

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK 2013

TEACHER'S GUIDE



KING PEGGY

An American Secretary, Her Royal Destiny, and the Inspiring Story of How She Changed an African Village

by Peggielene Bartels and Eleanor Herman
Nonfiction © 2012

IMAGINE IF EVERYONE READ THE SAME BOOK AT THE SAME TIME

WHAT NEW THINGS WOULD WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT WITH EACH OTHER?

In its sixth year, One Maryland One Book is Maryland's only statewide community reading program. It brings together diverse people in communities across the state through a shared experience: the reading and thoughtful discussion of the same book. Each year, the book selection process is guided by a common theme, which this year is "a pivotal and impactful moment in time." The Maryland Center for the Book at the Maryland Humanities Council partners with public libraries, high schools, colleges and universities, museums, bookstores, correctional facilities and other organizations to bring book-centered discussions and other related programs to communities across Maryland.

The Maryland Humanities Council has at the core of its mission the deep commitment to providing Marylanders with an opportunity to gather and discuss issues important to their lives and communities, believing that a great work of literature provides an excellent springboard to do so. One Maryland One Book is not just about reading or literature. It is also about bringing people together for meaningful dialogue.

The book selected for 2013 is *King Peggy: An American Secretary, Her Royal Destiny, and the Inspiring Story of How She Changed an African Village* by Peggielene Bartels and Eleanor Herman.

GET THE BOOK

Pick up a copy of *King Peggy* at your local public library or bookstore and start a conversation with your family, friends, coworkers, or even the person sitting next to you as you ride the bus or train. This is your chance to take a moment to have a great conversation with an old friend or to make a new one.

JOIN IN

We invite you to join Honorary Chairperson, Maryland's First Lady Katie O'Malley, and thousands of other Marylanders at one of the many book discussions and related programs happening around the state in September and October.

If you're out and about, you might find copies of *King Peggy* in unexpected places. Our Wandering Books can be found in public spaces such as parks, buses, malls, county fairs, and doctor's offices. If you find a copy, it's yours for a short time. Register the book online so we can see how far it travels (instructions are included with the book), read it, review it, and then release it for someone else to enjoy.

To find One Maryland One Book programs in your area, go to www.onemarylandonebook.org and click on the Calendar.

For all the latest information, Like or Follow us:



Look for *King Peggy* at venues across the state in September, including the Baltimore Book Festival on Saturday, September 28.



Scan this code with your smartphone to watch King Peggy's CNN interview.

LETTER FROM HONORARY CHAIRPERSON MARYLAND'S FIRST LADY KATIE O'MALLEY



Thank you for joining me and the Maryland Humanities Council for One Maryland One Book, our State's community reading project. Each year thousands of Marylanders read the same great work and then come together to talk about it and how it relates to their lives.

King Peggy is the true story of a young woman who emigrated to the United States when she was in her 20s to explore and gain new experiences. Like many who come to this country, she enjoyed the freedom and opportunities and stayed, working at the Ghanaian Embassy for decades. An early morning call five years ago from her cousin back in Ghana informing her that she was to be the next king of her ancestral village forever changed her life. What happens next to Peggy is not just about her installment as king of Otum, but also about the people of her village and the responsibility she feels for all of their futures. Much can be learned from *King Peggy* as she finds ways to improve the lives of her people with so little. She shows how hard work, compassion and the efforts of one individual can uplift an entire community.

We encourage you to pick up a copy of *King Peggy: An American Secretary, Her Royal Destiny, and the Inspiring Story of How She Changed an African Village* and join the conversation. A program of the Maryland Humanities Council's Maryland Center for the Book, One Maryland One Book is made possible each year through the generosity of sponsors and community partners. Thank you for your support and learn more online at www.onemarylandonebook.org.

