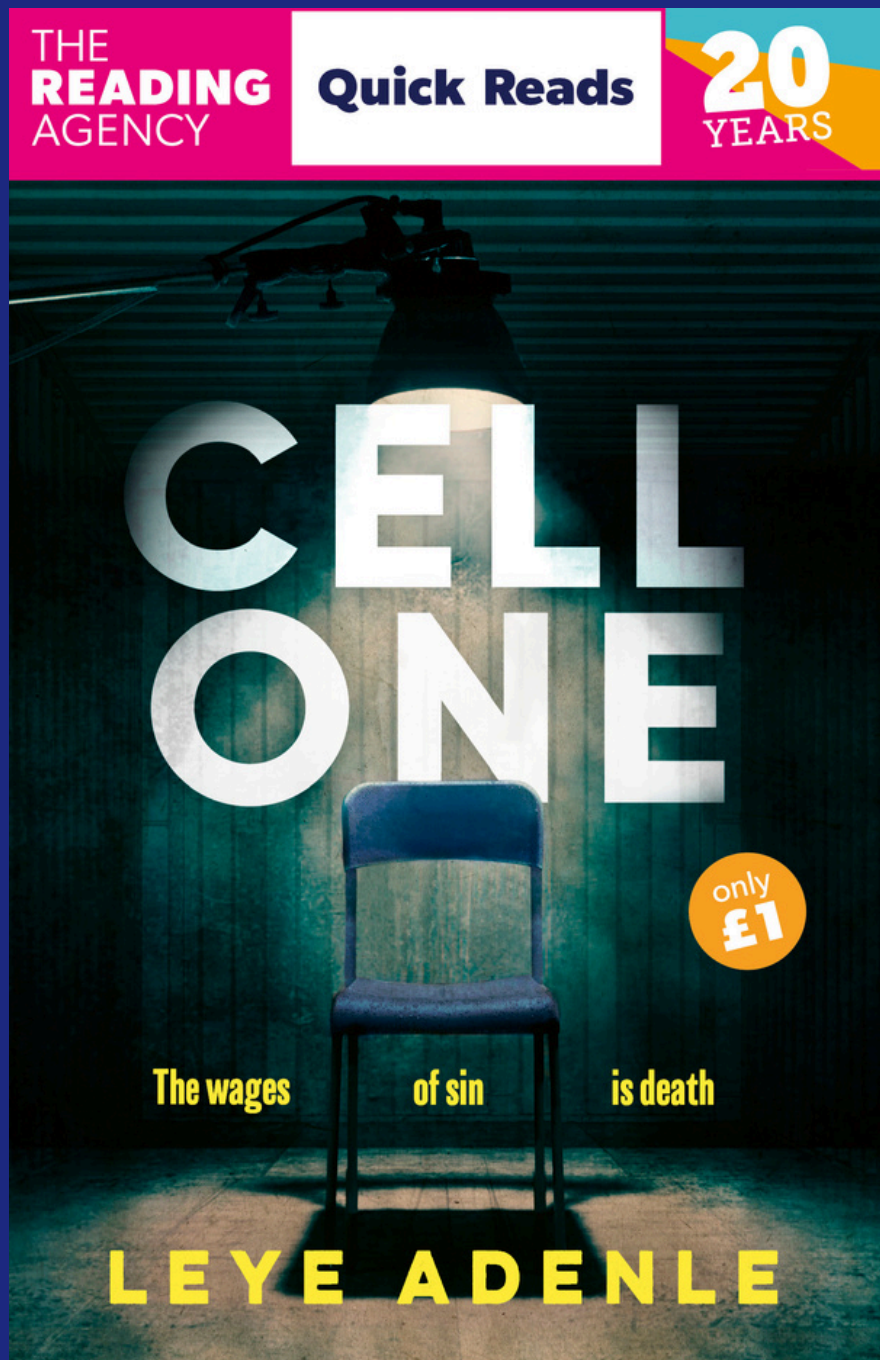


Discussion Guide



About the author

Leye Adenle is a Nigerian-born crime thriller author, known for his gripping and suspenseful stories that explore the darker side of human nature. His debut novel, *Easy Motion Tourist*, won the prestigious Prix Marianne in France in 2016.

