

Answer the following questions.

a. Why did Jonathan think of himself as ‘extraordinarily lucky’?

→ Jonathan believed that he was incredibly fortunate as he, his family, and their home managed to survive the Nigerian war. Additionally, he felt blessed to have retrieved his bicycle and repaired his house at a low cost.

b. What are the ‘five blessings’ for which Jonathan is grateful?

→ Jonathan is grateful for the five blessings that he considers himself extraordinarily lucky to have received after surviving the Nigerian Civil War. These five blessings include:

1. His life: Jonathan is thankful to be alive, along with his wife and three of their four children.
2. The safety of all the members of his family: Jonathan is relieved that all the members of his family are safe and unharmed.
3. His old bicycle: Jonathan managed to retrieve his bicycle after the war, which he considers to be a miracle.
4. His home: Jonathan's house was still standing after the war, despite many nearby structures being destroyed.
5. His job: After starting a bar for the soldiers in his home, Jonathan was thankful for having a job to support his family.

c. Why did Jonathan mistrust the officer who wanted to take his bicycle? What does this tell you about the situation in Nigeria?

→ Jonathan mistrusted the officer who wanted to take his bicycle because he sensed corruption and the lack of trust in the authorities that existed in Nigeria during and after the war. The widespread corruption in Nigeria meant that those in positions of power often used their authority to take advantage of the people they were meant to serve. This led to a general sense of mistrust and suspicion, as people had to resort to illegal means to protect their possessions and livelihoods. The fact that Jonathan had to pay a bribe to keep his bicycle reflects the pervasive corruption in Nigeria and the difficulties faced by ordinary people during that time.

d. What visitors might be at the door? Are Jonathan and his wife completely surprised? Explain.

→ The story does not provide any clear indication of who might be at the door. However, Jonathan's wife speculates that it might be their neighbor who has come to borrow something, while Jonathan suggests that it might be the soldiers who have come to search their house. They are not completely surprised because it was common during that time for people to receive unexpected visitors, especially during the war. The uncertainty and unpredictability of the situation had made people more cautious and alert, and they had learned to expect the unexpected. Jonathan and his wife were prepared for any eventuality and were not taken aback by the arrival of the visitors. They were ready to face whatever challenge lay ahead and were determined to protect their family and their possessions.

e. Why does no one in the neighbourhood respond when the thieves pound on Jonathan's door? Why do the thieves call for the police?

→ No one in the neighborhood responds when the thieves pound on Jonathan's door because they were all afraid and had learned not to interfere in such situations. The thieves knew this and took advantage of it. They called for the police as a way to scare Jonathan and his wife into opening the door, thinking that the police would be on their side and would help them steal from Jonathan. However, it is possible that the thieves were not actually calling the police, but rather pretending to do so as a way to intimidate Jonathan and his wife. In any case, the thieves were ultimately unsuccessful in their attempt to break into Jonathan's house, and Jonathan and his wife were able to protect themselves and their property.

Reference to the context

a. What does Jonathan mean by his expression "Nothing puzzles God"? What does this expression reveal about his character? Explain by citing details from the story.

→ The expression "Nothing puzzles God" means that Jonathan believes that God has complete control over everything and that nothing can surprise or confuse Him. This expression reveals Jonathan's deep faith and trust in God. Despite the challenges he faces, he remains optimistic and believes that everything will work out in the end. For example, when his bicycle is stolen, he believes that God will help him recover it. Similarly, when he is forced to pay a bribe to the officer, he believes that God will protect him and his family. Jonathan's faith and optimism allow him

to remain resilient in the face of adversity and to find hope even in difficult situations.

b. How does Jonathan change as he experiences the conflicts in his life? Explain.

→ Jonathan is a hardworking and optimistic person who values his hard work and faith in God. Despite experiencing conflicts such as the loss of his child during the war, he remains grateful for the blessings in his life. He adapts to changing circumstances and prioritizes his family's welfare, continuing to work hard for their benefit.

c. Read the extract and answer the questions below.

“To God who made me; if you come inside and find one hundred pounds, take it and shoot me and shoot my wife and children. I swear to God. The only money I have in this life is this twenty pounds egg-rasher they gave me today ...”

i. Who is the speaker?

→ The speaker was Jonathon.

ii. Who is the speaker talking to?

