

**LOOKING FOR  
A RAIN GOD  
AND OTHER  
SHORT STORIES  
FROM AFRICA**

**A TEACHING &  
READING GUIDE**

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## LITERATURE → FICTION → SHORT STORIES

The world's earliest "literature" was oral, passed along by word of mouth from one person to another and from one generation to the next. This literature was always connected with some important activity—singing, storytelling, religious or social ritual, prayer, teaching, or even magic. As civilizations progressed, however, they began to use writing to preserve their literature. This had the advantage of giving works a stable and lasting form. Fiction refers to works of prose (i.e., written in paragraphs and not lines, as in poetry, nor as dialogue meant for the stage, as in drama) that have imaginary elements. Although fiction can be inspired by actual events and real people, it usually springs from writers' imaginations. Fiction is meant to entertain, but it can also provide the reader with a deeper understanding of life. The two major types of fiction are novels and short stories. Both novels and short stories contain four basic elements: **plot**, **character**, **setting**, and **theme**.

- **PLOT** The sequence of events in a story is called the story's **plot**. The plot is a map of what happens, when it happens, and to whom it happens. Plots are almost always built around conflicts—problems or struggles between opposing forces. Although plots differ, a plot usually includes the four stages of development: **exposition** (introductory material that gives the background of the story), **rising action**, **climax**, and **falling action** (sometimes called **resolution**).
- **CHARACTER** The **characters** in a story are the people, animals, or imaginary creatures who take part in the action. In most stories, the events center on one or more **main characters**. The other characters, called **minor characters**, interact with the main characters and help move the story along. Characters can be dynamic or static. **Dynamic** characters change as a result of events, whereas **static** characters remain unchanged. Writers show characters' growth and change by presenting carefully chosen details.
- **SETTING** The **setting** of a story is the particular time and place in which the events occur. A story may be set in a real or an imaginary place. The events may occur in the past, the present, or the future. Vivid descriptions help readers picture the setting in their minds. Setting can play an important role in what happens to the characters and how they respond to conflict.
- **THEME** A **theme** in a work of fiction is a perception about life or human nature that the writer conveys to the reader. Most themes are not stated directly. A theme in a short story might, for example, be "Life is only as good as you make it" or "Good relationships take work." Themes can be revealed by: a work's title, key phrases and statements about big ideas, or the ways characters change and the lessons they learn about life.

### How to teach *Looking for a Rain God* in Community Day Secondary Schools:

According to the period allocation, only three 40 minute periods are available per week for English Literature in Form 3. All 30 stories from *Looking for a Rain God* should ideally be covered in two terms (which range from 12-15 weeks). Usually the final two weeks of each term are reserved for end-of-term examinations, so that leaves only 20-25 weeks. With the added difficulties of large class sizes and limited resources: how can this be done?

Plan to get through one story a week: Schedule a double period at the beginning of the week and a single period at the end of the week.

During the 40-minute single period, introduce the story title, author, and any additional background information. Next, read the **Story Preview** and **Make Predictions**. Then, complete the **Words to Know**. By the end of the period, assign students (in groups) to read the story, answer the **Comprehension Questions**, and identify the setting and characters.

During the 80-minute double period (after the weekend), begin by introducing the new **Literary term** associated with the story. Ask students to **Focus** on that term while re-reading the story out loud as a class. Students should also check their answers to the comprehension questions. After reading, groups should work on **Guessing Meaning from Context** and **Making Inferences**. Then, you can either fill in the graphic organizer (**Analysing the Story**) as a class or in groups. Finally, collect each group's comprehension questions and setting/characters (and possibly other activities) for scoring before discussing the answers as a class to ensure comprehension. Repeat. Some very short stories may take less time...

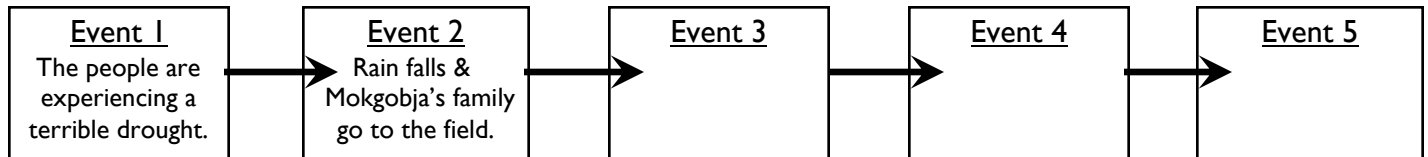
## ACTIVE READER: Skills and Strategies

Before we get started on the stories, let's review the habits of a successful student and an *active reader* of fiction. When examples are needed "Looking For a Rain God" by Bessie Head, the first story in this collection, is used. If you want to be an *active reader*, then as you read, take notes to:

- Connect what you read about people, places, and situations with your personal experiences.
- Write down any phrases, passages, or ideas that you find particularly exciting.
- Write down any questions you have about plot, character, setting, or theme.

