

LANGUAGE

The language of the novel is basically that of its first person narrator, Kambili Achike. It reflects her sensitive, intelligent and observant nature and is rich with evocative detail. Some examples are:

"When Auntie Ifeoma woke me up, the room was dim and the shrills of the night crickets were dying away. A rooster's crow drifted through the window above my bed." (p. 166)

"It was as if these high walls locked in the scent of the ripening cashews and mangoes and avocados." (p. 253)

"Above, clouds like dyed cotton wool hang low, so low I feel I can reach out and squeeze the moisture from them." (p.307)

Also noteworthy is the use of the traditional Igbo language by many characters at various times.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Nigeria itself can be considered a character in the novel. Discuss.
2. Is Eugene a victim as much as an oppressor?
3. Was Beatrice foolish to keep her children in the same house as Eugene for so long?
4. Auntie Ifeoma and her family are extreme opposites of Eugene and his family. Discuss.
5. *Purple Hibiscus* is primarily a novel about religious intolerance. Discuss.
6. Could Kambili's feelings for Father Amadi better be described as youthful infatuation rather than love?
7. A central concern in the novel is a traditional indigenous way of life struggling with a newer Westernised lifestyle. Discuss.
8. To what extent is Eugene a hypocrite – espousing religious values on the one hand but, on the other, being violent and inflexible in his family home?
9. Has Kambili found inner peace by the end of the novel?
10. Compare Father Benedict and Father Amadi. What conclusions can be made here?
11. What is Papa-Nnukwu's role within his family?
12. Kambili says: "Everything came tumbling down after Palm Sunday?" (p. 257) What does she mean?
13. *Purple Hibiscus* is rich in detail about the domestic lives of its characters, including such things as household chores and the preparation of food. What role does this focus serve in relation to the novel as a whole?
14. What is the significance of the novel's title, *Purple Hibiscus*?