Sincerely,

Katie O'Malley
First Lady of Maryland

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Peggielene Bartels—King Peggy—was born in Ghana in 1953 and moved to Washington, D.C. in her mid-twenties to work at Ghana’s embassy. She became an American citizen in 1997. In 2008, she was chosen to be king of Otuam, a Ghanaian village of 7,000 on the west coast of Africa. She lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, still works at the embassy, and spends several weeks each year in Ghana. Find out more at www.kingpeggy.com.



Eleanor Herman is the author of three books of women’s history, including *The New York Times* bestsellers *Sex with Kings* and *Sex with the Queen*. Her profile of Peggy was a cover story for *The Washington Post Magazine*. She lives in McLean, Virginia. Find out more at www.eleanorherman.com.

ABOUT THE BOOK

On a hot August night in 2008, Peggielene Bartels was startled awake by a long-distance call. It was her cousin in Ghana with incredible news: Peggy’s uncle Joseph, king of a beautiful village on the west coast of Africa, had died, and sacred rituals revealed Peggy to be the next king of Otuam. Thinking it was a joke, she almost hung up. How could a secretary in Washington, D.C., an American citizen, be an African king? Not to mention that she was a woman. But it was true, and, in an instant, Peggy’s life was forever changed.

King Peggy chronicles Peggy’s astonishing adventures as king of a town of 7,000 souls half a world away. Upon arriving in Otuam for her crowning ceremony, she discovers the reality behind the fairy tale: the town has no running water, no doctor, and no high school; the king’s palace is in ruins; and the town coffers are empty. Peggy’s determination to change all this sets her on a collision course with Otuam’s stubborn male elders, who are unaccustomed to heeding any woman. Yet she finds unexpected allies: her confidante, Cousin Comfort; the sober and reliable contractor, Nana Kwesi, who helps rebuild the palace; and a fisherwoman as strong as Peggy herself. Peggy opens Otuam’s first bank account and finds sponsors so the town’s children can attend school. But she also begins to wonder if there is something rotten in the state of Otuam. The late king, it seems, died of fright; his children are conspiring to sabotage his funeral; and suddenly Peggy does not know whom to trust.

Peggy’s first two years as king of Otuam unfold in a way that is stranger than fiction. In the end, a deeply traditional African town has been uplifted by the ambitions of its decidedly modern female king. And in changing Otuam, Peggy is herself transformed, from an ordinary secretary to the heart and hope of her community. King Peggy is an irresistible Cinderella story, and an inspiring look at one possible future for Africa.

ABOUT GHANA

Adapted and excerpted by Auni Gelles from the book, King Peggy. Note: data reflects the publication date, not current figures.

Ghana is a country of 24 million inhabitants located on the west coast of Africa. Home to many ethnic groups, including the Ashanti, Fante, and Ewe tribes, Ghana is steeped in rich cultural traditions as well as mineral resources. The nation’s capital and largest city is Accra, a port city of approximately 2.3 million. European—first Portuguese and then Dutch, British, and Danish—traders came to Ghana beginning in the 15th century seeking ivory, gold, and slaves. Haunting reminders of the slave trade are still visible today in the expansive castles where slaves were once held. In 1874, Great Britain created the colony of Gold Coast, making English the official language; British colonizers earned favor with many tribal kings by paying them an income, and building roads, churches, schools, and providing jobs. Ghana declared independence from Great Britain on March 6, 1957—just before Peggy’s fourth birthday—and became the first sub-Saharan nation to become independent from Britain. Today, Ghana’s economy is supported by gold mines, factories, and cocoa production for multinational companies like Nestle and Cadbury. Many Ghanaians follow a religious combination of Christianity and animism, communicating with and making offerings to the spirits of their ancestors. “To the dismay of the missionaries who brought Christianity to Ghana, many of those who had jubilantly converted also continued their ancestral traditions. They saw Jesus, born of a virgin and resurrected from death, as one of God’s countless miracles, along with thirsty ancestors and objects that could think.” (p. 26)