### Strategies for understanding plot

1. Keep track of events as they develop. A chart like this one might help you to visualize the sequence of events.



2. Identify the main conflict and what causes it. Also, note the minor problems or difficulties that the characters encounter along the way.
3. Note how the characters react to problems they encounter. Predict what they might do next.
4. Ask yourself whether the ending is what you expected.

### Strategies for exploring character

1. Use the details the writer provides to visualise the characters. Note any special aspects of their appearance that might be clues to their personalities.
2. Look for clues to the motives of the characters.
3. Note the ways in which characters change during the story. Watch for signs of internal conflict—that is, conflict within a character's mind.
4. Try using a chart like this one.

Looking For a Rain God

Character	Mokgobja
Words	
Actions	Remembers an ancient rainmaking ceremony
Thoughts	
Appearance	

### Strategies for visualising setting

1. Look for specific adjectives that help you imagine how the opening scene might look. Watch for details that help you visualise the setting.
2. Pay attention to ways in which setting influences the characters, the plot, or the mood of the story.

### Strategies for determining theme

1. Question whether the title offers any clues to the theme
2. Think about what any accompanying illustrations reveal about the story.
3. Note any sentences or ideas that you find especially intriguing. They might be clues to the theme.

### Strategies for Reading:

**PREDICT** Try to figure out what will happen next and how the story might end. Then read on to see how accurate your guesses were.

**VISUALISE** Visualise characters, events, and settings to help you understand what's happening.

**CONNECT** Connect personally with what you're reading. Think of similarities between the descriptions in the selection and what you have personally experienced, heard about, and read about.

**QUESTION** Question what happens while you read. Searching for reasons behind characters' feelings can help you feel closer to what you are reading.

**CLARIFY** Stop occasionally to review what you understand, and expect to have your understanding change and develop as you read on. Reread and use resources to help clarify your understanding. Also watch for answers to questions you had earlier.

**EVALUATE** Form opinions about what you read, both while you're reading and after you've finished. Develop your own ideas about characters and events.

## Making Inferences

Making inferences about a story involves using the information in the story, as well as your own common sense, to make logical guesses. This skill is especially useful for understanding characters. Writers seldom explain everything about characters' backgrounds, thoughts, and emotions. By making inferences, readers can supply the missing pieces.

### Strategies for making inferences about a character's background

1. Look for details about the physical environment and about any social, cultural, and moral influences that affect the character.
2. Question why specific details about the character are included in the story. Which details are clues to the character's inner qualities?
3. Think about things you've read or heard that can help you imagine what it would be like to live in the story's setting.
4. Consider details about the character in the context of the whole story. For example, Mokgobja remembers a rain-making ceremony that was "buried by years of prayer in a Christian church." From reading history, we know missionaries spread Christianity through Africa. So, we infer that Mokgobja was born in a society with traditional beliefs and later he converted to Christianity.

Facts or details	What I know from reading or experience	What I infer about the character
Mokgobja goes to a Christian church. He has memories of traditional African religious practices.	European missionaries came to Africa during colonialism and spread Christianity.	Mokgobja was born in a traditional society and converted to Christianity.

### Strategies for making inferences about a character's feelings

1. Connect to the character's experiences. Think about similar experiences you have had and how you felt.
2. As you read dialogue, imagine how you would say the words if you were in the character's place.
3. Reread descriptions of the character's gestures and facial expressions. Close your eyes and visualize these. Then think about the emotions you usually associate with the expressions and gestures.

### Strategies for making inferences about a character's behavior.

1. Note descriptions of dangers or opportunities in the setting. How might they affect the character?
2. Pay attention to the character's responses to conflict, setbacks, and opportunities. Try to see a pattern in the character's behavior—especially one that gives an idea of what to expect as the story develops.
3. Look for symbols and imagery that may hint at what is to come.

Root	Meaning	Examples
cosmo-	universe	cosmic
chron-	time	chronicle
ethn-	nation	ethnicity
negat-	deny	negate

A **prefix** is a word part that appears at the beginning of a word

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
anti-	against	antiwar
inter-	between	interview
pre-	before	preview

A **suffix** is a word part that appears at the end of a word

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-able	able to	renewable
-al	related to	natural
-some	likely to	awesome

## Enriching Your Vocabulary

Even great readers encounter unfamiliar words. These tips will help find their meanings.

### Use Context Clues:

- The **context** of a word consists of the punctuation, words, and sentences that surround a word. A word's context can give you clues about its meaning:

*After 12 hours without food, I was so **ravenous** that I ate three big patties of nsima.*

You can figure out from the context that *ravenous* means "extremely hungry."

