



Chike and the River

Chinua Achebe , Prue Theobalds (Illustrator)

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The more Chike saw the ferry-boats the more he wanted to make the trip to Asaba. But where would he get the money? He did not know. Still, he hoped.

Eleven-year-old Chike longs to cross the Niger River to the city of Asaba, but he doesn't have the sixpence he needs to pay for the ferry ride. With the help of his friend S.M.O.G., he embarks on a series of adventures to help him get there. Along the way, he is exposed to a range of new experiences that are both thrilling and terrifying, from eating his first skewer of *suya* under the shade of a mango tree, to visiting the village magician who promises to double the money in his pocket. Once he finally makes it across the river, Chike realizes that life on the other side is far different from his expectations, and he must find the courage within him to make it home.

Chike and the River is a magical tale of boundaries, bravery, and growth, by Chinua Achebe, one of the world's most beloved and admired storytellers.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

Chike and the River Details

Date : Published January 1st 1966 by Cambridge University Press

ISBN : 9780521040037

Author : Chinua Achebe , Prue Theobalds (Illustrator)

Format : Paperback 64 pages

Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Africa, Western Africa, Nigeria, Childrens, Literature, African Literature, Classics, Young Adult

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From Reader Review Chike and the River for online ebook

O says

I read this book, and had it autographed, as a child.

Samir Rawas Sarayji says

What a delightful read. Achebe waved his magic wand and made me feel 8 years old again while reading this charming children's story.

The Summary:

Chike leaves his mother and his village of Umuofia to settle with his uncle in Onitsha where he would school. He settles into this new life and quickly makes friends at the school. The notorious S.M.O.G. becomes a particularly good friend and a constant bad influence. Chike's desire is to cross the River Niger to Asaba, a big city unlike anything he has seen before. The ferry ride is six-pence one way and this is beyond his means. The adventure begins as he figures a way to make the money, he then crosses the river only to miss the last ferry back home, and then he ends up in the back of a lorry for the night, which turns out to be a loading vehicle for robbers. The ending I shall leave for you to discover (Avoiding spoilers here).

Culturally Educational

Of course, as all children's adventures go, there is nothing special here. In fact, one could go as far as to say that the story is a cliché, although the book was first published in 1966, so it could also be seen as a standard story format of the time. What stands out is Achebe's simple prose and the continuous references to Chike's tribal sayings, all of which are shown for young readers to understand. Likewise the occasional usage of pidgin English or references in local dialect. Another great factor is the actions taken by the different characters which are all accurate and vivid, representative of life in Nigeria. There is much to learn culturally for modern day young readers as well as adult readers who are interested to know about tribal African cultures. A highly recommended book.

Ginna says

Sweet story about a Nigerian boy's dream to cross the river. I think kids anywhere would like it.

Lisa says

Chike and his friends make you remember childhood as a time of dreams, friends and all the good and bad that come with them, warnings from adults and brave acts of discovery each day.

Karla says

While I found this in the Adult section of my local library, it is really a Children's story. Told like a fable it was a nice short read.

Vi says

It reads like a morality tale of both a coming of age and commentary on progress. Light quick read, good for reading lists.

Orient says

Oh yeah, I did it, I picked a book without magic, monsters and great villains :D Miracles do happen :) But I'll get back to my monsters, I promise :) No need to worry :)

Oh what an easy and light read "Chike and the River" was. I chose this book as a finale to my Lithuanian reading Challenge for 2016. With symbolism to adults and some funny and exciting adventure to kids. As you probably guessed, Chike is a kid and the river symbolizes his struggle in life to overcome his fears, sneak peak into the exciting world and try to not be carried away by the stream.

This short book was quite a page-turner and offered me a glimpse into a simple life when people were way more innocent, even the baddies. Simple but quite appealing illustrations served good to express the simplicity of the story but at the same time they left a warm feeling, like looking at a lovely art of a child. The writing is so simple, but compelling (old lorry called Slow-and-Steady with a quite picturesque description and so innocently mischievous nincompoops are only two gems I found in this slight delight)

The story gently touches the innocent mind of a child, essence of loneliness, childish curiosity, survival skills, way to salvation. It is a heartwarming tale :)

Carol says

When serendipity leads to a delightful read. If you have 30 minutes and any interest, this tale by Achebe will charm you.

Khashayar Mohammadi says

Kept me fairly entertained while I was trapped inside the library waiting for the rain to stop. A sweet little read that takes a rather innocent peak at poverty in Nigeria.

Doug Wells says

With his passing, I wanted to make a point of reading more of Achebe. While this does not feel the caliber of Things Fall Apart, it is good story. Simple, fast, and well-written.

Kellie Hermansen says

Loved it. My husband is Nigerian and based on the stories about school he's told me, this seems pretty accurate! I was actually really surprised while reading this how well it matched up with the stories and sentiments he told me :).

Shoshi Azran says

??? ?????? ??? ? ????

Tomi says

I loved the narration of this short story as I joined Chike in his series of small adventures. The illustrations in the newer edition are lovely adding a nice playful touch. This book is definitely geared towards a younger crowd (9-13yrs) but enjoyable for older folks who are aware that it's on the lighter side of Achebe's writing. Personally, I'm going to pick up a copy to add my library.

Edwinbcn says

Chike and the River is a charming little tale by Nobel Prize Winner Chinua Achebe. The language is simplistic, to the extent that the booklet would do well as a children's book. It's moral message is also of that stature.

The story seems to encourage young people in Africa to go out from the villages and look for a better future in the big cities, but warns of dangers and offers moral guidelines. In the course of the story, life in the village is shown as poor, simple but rather virtuous, while the city, the river, and Lagos, beyond the city and down the river are shown as places where danger lurks. Life in the city also requires money, and Chike learns the hard way how to come by the money he needs: deceit, theft and reward.

Whether read as a children's tale or a simple short story, readers of all ages may learn something from this booklet set in Africa.

Friederike Knabe says

Back in 1966, Chinua Achebe's wrote this gentle, touching story of an eleven-year-old Nigerian boy, Chike. He has to leave his beloved small village and his family behind and live with his uncle in the city Onitsha, on the shores of the Niger River, so that he can continue his schooling.

It is a charming tale about finding your way in a totally new environment and learning some important life lessons about loyalty, honesty, courage and the strength and limits of dreams. Best known for his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, published in 1958, Chinua Achebe is revered as the father of the African novel and THE standard for African fiction writing.

For my comprehensive review, go to www.mostlyfiction.com
