

TRANSFORMING MOMENTS

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TITLE

- ★ Transforming means change from one state to another. The story is about the narrator who changes from someone who has a low self-esteem to a confident female praise poet within a short space of time due to an encounter with a praise poet.

SUMMARY

- ★ A young Xhosa girl at a boarding school in the Eastern Cape knows she is very clever but thinks she is ugly. The church minister takes her to watch a traditional praise-poet performing. That makes her decide to become a poet herself and allows her to transform from having a poor self confidence to loving herself as she is.

SETTING

- ★ A high school in the Eastern Cape (boarding school)
- ★ A village near Tsolo in the Eastern Cape
- ★ Time: ± 1975 in SA (during Apartheid)



POINT OF VIEW AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

- ★ First person narrator
- ★ Memoir – selected memories and reflections of the author's life



STYLE AND LANGUAGE

- The story is told in a narrative form and description of the events are only from the point of view of the narrator.
- The style of the language is formal.
- The writer used Idiomatic expressions in order to emphasises meaning, for example “causing such a stir” or “kicked out of the school choir.”

TONE AND MOOD

- The tone is mainly a gloomy, despairing and depressed tone, except after she watched the praise poet performing she eventually discovered her talent. That is when the tone becomes exciting.
- The mood is matter-of-fact at first, but the reader sees the emotional undercurrents that grow progressively towards the end.

THEMES

- **Self-discovery** – understanding one's true self
- **Self-actualization** – the realisation or fulfilment of one's talents and potential
- **Talent development**

PROTAGONIST



- Teenage Xhosa girl in boarding school
- She experiences inner conflict and is changed by it
- She was emotionally weak, lacked confidence and had a low self-esteem
- She was intelligent
- After the encounter with the praise poet she was transformed to be confident
- She becomes determined to pursue her talent.

OTHER CHARACTERS

- ★ Bulelwa – her only friend at school, stands by her when she is bullied
- ★ Sizwe – her boyfriend; handsome rugby player, popular, good friend, sincere
- ★ Father Fikeni – minister, mentor, recognised the girl's talent
- ★ Cira – Imbongi (praise poet), the person who inspired her

THE TRANSFORMATION

FROM

- Feeling ugly; not liking herself
- Everything was going the same
- Low self-esteem
- Deep, droning voice

TO

- Not feeling ugly; truly liking herself
- Looking forward to the future
- Truly liking herself; confident
- Liked the sound of her own voice

IMBONGI (PRAISE POET)

- Very important in traditional black culture
- Traditionally a mediator between the chief and (mostly male) subjects
- Modern imbongi = political and social commentator

The moment in between
what you once were, and
who you are now becoming,
is where the dance of life
really takes place.

Barbara De Angelis

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