Adenle's writing is characterised by its vivid descriptions of Nigerian society, which he portrays with a gritty realism that captures the complexity of life in a country that is often misunderstood by outsiders. His novels delve into issues such as corruption, inequality, and violence, while also exploring the humanity of his characters and the choices they make in the face of adversity.

In addition to his writing, Adenle is a frequent speaker on issues related to African literature and culture, and has given talks at universities and literary festivals around the world. He is also an advocate for gender equality, and his writing often explores the experiences of women in Nigerian society.

With a growing reputation as one of the most exciting voices in contemporary crime fiction, Leye Adenle's work has been praised for its sharp prose, memorable characters, and unflinching portrayal of the darker side of human nature.



Discussion Questions

Chapter 1

1. How does the author build tension and fear in the opening scene before the lights come on?
Think about darkness, silence, physical pain, and what the man cannot remember.
2. What details about the room and the restraints suggest that this kidnapping was carefully planned?
Focus on the chair, zip ties, floor, IV tube, and lighting.
3. How does the man's physical reaction affect our understanding of his mental state?
Consider what fear does to him physically and emotionally (panic, crying).
4. What do the man's memories about his family reveal about his past and possible guilt?
Look at which memories surface and why they might matter.
5. What is the significance of the voice's message: "The wages of sin is death"?
Think about religion, punishment, and what the kidnappers might want from him.

Chapter 2

1. Why does Bobby feel unsure and nervous when he arrives at the police station?
Think about the station not expecting him, his clothes, and how Balogun looks at him.
2. Why is Bobby confused about his job?
Think about the cancelled recruitment, the travel and not knowing what to do.

3. Why does Balogun ask Bobby about a “godfather”?

Think about why Balogun doesn’t believe Bobby got the job honestly.

4. How does Bobby feel about being in Nigeria after growing up in England?

Think about how he feels in the new, different environment.

5. What do we learn about Oga Adams from the phone call and officers’ discussion?

Think about what he did, how the officers reacted, and what it shows about him.

Chapter 3

1. What is Bobby’s first impression of working with Abike?

Think about how she walks, talks and treats Bobby.

2. Why does Bobby feel out of place during the car journey and at the police station?

Think about the heat, the car, his accent, and how others react to him.

3. What do we learn about how the police station’s cyber unit works?

Think about Abike’s explanation of the unit and how it is different from bigger offices.

4. What happens when Abike and Bobby go to the officers’ mess to look for Adams?

Think about the car, the bar staff, the hotel rooms, and what they find out.

5. What does this chapter show about Bobby’s learning curve as a new police officer in Nigeria?

Think about the uniform, the accent advice, the phone tracking, and when he speaks to Balogun.

Chapter 4

1. Why is Bobby quiet during the drive to Adams’ house?

Think about what Abike said to him earlier and how it made him feel.

2. What does Abike’s speech to Bobby show about her attitude to the police job?

Think about how she talks about training, danger, and people losing their lives.

3. What happens when they arrive outside Adams’ estate?

Think about the dogs, the gate, and why they stay in the van.

4. How does Adams’ wife, Ireti, behave when talking about her husband?

Think about her words, and how she reacts to the other woman.

5. What new problem is discovered at the end of the chapter?

Think about the blog, Adams’ photo and the countdown timer.

Chapter 5

1. Why are many people calling and messaging Ireti before noon?

Think about the website and what people are waiting to see.

2. How does Ireti react while waiting for the countdown to finish?

Look at her actions, her face, and how she behaves with her phone.

3. What appears on the screen when the countdown ends?

Describe what happens to the character and where he is.

4. What do the kidnappers want Adams to do?

Think about the message they repeat and the words they use.

5. What violent act is shown during the live broadcast?

Think about the water, the chair, and how Adams reacts.

Chapter 6

1. What job does Abike give Bobby at the start of the chapter?

Where does she ask him to stand and what is he meant to do?

2. Who begins to arrive at Adams' house after the video is shown?

Think about family members, neighbours, and the media.

3. Why does Bobby start to feel confident while guarding the gate?

Think about how people react to him and how he feels about authority.

4. Why does the man in the hoodie make Bobby uncomfortable?

Think about his clothes, his behaviour, and where he is looking.

5. What important information does Bobby finally tell Balogun?

What does Bobby notice, and how does Balogun respond?