→ The speaker is talking to the thieves or robbers.

iii. Who does “they” refer to?

→ “They” refers to the government.

d. Nigerian English has words like soja ‘soldier’ and katakata ‘confusion’, ‘trouble’ derived apparently from English words but transformed by native languages’ phonologies. What does the author’s use of dialect here add to the story?

→ The author's use of Nigerian English dialect adds authenticity and local flavor to the story. It helps to create a sense of place and immerse the reader in the Nigerian culture and way of life. By using words like soja and katakata, the author also highlights the influence of colonialism on Nigerian society and language. This use of dialect also emphasizes the uniqueness and richness of Nigerian English as a distinct dialect. Furthermore, it shows the diversity of languages and dialects that exist within Nigeria, which is a multiethnic and multilingual country.

e. Why do you think the thieves who come to rob Jonathan speak English with a heavier African accent than Jonathan does?

It is possible that the thieves who come to rob Jonathan speak English with a heavier African accent than Jonathan does because they may come from a different region of Nigeria where the accent is different. English is a second language in Nigeria, and there are many different accents and dialects of English spoken throughout the country. The accent of the thieves may also be a deliberate choice on the part of the author to emphasize their otherness and to create a contrast between them and Jonathan, who speaks English fluently and with a more standard accent. The author may also be using the thieves' accent to highlight their lack of education and their social and economic disadvantage.

f. The title of the story "Civil Peace" itself is ironical as there is little to differentiate 'civil peace' from 'civil war'. Do you think that the title of this story is appropriate, or would "Civil War" have been a better title? Explain.

The title "Civil Peace" is ironic because it suggests that peace has been achieved, but the story shows that there is still violence and conflict. The title is appropriate because the story is not about the war itself but about the aftermath and how people try to rebuild their lives. The focus is on Jonathan's resilience and his determination to keep going despite the challenges he faces. The title "Civil War" would have been too broad and would not have captured the specific themes of the story.

Moreover, the title "Civil War" would suggest that the story is primarily about the conflict itself, which is not the case. The story is about the aftermath of the war and how people try to find a sense of normalcy amidst the chaos. The title "Civil Peace" acknowledges that there is still conflict and violence, but it also suggests that people are trying to move forward and rebuild their lives. Therefore, the title "Civil Peace" is appropriate as it accurately reflects the themes of the story.

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Reference beyond the text

a. How would you describe the civil peace in Nigeria?

→ After the Nigerian Civil War, the country was in a state of Civil Peace, but it was far from being a peaceful time. The period of resettlement was challenging for many people as they had to start their lives from scratch. The government had some laws

in place, but they were not always enforced, and people had to deal with many risks and uncertainties. Thieves roamed the streets, attacking and robbing people without any fear of punishment. Despite the presence of Civil Peace, anarchy was prevalent everywhere, and people struggled to cope with the challenges of daily life.

b. What kind of attitude towards life do you think you would have if your situation was similar to that of Jonathan's?

→ If my situation was similar to Jonathan's, I would try to stay optimistic and hold onto my faith and values, just like Jonathan did. Despite facing many hardships, he remained grateful for the blessings he did have, such as his family's safety and his ability to repair his home and bicycle. I would try to do the same and focus on the positive aspects of my life, no matter how small they may seem. I would also try to be resourceful and find ways to provide for my family, whether it's through hard work or other means, just like Jonathan did by starting his own business. Above all, I would try to stay strong and never lose hope, just like Jonathan did during the war and its aftermath.

c. Draw the character sketch of Jonathan Iwegbu.

Jonathan Iwegbu is the protagonist of the story "Civil Peace." He is a resilient and hardworking man who values hard work and his belief in God. Despite the many challenges he faces, including losing his son during the war and having his house destroyed, he remains optimistic and grateful for the blessings he has. He is resourceful and finds ways to make the best of his situation, such as repairing his house with the rubble from the war and using his bicycle to start a transportation business.

Jonathan is a family man who cares deeply for his wife and children. He is willing to do whatever it takes to provide for his family, even if it means taking risks or working long hours. He is also a man of principle, as evidenced by his refusal to pay a bribe to the officer who tried to take his bicycle.

Overall, Jonathan is a symbol of hope and resilience in the face of adversity. He represents the strength and determination of the Nigerian people during a difficult time in their history.