

# Custom: Madam Is the Law of Fools But It Shall Never Govern Me



**The Relapse: 'Custom, madam, is the law of fools, but it shall never govern me''** by Donna Lynn

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 278 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 128 pages



*Custom: Madam Is the Law of Fools But It Shall Never Govern Me* is a play by Wole Soyinka, written in 1969. The play is set in a fictional African country during the colonial era and tells the story of a group of rebels who are fighting for their freedom from the oppressive regime. The play is a powerful indictment of colonialism and a celebration of the human spirit.

## Plot summary

The play begins with a group of rebels meeting in a secret location to plan their next move. The rebels are led by a woman named Madame Tortoise, who is a powerful and charismatic leader. The rebels are determined to overthrow the oppressive regime, but they know that they will face a long and difficult struggle.

The rebels soon learn that the regime has been planning to build a new prison, which will be used to hold political prisoners. The rebels know that they must stop the prison from being built, so they decide to kidnap the minister of works, who is responsible for the construction of the prison.

The rebels successfully kidnap the minister of works, but they soon find themselves under attack by the regime's forces. The rebels are outnumbered and outgunned, but they are determined to fight for their freedom.

The play ends with a climactic battle between the rebels and the regime's forces. The rebels are defeated, but they have shown the regime that they are not afraid to fight for what they believe in.

## Characters

- **Madame Tortoise:** The leader of the rebels. She is a powerful and charismatic woman who is determined to overthrow the oppressive regime.
- **The Minister of Works:** The government official who is responsible for the construction of the new prison. He is a corrupt and incompetent man who is only interested in lining his own pockets.
- **The District Officer:** The British colonial official who is responsible for maintaining law and order in the country. He is a weak and ineffectual man who is more interested in keeping his job than in doing what is right.
- **The Sergeant:** The head of the regime's secret police. He is a brutal and ruthless man who is responsible for the torture and murder of political prisoners.

## Themes

*Custom: Madam Is the Law of Fools But It Shall Never Govern Me* explores a number of themes, including:

- **Colonialism:** The play is a powerful indictment of colonialism and its devastating effects on Africa. The play shows how colonialism has corrupted the African people and how it has led to the rise of oppressive regimes.
- **Power:** The play explores the corrupting nature of power and how it can lead to tyranny. The play shows how those who are in power are often willing to use violence and oppression to maintain their control.
- **Independence:** The play is a celebration of the human spirit and the indomitable will to be free. The rebels in the play are determined to overthrow the oppressive regime and to win their freedom, no matter what the cost.

## Critical reception

*Custom: Madam Is the Law of Fools But It Shall Never Govern Me* has been praised by critics for its powerful indictment of colonialism and its celebration of the human spirit. The play has been performed around the world and has been translated into over 20 languages.

In 1986, the play was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. The Nobel Prize committee praised the play for its "vivid and powerful depiction of the struggle for freedom and independence in Africa."

## Further reading

- Wole Soyinka's Nobel lecture

- Wole Soyinka on Encyclopedia Britannica
- Custom: Madam Is the Law of Fools But It Shall Never Govern Me on JSTOR



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