

## STUDENT: LOU POLE

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In the excerpt from “The book of Negroes” by Lawrance Hill, main character Meena has some internal struggles. Meena had just gotten to America in 1787 by slave traders, and escaped to the black community of Birchtown, Nova Scotia in search of Chekura, her husband. However, riots broke out and Meena was forced to ask a white family to care for her daughter May. But May was stolen by the Witherspoon family and taken to America.

Meena is now painfully grieving her loss. She is incapable of even admitting it to her friend, Jason at first. She is that internally destroyed that she wants to die and states May was her last daughter. She carries a burden of loss from May, and a weight of stress from the riot. Homes are destroyed and raiders went through houses.

Meena is feeling pain and devastation even weeks after. “For the next few weeks, I was in such agony that I could barely speak.” Meena has developed extreme depression from the tragic event. It is so great that she didn’t want to teach, work or express her own feelings in fear she may lash out and kill someone. Meena is desperate and wants to go to Boston in hopes to find May, however cannot afford it and could get arrested. She isn’t even completely sure if May is there.

Meena describes that her children were like phantom limbs, lost but still attached. Gone but still painful. This means her children meant a lot to her and she is feeling almost guilty. She feels as though they are still with her but out of her grasp. She is that depressed, eating or cooking is not an option.

She has lost faith in God. Her loss is that painful she gave up her faith. How could there be a God if he lets these tragic events happen with no sign or warning to fix them? However, she went to Daddy Moses services. People made sure she ate and never was alone, and fixed her house.

Meena recovered from her struggle with depression from her tragic loss, however, she still hurts. Just because you move on doesn’t mean you forget. And Meena has not near forgotten. A year after she finally got the courage to

work again and catch babies. A white baby from Shelburne was the first since losing May, and is a slight reminder. Meena has grown stronger but never forgot. She continues to move forward regardless of the pain. May is her phantom limb. Non-present, but still pulsating an ounce of pain.