Ghana’s constitutional democracy has made it one of the most stable governments in the region, and the work of elected officials is complemented by hundreds of local kings. Kings serve many roles in Ghanaian society: resolving disputes (rather than in the courtroom), working with the government to build schools, roads, sanitation systems, and managing land use. Ruling with an esteemed council of elders, including a tsiami—the king’s official spokesman—kings must pay tribute to their ancestors. “Kings were the custodians of Ghana’s vibrant cultural heritage. [...] Kings and all they stood for were what made Ghana Ghana, rather than just another former British colony like, say, Canada.” (p. 18)

"I realized that on this earth, we all have a calling. We have to be ready to accept it because helping my people has really helped me a lot to know that I can really touch their lives."

– King Peggy, 2013 CNN interview

Nana Peggy is the king of Otuam, a coastal village with a population around 7,000. Otuam has one paved road, Main Street, where there is a police station, a Methodist church, and the royal palace that Peggy and her regent Nana Kwesi restored. Many residents live in mud huts with thatched roofs. Located about 90 minutes from Cape Coast (population 83,000), residents of Otuam speak a distinct dialect of Fante: “the Otuam dialect was linguistic proof of the town’s scant interaction with the wider world” (p. 20). The local economy depends heavily on fishing, with fishermen working up to eight hours a day, six days a week, to collect mackerel, herring, red snapper, tilapia, and salmon in handmade canoes. Farmers in the region grow pineapples, yams, and papayas. The government set up a running water system in 1950, but since the pipes went dry in 1977, families—usually children—are responsible for collecting their own water from boreholes dug on the outskirts of town.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMON CORE STANDARDS

RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

RH.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

RH.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

RI.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

SL.11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.11-12.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

TEACHER'S NOTE: Common profanity and sexual references are sprinkled throughout this contemporary biography. Examples of them include ass, hell, bastards, bitches, have a quickie, and "squeeze your balls until..." They appear more as colloquialisms and part of informal speech than to sensationalize the story.

BEFORE READING:

DISCUSSION

- 1 What is royalty?
- 2 What countries have royalty?
- 3 Does the United States have royalty? Did it ever? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 1: SETTING - GHANA, AFRICA

- Use Google Maps and find some of the locations mentioned in the book
- Otum is not mapped, but you can find Accra (the capital), Winneba, and Kumasi (Peggy's birthplace)
- Zoom in and zoom out to see more detail
- Compare the Satellite, Hybrid, and Terrain maps
- What do you think about Ghana based on the maps and images?

ACTIVITY 2: SETTING - GHANA, AFRICA

- Access www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/
- Use the dropdown menu at the top right that says "Select a country or location" to find Ghana
- Look under "People and Society" and record the following: Age structure (with the five groupings), median age, maternity mortality rate, life expectancy, physician density, and hospital bed density. See chart below. Students may also be interested in including information on water and education (Drinking water source and Literacy).
- Then use the dropdown menu to find the United States
 - Record the same information about the United States.
- Below the chart, students should interpret the data and list conclusions

	GHANA	UNITED STATES
Age Structure (by %)		
0 - 14	38.7	20
15 - 24	18.8	13.7
25 - 54	33.7	40.2
55 - 64	4.7	12.3
65+	4.1	13.9
Median Age	20.7	37.2
Maternity mortality rate	350 / 100,000	21 / 100,000
Life expectancy at birth (total)	65.32	78.62
Physician density	.085 / 1000	2.672 / 1000
Hospital bed density	.9 / 1000	3 / 1000

DURING READING:

Students work in groups on one activity provided below.

Activity A: In an effort to learn about the Otuam culture and traditions, create a list as you go through the book as each is explained.

Activity B: Record African words and define them using the text. Research general information about the languages of Ghana.

Activity C: Summarize each chapter by creating a title for each. Below each title supply a representative quote.

Activity D: Describe the main characters by using text to quote words and phrases that illuminate their personalities.

