: He helps Tamari to escape from pursuers. He also helps Tamari walk on the sports field when she feels very weak.
- ii. He is partial. He does not write Tamari's name in his book when she commits offences.

7. Mrs. Shava

- i. She is helpful. She links up Tamari and Kuda with the Childline Office which assists in various ways.
- ii. She is immoral. She is not married and she goes to hotels on weekends to drink and laugh with men and women.
- iii. She is intolerant: She divorces her husband for going out with another woman.
- iv. She is compassionate. She gives Kuda a drink and a doughnut after he collapses on the playing field.

8. Aunty Banda

- i. She is emotional. She bursts into weeping when she realises Uncle Banda must have spent a week with a lover. She also weeps when Tamari brings her the message from Uncle Banda(in prison).
- ii. She is tolerant. She does not divorce her husband although proves to be irresponsible.

9. Aunty Loveness

- i. She is caring: She takes care of Tamari and Kuda. She takes good care of Tamari

when she
is ill.

ii. She is forgiving. Though Uncle Banda had wronged her she asks the Magistrate to set him

free.

iii. She is generous. She brings Tamari lots of presents.

vi. She is responsible. She takes care of her sister's children.

10. The Magistrate

He is law abiding. Despite Aunty Loveness's plea that Uncle Banda be acquitted, the Magistrate insists that Uncle Banda must be imprisoned for the offences he committed.

11. Sisi Maposa

i. She is sympathetic: She sympathises with Tamari over how she is treated by Uncle Banda.

ii. She is supportive. She orients Tamari on menstruation. She defends Tamari against pursuers.

iii. She is apologetic: She apologises to Uncle Banda for paying rent late.

Themes

1. Orphanhood

i. Tamari, Kuda and Clever are orphans.

ii. Mrs. Shava is unable to assist Tamari and Kuda because there were many orphans at the school.

2. Betrayal

i. Kuda feels betrayed by Mkoma Mandla. He says: "We thought you were a friend."

ii. Aunty Banda warns Aunty Loveness and Tamari that Uncle Banda has bad plans for the house(p. 43) .

3. Property Grabbing

Uncle Banda removes most of the furniture from Tamari's and Kuda's house.

He also attempts to sell Kuda's and Tamari's house to Uncle Matope.

4. Sexual Harassment

- i. The man with an empty beer bottle, who bought two eggs from Tamari's stall, tried to grab Tamari's hand.
- ii. Mkoma Mandla calls Tamari "my little wife" and " my sweetheart". He attempts to rape her.

5. HIV/AIDs Pandemic

- i. Tamari's parents died of HIV/AIDs
- ii. There are many orphans at the school where Mrs. Shava is a headteacher.

6. Gender based violence

The fat boy jabs Tamari's back with a ruler as she tries to sit on her desk.

7. Friendship

- a. Tamari and Linda are friends.
 - i. Tamari leaves her stall with Linda to attend to household chores.
 - ii. Linda and Tamari play pada and hopscotch together.
 - iii. Tamari and Linda go to the shop together to buy buns and freezits.
 - iv. At the funeral of Tamari's mother, Linda and her mother keep Tamari company and sleep with her at night.
 - v. At the graveyard, when they buried Tamari's mother, Linda had knelt down and laid flowers at the new mound of earth and cried, as if Tamari's mother was her own.
 - vi. Linda, her mother and her father visit Tamari during Christmas and when she is ill.
 - viii. When the bullies tease and pursue Tamari, Linda gives Tamari a print cloth and urges her to run fast.
- b. Tamari and Clever are friends.
 - i. Clever does not write down the name of Tamari when she fails to complete her course in the race.
 - ii. Clever and Tamari sit on the terraces and eat together peppermints.
 - iii. Tamari and Kuda share family backgrounds.
 - iv. Clever protects Tamari against pursuers.

8. Disillusionment

- i. People are disillusioned with the regime as seen by protests and demonstrations against the

rising costs of food and fuel.

- ii. The narrator says: "Through the window Tamari glimpsed the land once miles of rich wheat and maize and cotton and tobacco now occupied by the new farmers and studded with little grass huts and cattle and goat pens after it had been divided up after independence" (p. 60).
- iii. Near the migration offices two drunks argued about petrol, politics and presidents.

9. Adolescence

- i. Tamari's uniform was too tight at the breast and too short.
- ii. Tamari experienced her first menstruation at school.
- iii. Tamari and Clever have affection for each other.

10. Dream time versus real time

Tamari describes how her mother looked in her dreams compared to how she looked before she had died.

11. Charity

Tamari and Kuda are helped by various people: Mrs. Shava, Aunty Loveness, Sisi Maposa, Mkoma Mandila, Mai Linda, Linda, the Church, Childline Office, Mdara Zuze, e.t.c.

12. Skepticism

Tamari was skeptical e.g. She thought Mkoma Mandla was a good man but she was not sure.

13. Sisterhood

Tamari thinks that Aunty Banda, Aunty Loveness and herself are somehow in the same boat.

Literary Devices

1. Similes

- i. Linda had knelt down....cried as if Tamari's mother was her own.
- ii. When he (Uncle Banda) coughed he sounded like an old car trying to start.
- iii. As she played marimba, Tamari wanted to fly like a bird.

2. Symbolism

New mound of earth" (p. 2) symbolises a grave.

3. Irony

When Kuda hands Uncle Banda a cup of tea he(Uncle Banda) asks for sugar and milk which he did not provide to his late brother's children.

Uncle Banda accuses Kuda of neglecting his sister, Tamari(p. 14); yet he himself neglected Kuda and Tamari, his own brother's children.

4. Personification

Clouds are personified: "Big fat clouds rolled across the sky, spitting angry bolts of lightning..."(p. 14)

The bird that speaks to Tamari at the end of the book is personified.

5. Hyperbole

After Mkoma Mandla attempts to rape her, Tamari's heart was pounding.

6. Flashback

i. Tamari remembers visiting the mine twice while her parents were alive.

ii. Clever tells Tamari how his mother died.

iii. The narrator speaks of "... the land, once miles of rich wheat and maize and cotton and tobacco, now occupied by the new farmers and studded with little grass huts and cattle and

goat pens after it had been divided up after independence."

7. Imagery

"The queue snaked round the office buildings and spilled onto the street." (p. 64)