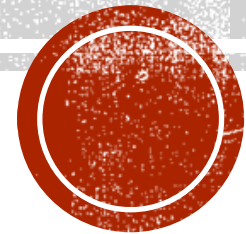


THE WIND AND A BOY

By Bessie Head



Bessie Head



BESSIE HEAD

- Born in Pietermaritzburg on 6 July 1937 and died in Botswana on 17 April 1986.
- South African writer but is considered as Botswana's most influential writer.
- After completing her Junior Certificate, she completed her two year Teacher Training Certificate.
- In 1956 she started teaching at Clairwood in Durban.
- After 18 months of teaching, she resigned and moved to Cape Town where she started a career as a journalist.
- In March 1964 she accepted a teaching post in Botswana and left South Africa for good.



SUMMARY

- The story is about a grandmother (Sejosenye) who is raising her daughter's son in a rural village because her daughter had to continue working and she could not take the child with her.
- Sejosenye takes Friedman everywhere (close bond).
- Sejosenye is very proud of her grandson, he is the apple of her eye.
- Friedman lives a care-free life and gets killed in an accident.
- His death affects the grandmother so much that she also dies and gets buried two weeks after the boy's funeral.



TITLE

- The boy mentioned in the title is Friedman, the main character.
- He is loved by other parents who see him as being different from other children.