Activity E: Out-of-class assignment for independent workers and/or students who need to focus more closely on the text while reading: Use the site www.ghanaembassy.org to extract information about Ghana regarding 3-5 of the following topics: About Ghana, Trade and Investments, Embassy, Education, News.

Activity F: Out of class assignment: Daily, report to the class on Ghanaian news using any of the following resources: www.ghanatoday.com, www.ghanaweb.com, and/or www.modernghana.com.

CHARACTERS

- **Ambassador Bawuah-Edusei** - Ghana's ambassador to the United States, Peggy's boss
- **Ekow** - Peggy's nephew, son of her sister Charlotte
- **Faustina** - Peggy's Soul who keeps evil spirits away from her
- **Kwame Aidoo** - town crier, local fisherman
- **Mama Amma Ansabah** - trustworthy woman who volunteered to join Peggy's new council
- **Mr. York** - educated man who improved education for many children
- **Nana Kodzia III** - Peggy's fifteen year-old queen mother whose job is to look after women and children
- **Nana Kwesi** - head of the family branch in Winneba, Peggy's regent
- **Nana Tufu** - village mediator
- **Papa Warrior** - Peggy's brother
- **Pastor Be Louis Colleton** - pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Landover, MD

GENRE: Biography

THEMES: perseverance, trust, forgiveness, acceptance, culture, family, faith, hope, determination, grace, acceptance

ASSIGNMENT #1 - PART I: IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2008 (Chapters 1–4; pages 5–52)

VOCABULARY:

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (p. 7) reverie | (p. 9) consular, visa | (p. 12) Fante |
| (p. 14) heinous | (p. 17) veneration | (p. 19) contentious |
| (p. 30) imbued | (p. 44) jettison | |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapter 1

- A euphemism is an expression used to soften harsh words when describing something embarrassing or unpleasant. What euphemism could be used in the United States that's comparable to Otuam's traditional euphemism meaning that the king is dead (i.e., "The king has gone to his village for a cure")?
- Are you surprised by the act of pouring libations? Why or why not? Do you have relatives or friends who practice traditions passed down from their ancestors' country of origin which they continue today? What are they?

Chapter 2

- Peggy practices not only Christianity but also African traditions that are focused on respect for her ancestors. Does one conflict with the other? If so how? If not, why not?
- Why would people look to their deceased ancestors to gain direction and support for their daily lives and decisions?

Chapter 3

- Discuss the impact of "the voice" on Peggy while she wrestles with the difficult decision concerning her acceptance of the Otuam kingship.

Chapter 4

- Does Peggy have the skills necessary to be king of Otuam? Use specific text support for your answer.

ASSIGNMENT #2 - PART II: IN GHANA, SEPTEMBER 2008 (Chapters 5–10; pages 55–124)

VOCABULARY:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| (p. 55) hinterland | (p. 56) veritable | (p. 76) miasma |
| (p. 91) adroitly | (p. 106) palanquin | (p. 113) impunity |
| (p. 123) petulantly | | |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapter 5

- Peggy starts a prioritized list of things to address in Otuam. If you were her, what would be your top three concerns as the new king?

Chapter 6

- Ghana and Maryland are quite different. Explain what would be the most difficult adjustment for you to endure if you relocated there.

Chapter 7

- Poverty puts enormous strains on a family. Create a Venn diagram for the class to fill in to compare and contrast poverty in Ghana and the United States.

Chapters 8-10

- Peggy experiences a roller coaster of emotions including many disappointments. Identify some of her highs and lows. What coping mechanisms does she employ? Are they effective? Why or why not?

ASSIGNMENT #3 - PART III: IN WASHINGTON, D.C. SEPTEMBER 2008 - OCTOBER 2008 (Chapter 11; pages 127-143)

VOCABULARY:

(p. 128) harpies (p. 137) portend (p. 140) regent, broached

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapter 11

- As an African American citizen, the election of Barack Obama to the office of United States president had a great impact on Peggy. Might it have had an impact on the Ghanaian people, too? Why or why not?
- Slowly Peggy is learning about her council of elders and their dishonesty. What strategies does she implement to end these behaviors?

