

A NOVEL dripping with tragic tales of history



BOOK REVIEW

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"The family is like the forest: if you are outside it is dense; if you are inside you see that each tree has its own position."

With the aforementioned Akan proverb, Yaa Gyasi welcomes the readers to her novel, "Homegoing", where dark history unravels itself, reminding the readers of the slave trade that has carved its marks on history's shoulders.

The story begins with a scene of fire raging through a forest in an eighteenth century Ghana, which is a total fate changer for one of the many characters, Effia. She and her half-sister Esi, are born into different families. Divided by the forces of circumstance, while Effia is married off to a slave trader Englishman, living in the historic Cape Coast Castle, Esi is imprisoned beneath the castle, known for slave transits. The story sinks its tentacles deep into the seven generations that Effia and Esi's circumstances have spun across three continents. The novel reaches the finish line as the family tree comes to life throughout the time span of 300 years of Ghanaian and American history, and each chapter sprawls with a new protagonist and circumstances. Every chapter seems like a short story unfolding the progressions from the perspectives of a diverse set of characters, and it was traceable as to how the characters were related to their ancestors.

While there were Englishmen who didn't respect the African civilians owing to the deeply sunk hier-

archy, there was also an equality favouring character Quey, who was half English and half African.

Despite hailing from a royal English class, unlike his father, he stood out from the rest. And that's where we see a little streak of positivity in a time when taboos and hierarchies had societies under their clutches. This is an important contrast to the elite mindsets that the author was able to set.

She was further able to effectively pen down the brutal accounts of sexual assaults, abductions, tortures, and killings. As ruthless as the incidents are, they only help the readers get a clearer look into the then decayed conditions of people. Stories of hardship and happiness together flow through the book as the readers are taken from the tropical villages and hideous white castle of West Africa to the slave ships in Europe to the sweltering coal mines and cotton harvesting gardens in America.

Considering this was the author's debut work, this novel has delivered more than I had expected, and it is an amalgamation of so many historic events and teachings that are still applicable to this century. Her writing emphasises on how history, time, and various instances shape us all. Through the eyes of every character clawed by the aftermath of slave trade, lust for power, and taboos, Yaa Gyasi becomes successful in stitching the fact that racism is mostly rooted in tribalism and greed.

With the various narratives being the winding branches of a tree and the forces of slave trading history being its roots, Homegoing is a literary gift worth digging into.

THE PERFECT PHONE

A.K.M. MUSHFIQUR RAHMAN

Technological advancements have blessed upon us a device with unlimited utility. Let's forget about the whole modern civilization for a second and appreciate just how amazing being able to talk to someone on the opposite side of the planet really is. But of course, since that's something every phone is capable of doing now, it's all about the newest, flashiest features.

People treat their phones like some parents treat their children; paranoid about sustaining physical damage and complain to others about the faults and shortcomings. With all the problems people face regarding their phones, I've decided to come up with 5 fresh new features to create the "Perfect Phone" and save the people from their daily struggles.

1. GOOD LIGHTING NAVIGATOR

Have you ever tried to take a selfie with your friends and met with the line "Dost ekhane lighting baje oidike chol"? And then bounced around the place 5-6 times just to find the perfect spot? Of course you have! This is why the perfect phone will come with a lighting navigator, which will direct you to the perfect spot for taking a

picture within a 10 meter radius.

2. MUG SHIELD

The #1 drawback of buying an expensive phone is that you'll be much sadder when you get mugged. So in order to safely roam around the dark street corners of Dhaka while still being able to show off to your friends, the perfect phone comes with an anti-mugging measure. The outer layer of the device will have a taser that

about their phones is that the battery drains way too fast. This is why the perfect phone will provide two adapters, one for inserting into a socket and one for inserting into a potato. We all know from our school science fairs that potatoes are an excellent source of energy. So if you have the perfect phone, you can just carry around a potato wherever you go and never worry about your phone running

earth and save you from the humiliation of having the screenshot of your text posted publicly.

5. TORCHLIGHT

Have you ever tried to climb down the stairs in the dark and then stumbled and fell down the entire flight? For times like that, the perfect phone will have a small light attached to the back, which can be used as a proxy for an actual flashlight.



will be activated whenever anyone without the registered finger print tries to touch the phone. As a bonus, this will also protect you from people intending to snoop around in your phone or post embarrassing statuses from your Facebook account.

3. POTATO POWER

The most common complaint people have

out of power again.

4. TEXT ASSASSIN

People text a lot. And some of them are stupid texts, sent to the wrong people, at inappropriate times. And so, the perfect phone will have a text assassin feature, the savior of our socially awkward generation. A virtual assassin will hunt down that one specific text, remove it from the face of the

Genius right?

Oh, the 5th one already exists? Well, what a time to be alive!

A.K.M. Mushfiqur Rahman spends his free time zip-lining across Dhaka's rooftops with his pet llama named Barkat. Spot him at your nearest rooftop and feed his llama some nuts or something.