Author: Spain Group

The Other Hand is a novel written by Chris Cleave, this novel is also known as *Little Bee* and it is written for teenagers and young people in general.

This excerpt from the novel places us in an immigration detention center, in Essex, in the South of the United Kingdom, during the period Little Bee is locked there. Little Bee is the main character; she is a Nigerian girl, a girl who has nothing apart from her Queen's English.

The secondary characters are Yevette, a Jamaican girl who had chosen to be good-looking to survive, she is a curious character; she seems to be very self-confident but she is scared in the deep. She has lots of little scars Little Bee makes us to see beautiful, as a mark of survival. "The girl in yellow sari" is a pretty girl but she doesn't speak any English and "the girl with kilos of documents" doesn't know English and she is not pretty but she has her story written and made official. Another character is the officer who works in the detention center. He doesn't pay attention to the girls; this situation is rutine for him. At the end, when the girls are leaving he shows his good side and wishes the girls good luck.

The Taxi driver doesn't appear physically, just in a phone conversation but he shows a refusung attitude when the girls tell him they want a taxi to pick them up in the detention center. So, the girls have to lie to him to get the taxi.

Mr. O'Rourke is the only person Little Bee knows in England. He doesn't appear physically; she calls him trying to look for a place to go because she is alone and lost.

Nkiruka, Little Bee's sister, doesn't appear physically, only when Little Bee tells us about her; Nkiruka is her older sister but she seems to be very innocent.

At the beginning of the novel Little Bee places us in the detention center but she uses a flashback to explain us why she is there. Actually, we wouldn't have gone anywhere if she hadn't used a flashback to explain us something. So, in the first flashback she wishes she were a pound, she personifies a pound and tells us that a pound, a simple English pound everybody is happy to see, can go everywhere without any problem, that pound can be power or property; but not her, she is a girl who has nothing and the only way she has to survive is to be pretty or talkative. That is what the older girls told her.

After this flashback she places us in the main door of the detention center,

she has just finished two years as a refugee, as an asylum seeker. During the time she is in the queue to call a taxi, still inside the detention center, she tells us things about her and her country and about her family, in special about her sister Nkiruka. Her country is the opposite of the United Kingdom; her country and her language are the natural and the U.K, the imposed, she had to learn a perfect English to survive there, "their" English. And that's what she did during the two years she spent in that center, "time was all she had", she learnt perfect English from the papers; she chose to be talkative.

At the end of this chapter when Little Bee has called the taxi and lied to the taxi driver for her and for the other three girls, they decide to cross the door and walk towards the light, the light represents freedom; Little Bee gets very nervous and scared but she goes out and smells fresh air after two years.

This novel is related by Little Bee as her life in the first person; and I think the writer made this choice because this way we be better brought in her problems and thoughts. The first person tells the story in a subjective way and in this case Little Bee uses the irony and the humor all the time, I think she does this to soften the story.

He could have written this story from the point of view of an English police officer who works in that immigration center and that would have changed the story because probably the book wouldn't have had such a hard underlying message and that is the most important thing in this novel. I think this story is trying to shows us how difficult is for an immigrant to leave everything away and go to a new place. I also think there is a criticism of the globalization underlying, at first Little Bee explains how money can travel completely safe and on the other hand, a person has to avoid so many obstacles. He also criticizes British asylum system and attitude towards asylum-seekers. The attitude the taxi driver has towards the refugee girls is a clue of it.

In my opinion this book tries to draw our attention to something we see every day as a normal thing. We all know people who have emigrate to another country or people in our city who are immigrants. Nowadays, it is becoming more and more normal but it is still very difficult. Travelling abroad is very different depending on whether you do it for fun or for necessity. This girl in the book made me feel empathy, she is so

courageous. If I were her I couldn't have done that, going and travelling so far with nothing.