Preparing to Read
Connect to Your Life

Marriage customs vary greatly throughout the world.
- In some cultures, people’s marriages are traditionally arranged by their parents.
- In others cultures, the partners make up their own minds.

Preparing to Read
Connect to Your Life

What do you know about arranged marriages?
- What purpose do they serve?
- What advantages and disadvantages might they have?
Preparing to Read
Build Background

- The story takes place in the West African country of Nigeria, a land of great cultural diversity.
- Centuries-old traditions continue to govern life in Nigerian villages, where parents often play a decisive role in choosing mates for their children.

Preparing to Read
Build Background

- In the cities, however, modern practices have displaced many of the village traditions, including the role of parent as matchmaker.
- The tension between old and new ways of living sometimes creates conflict within families, especially between generations.

Preparing to Read
Build Background

- The following story focuses on a conflict between a father and son about the choice of the son’s marriage partner.
- Both men are Ibo, members of one of Nigeria’s largest ethnic groups.
Preparing to Read
Build Background

The son, like many of his contemporaries, has moved away from the village of his birth and lives in a city, Lagos, the economic and commercial center of the nation, with a population of 1.4 million.

Preparing to Read
Build Background

- In the villages of Nigeria, the Ibo live apart from other peoples, maintaining their traditional way of live.
- In Lagos, ethnic groups, cultures, and religions mingle freely.

Preparing to Read
Words to Know

- commiserate
- cosmopolitan
- deference
- dissuasion
- forsaken
- homily
- perfunctorily
- persevere
- remorse
- theological
Preparing to Read
Focus Your Reading

• The plot of story is constructed around conflict, or the struggle between opposing forces.
• In some stories, struggles occur as a result of cultural differences; these cultural conflicts arise from differences in values, beliefs, or customs.
  – As you read, look for conflicts arising from cultural friction.

Preparing to Read
Focus Your Reading

• In order to understand the conflict in this story, you will need to pay close attention to the cultural context.
• The following passage shows a tension between city ways and tribal ways of life.
  – In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city, it had always seemed to her something of a joke that a person’s tribe could determine whom be married.

Preparing to Read
Focus Your Reading

Reader’s Notebook
– As you read, take notes on the cultural characteristics of the village and the city.

Download the graphic organizer at www.curriculumcompanion.org
Reading and Analyzing

Literary Analysis

Cultural Conflict

– The chief conflict in this story is over a clash of cultures.
– Students should recognize the distinctive characteristics of the cultures.

» What are the values, beliefs, and customs on both sides that are the source of this conflict?

Reading and Analyzing

Active Reading

Identifying Cultural Characteristics

– As you read continue to keep track of the differences between the culture of Okeke’s village and that of Lagos.

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Reading and Analyzing

Active Reading

• Summarize
  – Summarize the conversation among Okeke and the other men of the village.

• Evaluate
  – What do you think Nnaemekwe’s father was trying to win?
  – Do you feel that the father truly won something?