Chapter 7

1. Why does Bobby start to doubt himself at the beginning of the chapter?

Think about the word "suspect" and whether he is sure he is right.

2. How do the police find out which way the man in the hoodie went?

Who do they ask, and what information do they give?

3. What role do the Okada riders play in catching the man?

Think about what they notice and what they do before the police arrive.

4. What does Bobby realise about the man after he is arrested?

Think about the man's age, appearance, and behaviour.

5. How does Bobby feel at the end of the chapter, and why?

Think about the boy crying and Bobby's actions and thoughts.

Chapter 8

1. What changes does Bobby notice when he returns to Adams' house?

Think about security, the crowd, and the police presence.

2. Why does Bobby start to feel uneasy about the crowd outside the estate?

Look at how the people and the officers behave towards each other.

3. Why is Abike angry with Bobby about the man he arrested?

Think about Bobby's reasons and what Abike says about suspicion.

4. What does the governor say has been done about Adams' kidnapping?

Focus on arrests, task forces, and promises made to the public.

5. What does Bobby learn about the arrested young man at the end of the chapter?

Who was the man really, and why was he arrested?

Chapter 9

1. What danger is Adams in, and how soon could it happen?

What might happen to him if the water keeps rising?

2. What does Rocky discover about where Adams is being held?

What kind of place is it and how does he work this out?

3. What task does Balogun give the officers after the briefing?

What are they told to search through, and why?

4. What clues make Bobby think the kidnapping is personal?

Think about the word "sin" and the kidnapers' behaviour.

5. What shocking connection does Balogun suggest at the end of the chapter?

Who does he compare the possible suspect to, and how does this affect the narrator?

Chapter 10

1. Why does Balogun question Bobby about his father?

What make Balogun suspicious about him?

2. What is the real reason Bobby joined the Nigerian police?

What does he secretly want to investigate?

3. Why does Balogun tell him to go home? Do you agree with him?

What danger does Balogun think Bobby might be in?

4. What reaction do people online have to the video of Adams?

How do the comments show different opinions about the police?

5. What new idea does Bobby have about where Adams might be held?

What place does he think it could be?

Chapter 11

1. How does the mood in the hotel garden change when Bobby arrives?

What do people's silence and body language show about what they are watching?

2. Why is the second broadcast harder for Bobby to watch than the first one?

Think about what he already knows will happen.

3. How does Hyacinth's story affect the crowd's opinion of Adams?

Why do some people stop feeling sorry for him?

4. What detail about Natasha's blog post makes Bobby suspicious?

What does she seem to know that she shouldn't?

5. Who does Bobby begin to suspect at the end of the chapter?

Think about motive, access, and who Adams trusted.

Chapter 12

1. Why does Bobby decide to accept the lift to the police station?

What information does he think he has, and what does he need to do urgently?

2. What makes Bobby suspicious of Rocky when he sees him near the station?

What behaviour seems "shady" or out of place?

3. Why is the setting of the Container Village important in this chapter?

How does it connect to earlier clues about the kidnapping?

4. How does Bobby's instinct guide his actions?

Think about following the SUV and confronting Rocky.

5. What new danger does Bobby face?

Where does he hide? Why is this worrying?

Chapter 13

1. How does Bobby react when he wakes up in the container?

What does he do at first and what does this show about his fear?

2. Why does Bobby think about his parents and sister while he is tied up?

What do these thoughts tell us about how he is currently feeling?

3. Why do the kidnappers force Bobby to watch Adams again?

What effect does watching the broadcast have on Bobby?

4. How does Adams change during this broadcast?

Think about his singing, screaming, laughing and refusing to confess.

5. Why is the final line about being offered "a clue" important?

What does it suggest about the kidnappers' plan and Adams' chances of survival?

Chapter 14

1. Why does Adams react so strongly when the clue is given?

What do "Cell One" and "December 16" make him remember?

2. What role does Rocky play in the crime Adams admits to?

How does Rocky help the officers choose their victim?

3. Why is the confession about the party so important to the story?

Think about power, corruption, and why this man was targeted.

4. How does Bobby feel after hearing Adams' full confession?

Why does he say this is about exposure, not revenge?

5. What is the effect of the final image of the nine chambers on the reader?

What does it suggest about what will happen next? Who is in danger? How does this make you feel?