

# Noughts and Crosses

## Settings

The different lifestyles of the Noughts and Crosses are shown very vividly through the various settings in the novel.

Look at the opening to Chapter One, when Sephy begins:

‘I wriggled my toes, enjoying the feel of the warm sand trickling like fine baby powder between them. Digging my feet even deeper into the dry, yellow-white sand, I tilted back my head. It was such a beautiful August afternoon. Nothing bad could ever happen on a day like today.’

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The verbs are underlined in red.

The adjectives are underlined in yellow.

What comments can you make about Blackman's use of verbs and adjectives here?

How does her choice of language affect our perception of the scene (ie, how we see what Sephy sees)?

Why do you think Blackman has chosen to set this first scene on Sephy's family's private beach?

What does a beach and the sea suggest to you?

What might be considered ironic about the fact that the beach is private?

Now look at Callum's description of his home:

'I hesitated outside my house – if you could call it that. Every time I came back from Sephy's, I flinched at the sight of the shack that was meant to be my home. ... Looking at our rundown hovel, I could feel the usual burning, churning sensation begin to rise up inside me. My stomach tightened, my eyes began to narrow ... So I forced myself to look away.'

Make a note of the adjectives and verbs Callum uses.

Compare the language to that which Sephy uses about the beach.

What do we learn about Callum's home?

More significantly, what do we learn about Callum's feelings from his description?

Write at least two paragraphs about the use of settings at the beginning of the novel.

Use phrases like:

We learn a lot about Callum and Sephy's lifestyles ...

Sephy's description shows us that ... whereas Callum feels ...

Sephy's use of ... reflects her feelings of contentment but Callum's ...