



emulation

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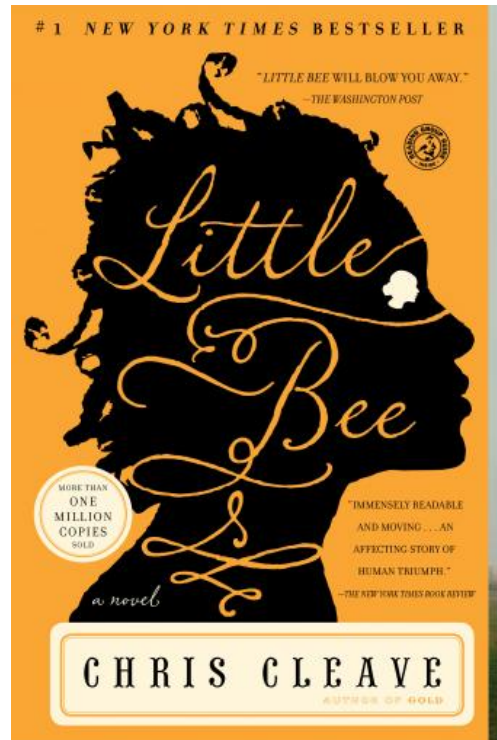
LITTLE BEE

A New York Times Bestseller

Little Bee

by Chris Cleave

In Chris Cleave's best selling novel *Little Bee*, the main character, Little Bee, is faced with a mind boggling decision. After fleeing her home in Nigeria and an Immigration Detention Center in the UK, Little Bee has ended up at the home of the only couple she knows in Europe, Sarah and Andrew. Still scarred from their encounter in Nigeria, Andrew is not excited to see her, and things take a morbid and unexpected turn. Andrew's depression spirals out of control and he hangs



himself, right in front of Little Bee's unwavering eyes. Little Bee must decide to either confess that she watched him die and be deported, or save herself. When Sarah takes her in, Little Bee must carry this weight with her as she and Sarah try to heal. *Little Bee* is a story of struggle and growth, and the mysterious way they intertwine.

UNRELIABLE NARRATOR

Relevant Quotes:

“Sarah said it was strange that I came on the day of Andrew's funeral.’ ‘Yes?’ ‘It was not a coincidence,’” (page 190).

“Little Bee telephoned us on the morning they released her from the detention center,” (page 22).

“Little Bee knocked on my front door five days after my husband died, which was ten days after they released her from detention,” (page 22).



NIGERIA

ELEMENT 1: Unreliable Author

DEFINITION

The author uses unreliable narration in his story by having Little Bee tell white lies to the reader and having them, as well as Sarah, make assumptions about the exact timing of events over a few days.

IMPACT

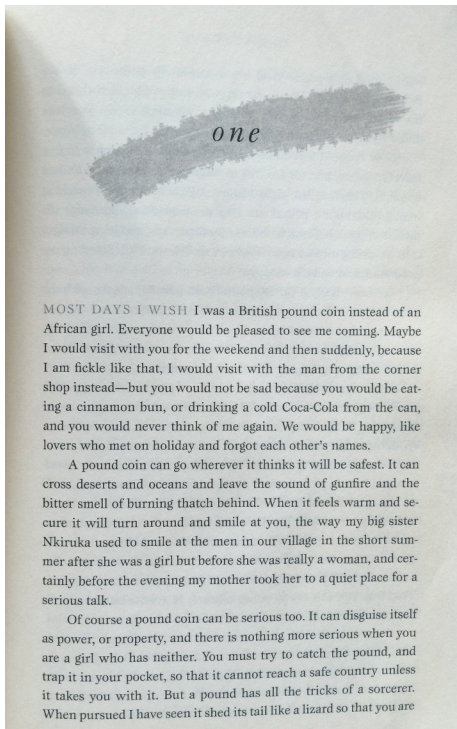
Little Bee's narration is steady and truthful for the entire story until this key point. For readers, this is a huge change, and it makes them second guess their relationship with the narrator. To them, Little Bee is very open and honest, so when they find out that she has left out such a major detail, they begin to question her loyalty. While Little Bee is seems kindhearted, she makes readers feel betrayed and left in the dark. She hasn't lost the readers all together, but they are more skeptical of her 'total vulnerability' after this point.

