

**LAURY LAWRENCE OCEN: The Alien Woman.**

*Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.*

‘Grandmother keeps us in dirt, but today we have a new mother.’

Olugo was vexed almost to breaking point. ‘Why is it that even a worm is making a fool of me?’ he asked himself in a fiery temper. His face became dark with fighting fury. He had realized all that had happened at home this morning. Before he could reach Opolo’s naked buttocks with a cane, the little boy was already off running back to Margaret and this left Olugo’s hand hanging with his whip stupidly in awkward embarrassment.

Since Margaret came, even Awino, who used to be the children’s favourite was forgotten. The once lovely title of grandmother was now seldom pronounced.

Obina and others came last. But before he went to his usual seat on the tree trunk; he composed himself and went to greet Margaret. She was seated on the bare kitchen floor with her head hanging. She looked unhappy, and Obina knew that his people would even object to his salutation of Margaret. But it would look unkind and mannerly for him to completely neglect her. He wanted to respect his parents and yet he loved Margaret too. It was he alone among adults who was getting a full understanding of Margaret’s character. The one day stay at home had made him learn a lot about her. Obina could not help feeling ashamed each time he saw Margaret and compared the impoverishment of his home with the opulence of Margaret’s.

Margaret had heated some water and she thought it would be better if the cultivators washed their bodies before breakfast. ‘Your bath water is ready father, you must be very tired. And Mama, your bath water is in the shelter.’ And lastly she made the same call to obina. She was doing it one after the other in that order of seniority. Some funny goats had the previous night destroyed the banana-fibre shelter and that morning there was none. Margaret herself with the help of Lucy had only hang matting between two small trees to form a temporary shelter. Obina saw this and almost went mad with embarrassment.

As for Awino Cerina, she just felt ashamed about such a woman of stunning beauty kneeling down before her. To her, it did not make sense. She had suspected that the resolution made by the old men would be a mere fallacy.

However, it was noticed that the houses surrounding Olugo's home were always full of people, as even far-coming people came to see a Muganda woman, a piece of shit in Abela soil coming to make a fool of the people. But each time one came, one found that Margaret was not a piece of shit after all. She dazzled with unprecedented beauty: she exhibited a rare kind of discipline and temperament among the womenfolk of Abela, and even Bungatira as a whole. And so most of them came and spent so many hours engrossed in admiration as well as envy.

### **Questions**

- a) What leads to this scene in the novel? (05marks)
- b) What is the relationship between Obina and his parents? (06marks)
- c) Describe the character of Margaret in the passage. (04marks)
- d) What happens shortly afterwards? (05marks)