

Read the following excerpt taken from **Purple Hibiscus** by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

I came second in my class. It was written in figures: “2/25”. My form mistress, Sister Clara, had written, “Kambili is intelligent beyond her years, quiet and responsible.” The principal, Mother Lucy, wrote, “A brilliant, obedient student and a daughter to be proud of.” But I knew Papa would not be proud. He had often told Jaja and me that he did not spend so much money on Daughters of the Immaculate Heart and St. Nicholas to have us let other children come first. Nobody had spent money on his own schooling, especially not his Godless father, our Papa-Nnukwu, yet he had always come first. I wanted to make Papa proud, to do as well as he had done. I needed him to touch the back of my neck and tell me that I was fulfilling God’s purpose. I needed him to hug me close and say that to whom much is given, much is also expected. I needed him to smile at me, in that way that lit up his face, that warmed something inside me. But I had come second. I was stained by failure.

Write down what you think will come next. What will Papa’s reaction be like? In your account describe Papa and describe Kambili’s interaction with him. What does Papa look like? What is he like? What does he do when he learns his daughter has arrived second. What is Kambili’s countenance in the presence of her father? What about her posture? What are her thoughts? What does she do? All these pieces of information have to be interwoven naturally in the body of your text. You are writing a piece of narrative, so... no “jumpy” passages. The questions are meant to feed your thoughts, but you can add as much “relevant” information as you wish. The more details you give, the more “tactile” your description will be. By means of details (large use of adjectives, adverbs, sense verbs) you will make the characters come to life and the reader will be able to suspend “disbelief”, s/he will feel dragged into your narrative.

Now read what happens next. Where your predictions right?

I was sitting at my study desk when Papa came home. He lumbered upstairs, each heavy step creating turbulence in my head, and went into Jaja’s room. He had come first, as usual, so Papa would be proud, would hug Jaja, leave his arm resting around Jaja’s shoulders. He took a while in Jaja’s room, though; I knew he was looking through each individual subject score, checking to see if any had decreased by one or two marks since last term. Something pushed fluids into my bladder, and I rushed to the toilet. Papa was in my room when I came out.

“Good evening, Papa, *nno*”.

“Did school go well?”

I wanted to say I came second so that he would know immediately, so that I would acknowledge my failure, but instead I said, “Yes”, and handed him the report card. He seemed to take forever to open it and even longer to read it. I tried to pace my breathing as I waited, knowing all the while that I could not.

“Who came first?” Papa asked, finally. [...]

My stomach was making sounds, hollow rumbling sounds that seemed too loud, that would not stop even when I sucked in my belly.

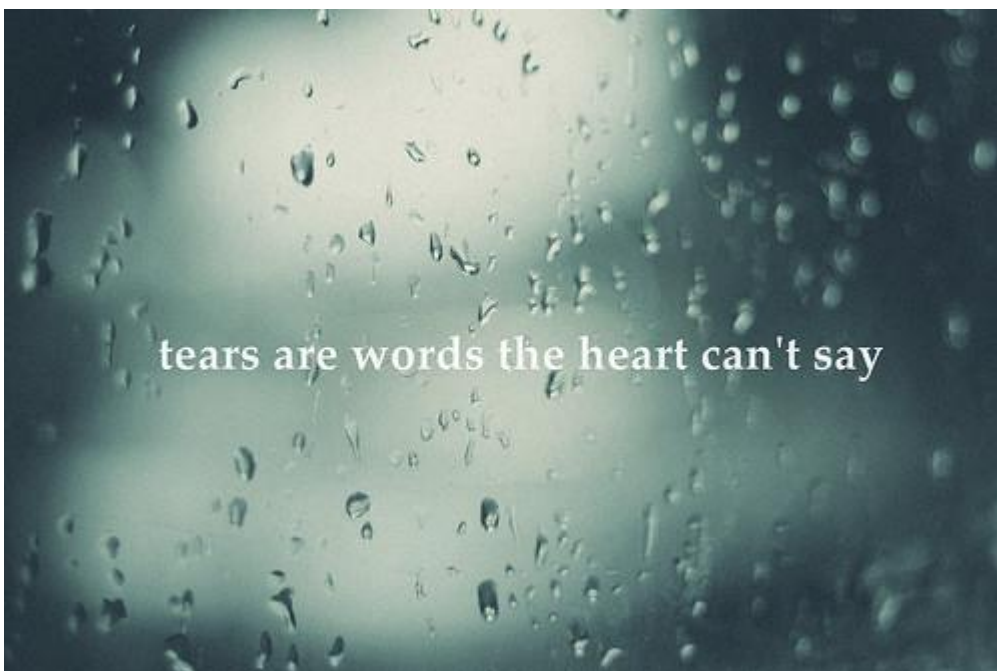
Papa looked at my report card for a while longer; then he said, “Come down for dinner.” [...]