DEFENSE

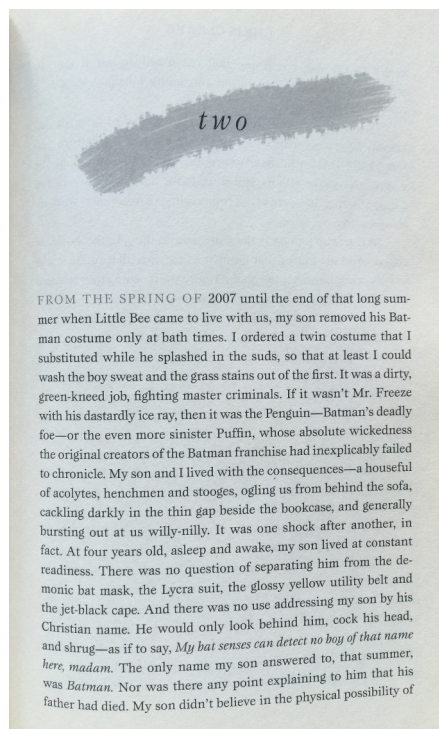
A huge theme in this story is what happened in Nigeria and how it affected Andrew enough to lead him to suicide. The fact that Little Bee is wrapped up in the event that scarred him and seems to pop up right after it kills him is an interesting and unfortunate coincidence, so it seems. When Little Bee reveals her truth during a fight with Lawrence, and readers find out that she has left out key information in her narration, having arrived at Sarah's home many days before Andrew died, as seen in the quote above. Little Bee reveals that seeing her caused Andrew's condition to worsen, and she witnessed his death almost a full week before she "arrived" at Sarah's door like Sarah narrates above. Little Bee never flat out lied when talking about her arrival, but she strongly implied that she had arrived the day of the funeral, and never gave readers a cause to think otherwise. This slightly unfaithful side of Little Bee is new and it impacts much of the story that comes later.



ELEMENT 2: Dual Narrators



The first chapter is written by Little Bee. She narrates all of the odd chapters in the story.



The second chapter is written by Sarah, as well as all of the even chapters.

DEFENSE

The dual narrators are very important to this story because of the completely different backgrounds the characters share. Readers learn about each of the narrators' lives without having to hear it from another character. It helps the reader understand their dynamic, and why they each have reservations around certain things. This book would be very confusing if there was only one perspective, mostly because they see the world through different lenses, each vital to the overall story.

DEFINITION

The author uses an interesting style of narration in which he has two narrators tell mostly linear stories, alternating between chapters. Each story picks up where the other left off, if the characters are together, or they overlap a little bit. For the most part, there is not moving around in time unless in a flashback or flash forward.





IMPACT

By forcing the reader to transition between 2 narrators, it makes them feel what each character feels. While sometimes confusing, the switching back and forth helps readers get a full picture of what is going on. It can make them feel more knowledgeable when one character is curious about something they've already found the answers to, or it can make them feel upset, when a character is being wrongly punished for something the readers already know wasn't their fault. Having two narrators gives the reader more power and information, causing them to feel more in control.

ELEMENT 3: Sentence Structure

An aerial photograph of a wide, calm river winding through a dense, vibrant green forest. The river's surface is still, reflecting the surrounding trees and sky. The forest appears to be a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees, creating a rich, textured green landscape. The river meanders from the top left towards the bottom right, with several small islands and peninsulas of forested land protruding into the water.

RELEVANT QUOTES

“I sat down. I was out of breath. I watched the traffic racing past below me, three lines in one direction and three lines in the other,” (pg 82).

“I wish I could claim it was the only tourist-board freebie that arrived at the magazine that spring, but we had boxes full of them-crates of unopened envelopes hemorrhaging sunscreen from ruptured sample sachets,” (pg 99).