ASSIGNMENT #4 - PART IV: IN GHANA, SEPTEMBER 2008 - NOVEMBER 2009 (Chapters 12-19; pages 147-236)

VOCABULARY:

(p. 165) aquiline (p. 167) errant (p. 174) mired
(p. 178) unkempt (p. 186) ostensibly (p. 187) extort
(p. 188) guffawed (p. 194) amorphous (p. 210) apartheid
(p. 215) tatty

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapter 12

- Examine the photographs in this chapter. What is revealed in them that you've read about in the text? What's revealed in them that surprises you?
- Do you think Peggy is right to try to break down old gender stereotypes? Is it necessary to do so? Explain.
- Where is figurative language being used on page 156? What is the benefit of employing figurative language?
Examples:
 - "...breeze played around your neck and shoulders like the caresses of a light silk scarf."
 - "...the vaulted mirror of the sky had shattered, hurling a billion tiny glinting shards..."
 - "The hen's six yellow chicks followed her like a tide, spreading out around her and washing back together again."
 - "...the world became even more alive, and the silver stillness, peppered by animal cries, suddenly buzzed with human activity."

Chapter 13

- Reflect on Uncle Moses' comment, "Just remember, when you cook a sea turtle, it stews in its own juices" (p. 164). Within the context of the situation, what does he mean by this statement?
- Has anyone read the novel *Things Fall Apart* by African author Chinua Achebe? If so, summarize the plot for the class. Are there any commonalities between Achebe's novel and *King Peggy*?

Chapters 15 - 16

- Predict who could be stealing from the courtyard. Create a chart with class opinions and a count for each prediction. Keep the chart posted until the thief is revealed.
- Corruption is prevalent throughout the world. Why does Peggy take the Ghanaian corruption so personally? Does the corruption throughout the country impact the Otuam citizens? Why or why not?
- What does "divorcing a family member" mean to Ghanaians? Does anything similar occur in American culture?

Chapters 17 - 18

- Why is the introduction of Daavi and Dzadi Yatu a turning point for King Peggy's plans for her kingship?
- Are there any benefits to the ubiquitous arguing that occurs among the council of elders and King Peggy?
- What is the impact of Mama Amma Ansabah volunteering to join the council of elders?
- In your opinion, did Uncle Moses kill the late king? Should he be absolved of feeling guilty?

Chapter 19

- What prejudices are apparent in Otuam?

ASSIGNMENT #5 - PART V: IN WASHINGTON, D.C. NOVEMBER 2008 - SEPTEMBER 2009 (Chapters 20–21; pages 239–261)

VOCABULARY:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| (p. 240) apoplectic | (p. 244) demeanor | (p. 245) affectation |
| (p. 251) vestige | (p. 253) imbibe | (p. 255) disconsolately |
| (p. 258) impetuous | | |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapters 20 - 21

- List the types of assistance Shiloh Baptist Church will provide Otuam. Number them in order of priority as you understand Otuam's needs. Remember, King Peggy wants to provide "dignity" for her subjects. Compare and contrast a partner's list to yours.
- Return to the chart that plots the predictions of the courtyard supplies thief. What percentage was correct? Is that the majority of the class? What clues led you to correctly identify the thief?
- What does King Peggy reveal about the epiphany she's had since spending so much time in Ghana on her last visit? How might this help her perform her duties as king?