Main Character

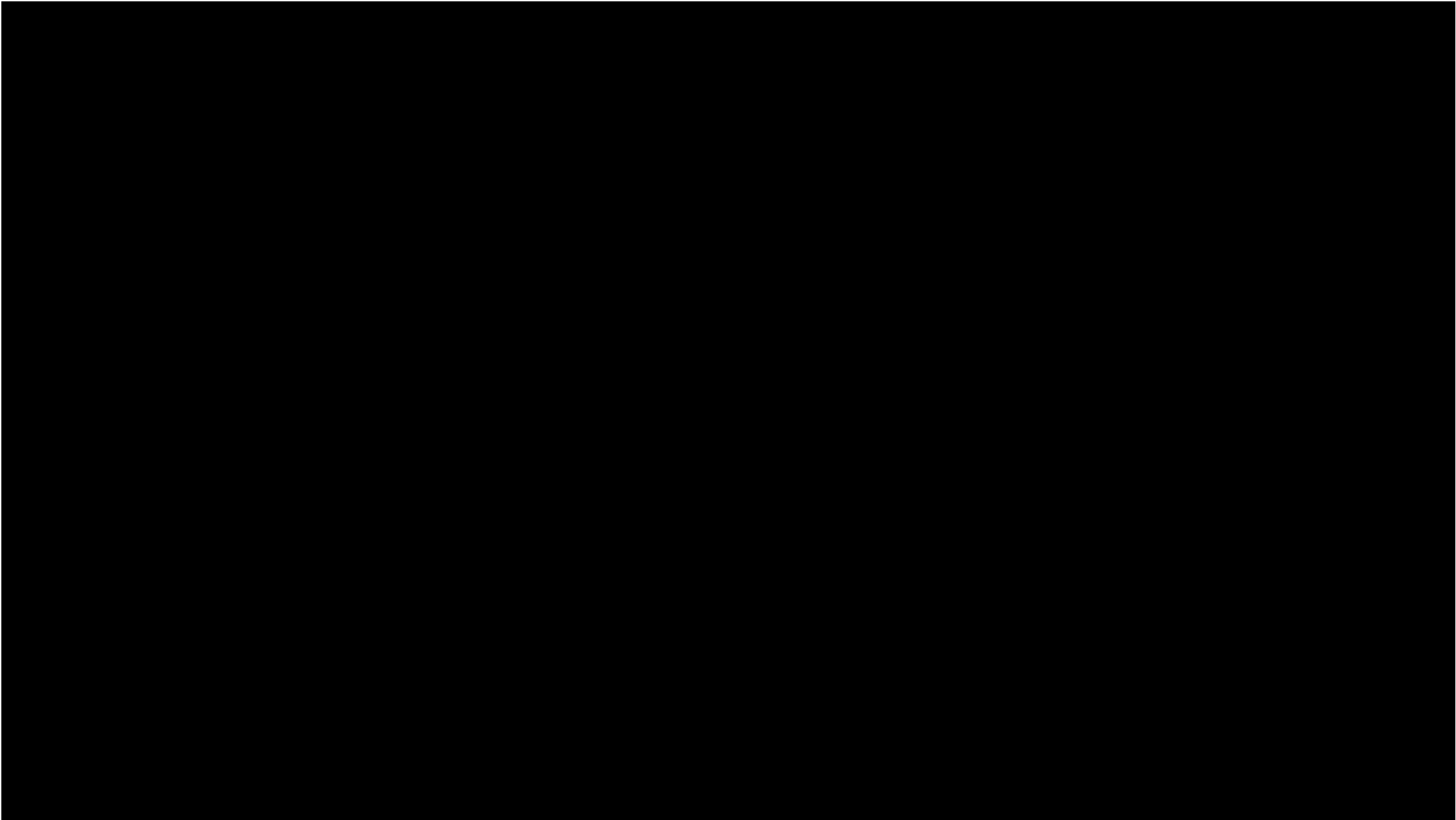
FRIEDMAN



SETTING

- Rural Village in Ga-Sefete-Molemo ward.
- Not clear when the story takes place but it is at the dawn of independence in Botswana. (1960s)
- Hospital where Friedman was born.
- Hospital where Sejosenye died.





THEMES

GENDER ROLES

- Clear distinction between gender roles of males and females.
- Boys do as they please, nobody gives them guidance on how to behave.
- Boys go wherever they want, leaving home in the morning and come home after sunset.
- Girls stay at home, do household duties, which include fetching water and they don't need any education.
- The grandmother is envied by other woman because she can plough the land, which is a duty mainly associated with men.



THEMES



LOYALTY

- Friedman is loyal to his grandmother, he listens to her stories and teachings and imitates the hero's from the stories that he has listened to.
- He hunts for meat. He becomes loyal to his grandmother and wants to help her in any way.
- His grandmother is loyal to Friedman. She is there for him throughout his life and she takes him wherever she goes. She is very proud of her grandson.





THEMES

CHANGE (MODERN)

- Evidence of change towards the end of the story.
- Although the village is mostly rural, some people are moving to a more modern way of life by buying cars.
- The driver of the truck that killed Friedman did not have a drivers licence. He rushed to own a truck (no driving lessons) so that he could fit into the privileged class.

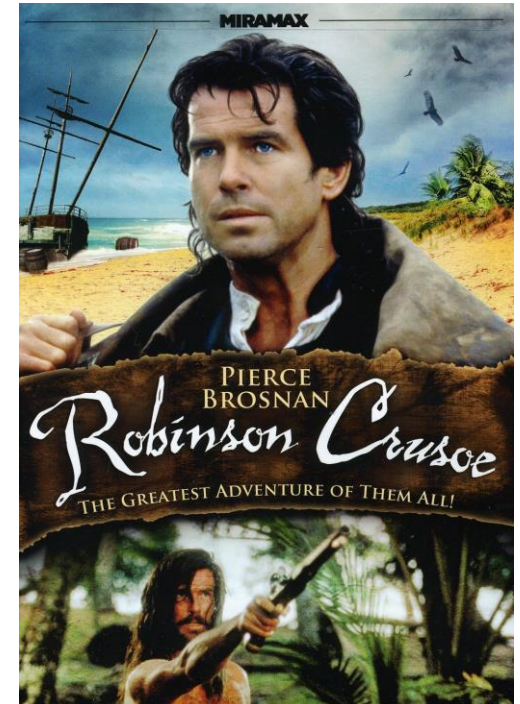




CHARACTERS

FRIEDMAN

- He is a loveable young boy who is brilliant, talented and naughty like other boys.
- He is imaginative. (He loves to listen to the stories his grandmother tells and gets captivated by Robinson Crusoe's heroic actions.)
- He is very loyal. (He stays close to his grandmother and wants to help her all the time.)





CHARACTERS

SEJOSENYE

- She is a loving grandmother who loves her grandchild unconditionally.
- She is a non-conformist. (She does not conform to societal expectations.)
- She is a confident woman. (She holds her head high even when the society thinks she has committed scandalous acts.)
- She is physically strong and independent. (She ploughs the fields whilst other woman sit and wait for their husbands to do it.)

What is conformity?

- conformity – behavior that matches group expectations.
- Is decision making easier alone, or with a group?*
- People often make riskier decisions when with a group
 - Less sole responsibility
- Groupthink: poor decisions that result from discouraging dissent.