DEFINITION

Sentence structure can consist of many elements, but word count, the number of commas, and the use of advanced vocabulary are the most important in this story. A vast majority of the sentences on a sample page in one of Little Bee’s chapters have 1-20 words, almost no commas, and very minimal special vocabulary. This narration uses straightforward delivery, and is free of distractions from flowery writing. The majority of the sentences in any of Sarah’s chapters have 7-20 words, are more frugal with commas, and much more exuberant writing. Sarah’s style of narration uses complex words and the addition of commas to add to the story, just in a different way than in Little Bee’s chapters.

DEFENSE

By using basic sentences in her narration, Little Bee's character traits are shown. Her simplicity, honesty, and strength come to light because of the effortlessly simple way her narration is written. It highlights that she chooses her words wisely, and says what she needs to to be impactful. This is particularly important in this story because of who Little Bee is. She has watched her home burn and has seen too many people die before her eyes. She has grown tougher and stronger and knows that she is wiser now. Her voice needs to have an impact in this story because of her struggles and the way that she has come through them.

Sarah's style of more traditional flowery and lengthy sentences shows sophistication and refinement. She is a writer for a magazine, and her word choice reflects that. The way that she thinks and her frantic mindset go well with the way her story is written, and they feel connected.

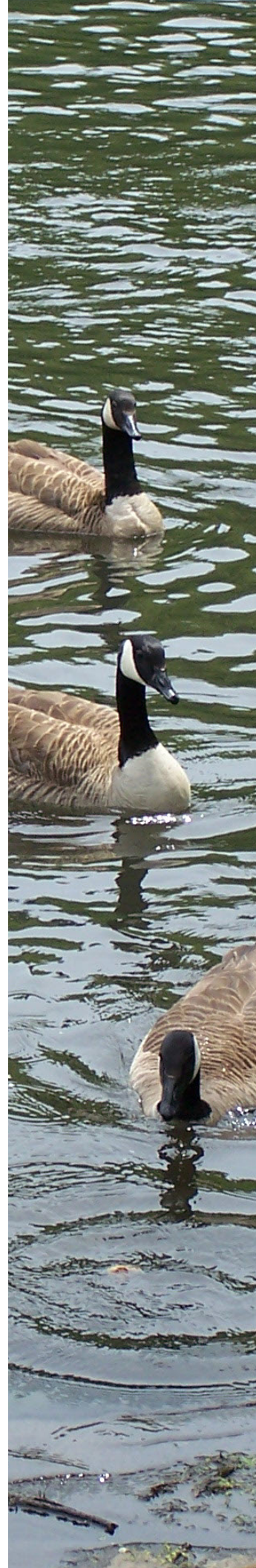
The side by side of these two characters and their writing styles is so important to this book because readers need the contrast. It can be said hundreds of times that these characters come from different worlds, but until readers can see their distance within the writing, it is all meaningless. These slight differences between the sentence structure help define each character without the reader even knowing it, and that's why it is so important.

IMPACT

The sentence structure and choice of words is important to this book because of the dual narrator. The characters that narrate are so different and yet have lives that are so intertwined. By having these two different styles of writing, readers can fully switch their mindset each time the narration switches, and really get into each character.

With Little Bee, it allows readers to get inside her head and see how clearly she sees the world because it is so new to her. Everything she sees is for the first time, so there is nothing to compare it to, nothing to distract from what it is. The quote above helps to highlight this as she takes a full sentence to describe for the readers what a road looks like. It is something that most readers would already understand, but to her, it is brand new. As a reader, this style of writing is the key to feeling what Little Bee feels, especially because her character might be somewhat unreachable for many readers.

With Sarah, it allows readers to feel her conflicted mind and to watch her life crumble. Readers can see a clear correlation between what they learn about her and the way that she thinks. Sarah frequently gets upset with herself, and because she normally uses longer sentences, readers feel when she is irate because the sentences get short and blunt. Her flowery writing lets people in, but doesn't always let them see her full truth. Sarah's writing is not overwhelming, it adds just enough of an extra touch to make the reader have an obvious emotional reaction, such as using the word hemorrhaging which implies a chaotic nature in itself, versus when Little Bee narrates, and the reader has to figure out how they feel for themselves.