“Kambili,” Papa said, breathing deeply. “You didn’t put in your best this term. Yu came second because you chose to.” His eyes were sad. Deep and sad. I wanted to touch his face, to run my hand over his rubbery cheeks. There were stories in his eyes that I would never know.

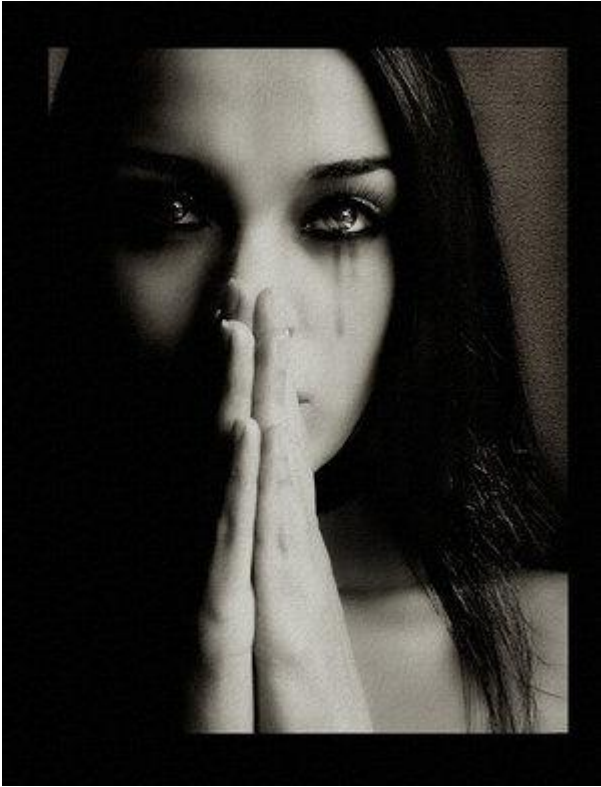
Now write one of these stories. It must be a story that somehow shaped Papa into a stern man. Why is Papa so strict? Why can’t he show feelings to his children? Why does he not support his kids? Why does he not understand that his children are terrified of him and fear him constantly? They feel emotionally crushed by him and they are teens. What is one of the stories that can have moulded his personality in such a way?

Reread the two excerpts and then write one page of a journal for Kambili and one for Papa. Write about the anecdote mentioned in the excerpts, but add some interesting and revealing aspect that disclose some personality traits both about Kambili and Papa. Being a personal diary the language must be highly evocative and sentimental.

Look at the following images. Observe them carefully and read the words repeatedly. Make them your own. Who is the woman who wrote them? Why did she write them? Write at least one page through her eyes and explain her sadness, make it visible to the point that you can almost touch it and make it disappear.



Your heart is broken
Not even mendable pieces are left
Simply particles of dust
That blow away
That blow far, far, away.
Along with the last of your trust.
Stabbing thorns hurt so badly
You could have screamed
You could have cursed
But you didn't
You refused
You just let them hurt and build
And hurt more and more
Till you were just confused
Until your whole being was one horribly tense
More than we could imagine
Is based upon one thought
I have no-one
No-one
No-one will ever truly care
Then...
A voice softly says
With the sound of injury
Don't you remember you still have me?



Sadness

Emotion characterized by feelings of disadvantage, loss, and helplessness. When sad, people often become quiet, less energetic, and withdrawn. Sadness is considered to be the opposite of happiness, and is similar to the emotions of sorrow, grief, misery, and melancholy. The philosopher Baruch Spinoza defined sadness as the "transfer of a person from a large perfection to a smaller one." Sadness can be viewed as a temporary lowering of mood, whereas depression is characterized by a persistent and intense lowered mood, as well as disruption to one's ability to function in day to day matters.