ASSIGNMENT #6 - PART VI: IN GHANA, SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2010 (Chapters 22–27; pages 265–326)

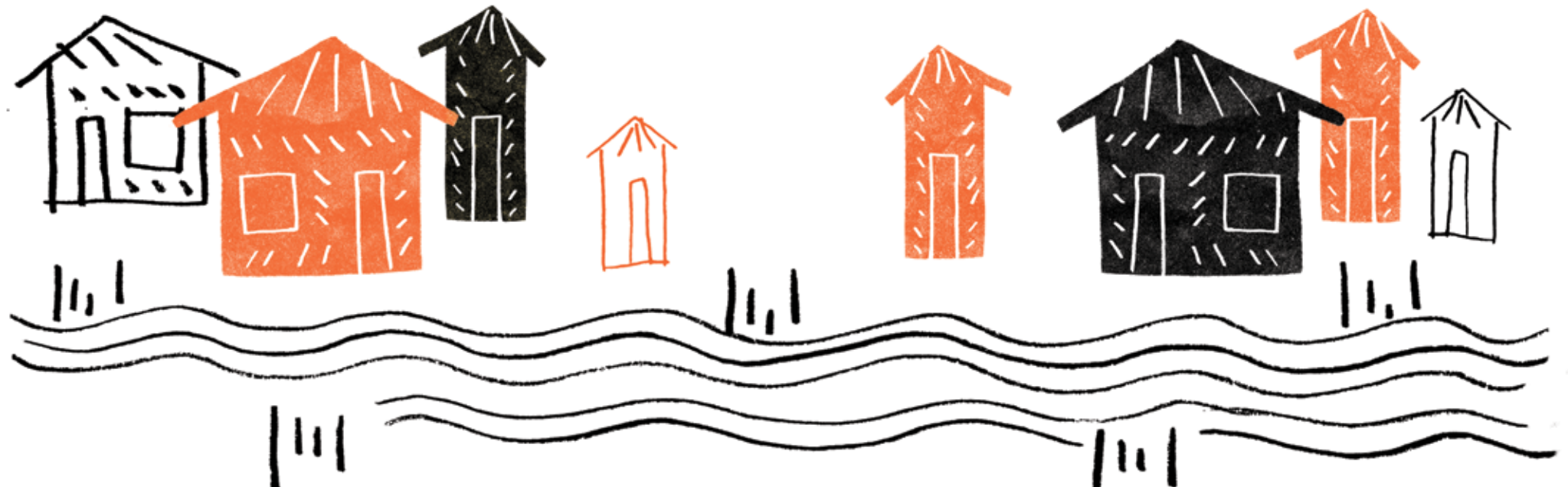
VOCABULARY:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| (p. 268) adjudicate | (p. 280) epithets | (p. 283) vindictive |
| (p. 284) keening, diaspora | (p. 290) aristocratic | (p. 292) effigy |
| (p. 298) dais | (p. 314) tribunal | |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapters 22 - 26

- What one line on page 278 provides subtle foreshadowing? Any predictions about what's going to happen?
- How does the young, beautiful, quiet Queen Mother's dream turn around the atmosphere of the room and the discussion about burying the wrong body?
- As in real life, many people in the novel change over the years. Which characters have changed from certain behaviors at the beginning of the book to near opposite behaviors at the end of the book? Does this surprise you?
- This novel is filled with irony—the use of words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal meaning. For example, the children of Otuam live in poverty but will never go hungry. Reflect on the entire story and share other examples of irony.
- What will be the most memorable part of this book for you? Why?



EPILOGUE: (pages 327 - 328)

AUTHORS' NOTE: (page 329)

AFTER READING

- Collaboratively, each During Reading group creates a presentation that completes their activity. Suggested formats: Animoto, Prezi, VuVox, PowerPoint, flip chart, video, digital collage, poster, etc. One student acts as a spokesperson to introduce the presentation. If possible, allow time for students in the other groups to pose questions of the presenting group. Group members other than the spokesperson provide answers.
- Send letters from students to King Peggy explaining their reaction to the novel and their interest in helping Otuam and its people.



The content and resources of this guide were created and compiled by Susan P. Mundy. Portions have been reprinted with permission from Anchor Books.

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