EMULATION

She pushed me again. I stumbled but stayed standing. My arm was red where she'd hit me. I looked her in the face and pushed back. My push sent her flying.

"Daniel! What are you doing?!" my mom called. She wasn't happy.

"It's her fault! She started it!" I stared at the floor. The black and white tiles fit together so perfectly, each one knew its place. I sighed. I wasn't winning this one.

"Susie can't help it Daniel. You know better."

"Yes, Mom. I'm sorry."

I kept my head down and left the room. The tiles were cold under my feet. I counted them as I left. Thirteen white, fourteen black. It wasn't fair. I stepped on one more white tile. She never got in trouble.

Work was never ending that day. My boss got in a fight with his wife the night before, and was fuming before he even entered the office. When he spilled coffee on his tie, he tipped further over the edge, and when his presentation for the board malfunctioned, we all assumed the fetal position in anticipation of what was to come. Compared to my day, coming home to a rowdy child seemed like a day off.

I stood in the kitchen stirring a pot of pasta sauce on the stove when I heard a bang.

"Daniel!" I jumped to the doorway and peered around the corner. The bathroom door was wide open. "Daniel!" I yelled again, walking in. "What are you doing?!"

He looked up at me with those big brown soul-melting eyes. His arm was red and the shower curtain was off its hooks on the floor. I shook my head, snapping out of his spell, and gave him a stern look. I meant business.

Daniel's gaze shot down as he gave me his excuse. The longer I listened, the more damage I saw. The towels were on the ground and the toothbrushes had been thrown. A real fight had taken place here.

"It's her fault! She started it!" Daniel finished, clearly fighting a losing battle.

"Susie can't help it Daniel. You know better." I saw her shaking in the corner.

Daniel left the room slowly, dragging his feet dramatically behind him. I went over to Susie and lifted her into my arms, gently petting the fur between her ears.

"I'm sorry Daniel did that to you sweet baby," I cooed as she purred. "You know how kids can be." Susie licked my face and lept from my arms, only to run straight back to Daniel in the next room.





UNRELIABLE NARRATOR

In the first section of my story, I used unreliability in my narration by making Susie seem like a person instead of the cat that she turns out to be. I wrote as if she was a peer or a sibling, but I never stated it as a fact, therefore not actually lying to the reader. I just strongly implied that she would be a person, not a pet. In the second half of my scene, I revealed the truth, which makes the readers question Daniel and what he tells them about the world.



DUAL NARRATOR

Dual narrators were shown in my piece by writing 2 separate portions from two separate narrators, each with their own style. This affects the reader by giving them more insight on the fight that occurred, and exposing Daniel's white lie. This element, combined with the others, allowed the readers to feel different emotions when reading each section, and to get inside the minds of the narrators during each of their pieces.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

In the first section, I emulated sentence structure by using shorter sentences, simpler words, and less commas. I tried to write using less direct emotions, and instead make it clear in the writing. I talked about what Daniel was seeing, such as the tiles, and tried to form imagery and figurative language using that instead of having to make it blatantly obvious. This makes it easier to get into his mind and allows readers to feel with him. For the second section, I used longer words and sentences, and more commas. I allowed fancier terms to come out, and to paint pictures that way instead of just with the scene. I put more of the mother's thoughts into it, and this was to make the readers aware of who she was as a person. She mentions that she is a business woman, and I felt like she would use better vocabulary and have more to say about certain things than her young son. Through this technique, her maturity and personality are visible, and readers can feel a clear difference between her story and her son's.

