Life Is Sweet at Kumansenu

Reading Check

a. How does Bola explain the death of her first six sons?

b. What does Musa tell Bola to do with the corpse of her sixth son?

c. What does she do instead?

d. What does Meji say is his reason for suddenly coming to visit his mother and daughter?

e. What shocking news reaches Bola near the end of the story?

First Thoughts

1. When did you begin to guess the truth about Meji?

Shaping Interpretations

2. Nicol uses foreshadowing to hint at what is going to happen later in the story. Go back and see how many clues you can find that foreshadow the truth about Meji. Fill in the rest of the chart using #1 as a guide:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Clue** | **What It Foreshadows** |
| **1.** The mark on Meji’s body | **1.** He is the same child who has died six times. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |

3. Which passage in the story do you think best sums up its main message?

4. What do you make of Bola’s final comment to Musa, the magician?

Connecting with the Text

5. This story takes place several years ago in a village in West Africa, where beliefs and visions of reality may be different from those of your culture. Despite those differences, how does the story suggest values that all people share?

Extending the Text

6. Think of one other person, from real life or literature, who, like Bola, have defied authority or the law (maybe even the laws of science) in order to save a loved one. What do this person and Bola have in common? How are they different?

7. Modern social pressures and changes are breaking down many of the old customs in Africa. What evidence of this do you find in Nicol’s story? Do you think such changes are taking place today all over the world? Why, or why not?