

Seyond and I (a poetic recollection)

There he stood darkly, his eyes grey and lifeless, a slightly slouched figure whose shoulders bulged in reflex to my arrival at his abode. Yes, the street light over him seemed almost the only thing, but J that did not shrivel in his sight and momentarily, J knew that J, yes, J was the only one free. Yet the captivity of my gaze, which was wilful, hinted that J might be his already.

J observed in speechless awe as a bruised woman lay down at his feet. She was as Mary to the Christ with her tears. With the most scornful laugh J ever heard he kicked her away. And like a spider deprived of legs she stayed where she landed, squirming and begging to die. Yet J returned my gaze to this man wilfully showing my full imprisonment.

A boy of ten next ran to him. A report of violence spewed forth and a flood of filth returned: "go, and show some pitiful worth". Less said would've shocked me by now.

The boy ran off again unmarked, or so his face said. His matted hair and ragged shirt, his dried scars and black boils suggested otherwise. yet J knew that he was indeed unscarred. How can one lack what is not missed?

The crowd about us stood silent, Perhaps in anxiousness, but likely in fear of him. No less than ten fragmented families could do no more to this man

than a thousand ants do to a shark. Yet he could do more than a wolf to a rabbit. My eyes were immovable from his presence.

J tried to tell myself that this man was less than J was. J convinced myself, at least temporarily, that this man was typical. He ate, slept, and bled like us all. Yet, only a fool or a liar could say so. Perhaps that shell held more than a fistful of blood. If he is black, then J am white and if he is white, J am black. And with this J walked away.

A woman followed me for a while. Sensing, and obscurely fearing her, J turned abruptly, baring my chest for my open jacket. The tears in her eyes held pity and warning, but no sorrow.

"Do not let him hate you. J did and J suffered. For he does not love, he hates. And my suffering is over. Run from the consuming fire while you can. It is a foreboding darkness; J know. But now run, and be not hopeful, nor despair, just live on".

With this she turned and received a bullet through her chest. In the flight J tasted her blood, and did not stop until J reached my abode, within an abandoned church. The fifty people slept, but all knew me. And J loved them all. Only three rose. And they knew...

My wife rose among them and held me. J laid in my lace with her by the altar. J prayed, then thought. When J awoke, before anyone else, my only thought was: "We are so alike... captivating... yet so different."

by James Richard

Mozambique

This is part of a series of profiles of some African countries brought to you by courtesy of African High Commissions and Embassies in Canada. The information in these articles will be the main source for questions to a quiz on February 18. Winners will be announced at the Africa Nite celebrations on February 19.

Mozambique is located on the Eastern coast of Southern Africa between 10° 27' and 26° 52' S and 30° 12' and 40° 51' E. Its borders are: North: Tanzania; West: Malawi; and the South African Province of Natal; East: Indian Ocean. The country covers an area of 799,380 sq km (including 1,300 sq km of inland lakes and rivers) with a population of 15.7 million (1990).

Mozambique has a tropical and sub-tropical climate with a cool season during May - August. There are three climatic zones: a rainy zone in the North and Centre, a drier zone in the Southern half of the country and a relatively cool and rainy zone in the plateaux and mountainous regions of Namaacha, Manica, Maravia-Angonia, Gurue and Lichinga. The maximum altitude is 2,436 metres on Monte Binga.

The weather at Maputo at an altitude of altitude 59 m is as follows:

Hottest month February	22 - 31° C
Coldest month July	13 - 24° C

Driest months July and August

Wettest month January 130 mm rainfall

The best time to visit Mozambique is during the winter months (April-September) which are dry and somewhat cooler and less humid. The main towns are Maputo (capital), Marolia, Machava, Beira, Inhambane, Xai-Xai, Nampula, Pemba, Quelimane, Tete, Lichinga and Chimoiio.

The local languages are mainly of Bantu origin. The official language is Portuguese. In addition, there are four other main African languages - Tsonga, Sena, Nyanja and Makua-Lomwe. English is the most widely spoken foreign language. Mozambicans have their own cultural identity manifested through different ethnic groups. Most of the population follow traditional animist beliefs (65%). Christians form 23% of the population, and live mainly in the urban centres, and Muslims represent 12%, and are mostly in the north.

The International Airports of Maputo and Beira are

equipped to handle all types of commercial aircrafts and offer national and international flights. For international links, Maputo is connected by air to Dar-es-Salaam, Lusaka, Harare, Johannesburg, Paris, Moscow, Maseru, Manzini, Lisbon, Luanda and Cape Town. Mozambique has the following international rail links: Maputo - Swaziland, Maputo - South Africa, Maputo - Zimbabwe, Beira - Zimbabwe, Beira - Malawi and Nacala - Malawi.

In Mozambique, choice of clothing is dependent on weather conditions. Generally, summers (November to February) are hot, with average temperature in the 30-35 degree C range. Clothing is, therefore, light but casual, particularly in business and official circles. Rains are frequent from November to January. From May to August, the days are cooler but still sunny, with daytime temperature between 20 and 25 degrees C. However, the evenings are cool and therefore, warmer clothing is needed when going out.

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