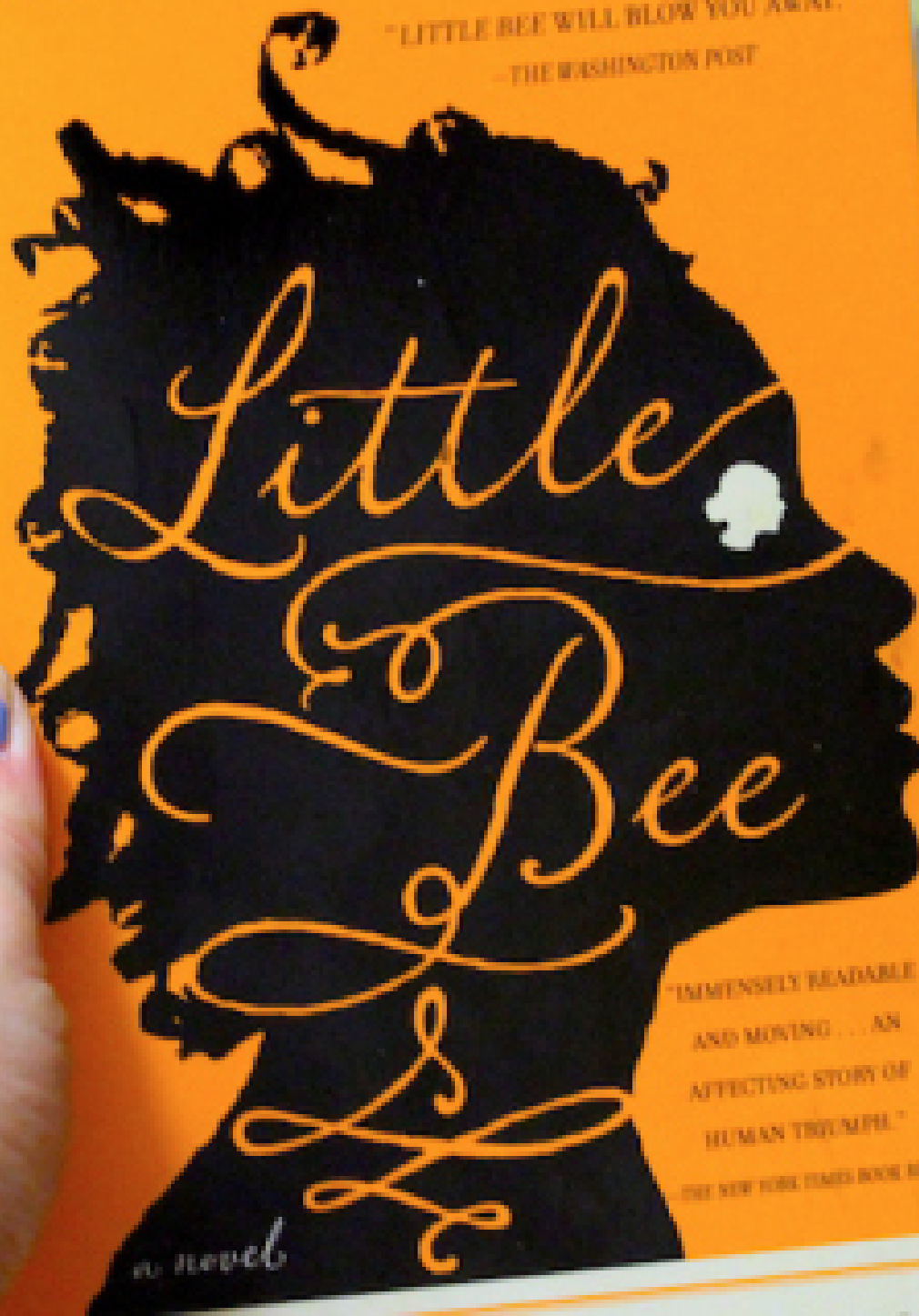


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Cleave is the author of many New York Times best sellers, including 'Everyone Brave is Forgiven,' and 'Little Bee.' His novels are published in over 30 languages, and have been formatted for movies around the world. Cleave is 42 years old, and lives with his 3 children and his wife in London.

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

"LITTLE BEE WILL BLOW YOU AWAY."
—THE WASHINGTON POST



"IMMENSELY READABLE
AND MOVING . . . AN
AFFECTING STORY OF
HUMAN TRIUMPH."
—THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

CHRIS CLEAVE
AUTHOR OF INCENDIARY

emulation

Bea Gerber