CHARACTERS

DR. FRIEDMAN

- He is friendly, 'foreign' doctor who works at the hospital where 'baby' Friedman was born.
- He is an exemplary/role model. (Sejosenye decides to name her grandson after him because of his friendly behaviour towards Sejosenye when she visits the hospital)



STRUCTURE AND PLOT

EXPOSITION

- The narrator introduces the reader to Friedman's phases of life.
- First phase he comes home from the hospital as a small bundle and his grandmother takes care of him.
- Second phase is characterised by him toddling silently next to his tall grandmother.
- Third phase he is a tall, long legged boy who has become the king of kings of all the boys in the area.

1st PHASE



STRUCTURE AND PLOT

RISING ACTION

While listening to his grandmother's stories, Friedman gets hooked on the heroic stories of Robinson Crusoe (the great hunter) and decides that one day he is going to be just like him.



***Robinson Crusoe** is a fictional character who spends 28 years as a castaway and hunter on a remote island.



STRUCTURE AND PLOT

CLIMAX

- Life with its responsibilities increases for Friedman as he starts his teenage years.
- He asks for a bicycle so that he can do more for his grandmother.
- His mother buys his bicycle and he starts running more errands for his grandmother.
- He is hit by a truck while running errands for his grandmother on his bicycle.



STRUCTURE AND PLOT

RESOLUTION

- Sejosenye is sent to hospital for shock.
- She dies in hospital and the villagers bury her.



ROBINSON CRUSOE STORY

- Robinson Crusoe was a hunter Who went by Gweta (district in Botswana) and killed an elephant by himself. (made up story)
- Robinson Crusoe disappeared for many days and people were wondering if he was eaten by a lion. Robinson liked to be alone and do foolish things.
- Robinson suddenly appeared and the people gathered around him.
- Robinson told them that he had killed an elephant. The people were afraid of the mere thought of an elephant coming close to the village.
- Robinson was standing at the feet of the elephant, feeling like a small ant because the elephant was so big it reached the sky.
- The elephant was angry but Robinson only looked into his one angry eye and he raised his spear and threw it at the elephant's eye.
- The elephant didn't make a sound and fell to his one side.
- The women filled their containers with elephant meat and fat.
- The men sharpened their knives and made many things from the skin and bones of the elephant.
- The villagers gained something from the great work that Robinson Crusoe did.



NARRATOR

- Third person omniscient narrator.
- The reader easily gets all the details of what is happening to all the characters.
- The narrator is not part of the story, but has a bird's eye view of the events as they unfold.
- There is minimal use of dialogue.

Omniscient Narrator



- a narrator who knows everything that needs to be known about the characters and events in the story, and who has privileged access to a character's thoughts, feelings, and motives.
- This narrator never needs to say “maybe” or “perhaps” a character feels something. They always know.



TONE AND MOOD

TONE

- Cheerful, appreciative: Friedman lives a happy life, and brings happiness to his grandmother.
- Sympathetic, disappointed and dull: Friedman and Sejosenye's deaths leave the villagers miserable.

MOOD

- Happy
- Optimistic
- Sad
- Angry



FIGURES OF SPEECH

Simile

‘from side to side like a cobra’ (Page 134)

Friedman’s movements are compared to those of a cobra when it moves from side to side in the grass.



FIGURES SPEECH

Metaphor

- **‘small dark shapes’ (Page 133)**

The narrator compares the village boys to small dark shapes as they sped out of the village to the bush.

- **‘extravagant care’ (Page 133)**

The overgenerous care with which Sejosenyé takes care of Friedman is compared to an extravagant gift of love.

- **‘a small dark shadow’ (Page 134)**

Young Friedman is compared to a small dark shadow.

- **‘leave your handbag at home sometimes’ (Page 134)**

How other women referred to Friedman because he was always with his grandmother.

- **‘he was crossing swollen rivers’ (Page 137)**

The overflowing river compared to something that is swollen.



FIGURES OF SPEECH

Personification

- **'a porcupine hurled his poisonous quills'** (Page 133)

The speed with which the porcupine raises its quills is compared to someone who is throwing something.



FIGURES OF SPEECH

Irony

- The bicycle that was meant to help Friedman cuts his life short.
- The civil servant who came to the village to bring development brings carnage and fear instead of hope and joy.