### Break Words into Parts:

- Breaking a word into its parts can help you understand it. When you see unfamiliar words, try to:
  1. Look for any **prefixes** or **suffixes**. Then remove them to try to isolate the **root**—the word part that contains the core meaning.
  2. Try to think of other words containing each prefix, suffix, or root. Think about what those words mean. Do they have anything in common?
  3. Consider the way the word is used in the sentence. Use the context and the word parts to make a logical guess about its meaning.
  4. Consult a dictionary to see whether your guess is correct.

## CRITICAL THINKING:

Critical thinking is the ability to analyse, evaluate, and synthesise ideas or information. Critical thinking goes beyond simply understanding something. It involves making judgments based on reasoning skills.

### Avoid Faulty Reasoning:

When you write (or speak) for a persuasive purpose, make sure your logic is valid. Avoid these mistakes in reasoning, called **logical fallacies**:

- **Overgeneralization:** Conclusions reached on the basis of too little evidence result in the fallacy called overgeneralization. A person who saw three motorcyclists riding without helmets might conclude, "Nobody wears helmets." That conclusion would be an overgeneralization.
- **Circular Reasoning:** When you support an opinion by simply repeating it in different terms, you are using circular reasoning. For example, "Tobacco is a popular cash crop in Malawi because more farmers grow tobacco than any other cash crop." This is an illogical statement because the second part of the sentence simply restates the first part.
- **Either-Or Fallacy:** Assuming that a complex question has only 2 possible answers is called the either-or fallacy. "Either we close the library permanently or students will continue to steal books" is an example of the either-or fallacy. The statement ignores other ways of discouraging students from stealing.
- **Cause-and-Effect Fallacy:** The cause-and-effect fallacy occurs when you say that event B was caused by event A just because event B occurred after event A. Someone might conclude that because students performed poorly on exams the year a new headteacher arrived, that the new headteacher caused the poor performance. However, this cause-and-effect relationship would have to be supported by more specific evidence.

### Identifying Modes of Persuasion:

Understanding persuasive techniques can help you evaluate information, make informed decisions, and reject persuasive techniques that are intended to deceive you. Some modes of persuasion appeal to various emotions.

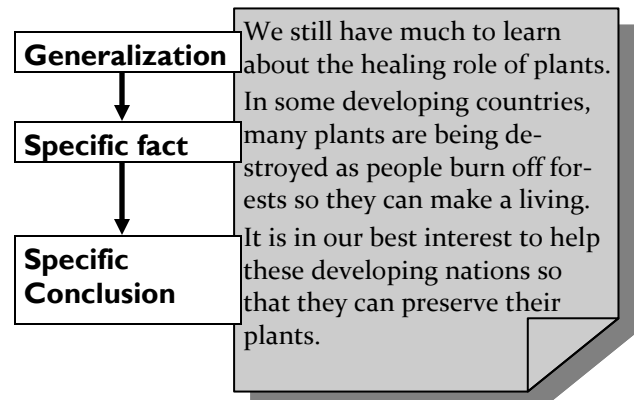
- **Loaded Language:** Loaded language is words or phrases chosen to appeal to the emotions. It is often used in place of facts to shape opinion or to evoke a positive or negative reaction. For example, you might feel positive about a politician who has a *plan*. You might, however, feel negative about a politician who has a *scheme*.

- **Bandwagon:** Bandwagon taps into the human desire to belong. This technique suggests that "everybody" is doing it, or buying it, or believing it. Phrases such as "Don't be the only one..." and "Everybody is..." signal the bandwagon appeal.
- **Testimonials:** Testimonials present well-known people or satisfied customers who promote and endorse a product or idea. This technique taps into the appeal of celebrities or into people's need to identify with others just like themselves.

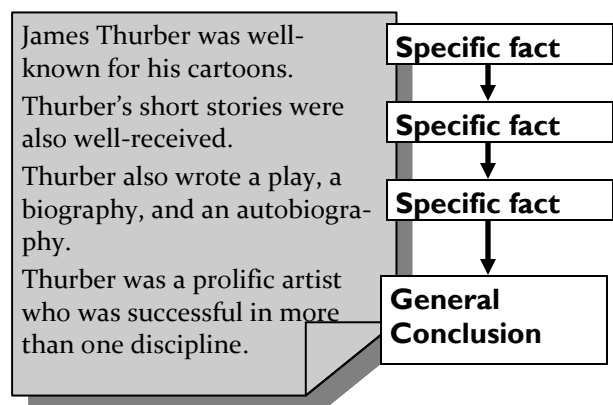
### Logical Thinking:

Persuasive writing (and speaking) requires good reasoning skills. Two ways of creating logical arguments are deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning.

- **Deductive Arguments:** a deductive argument begins with a generalization, and then advances with facts and evidence that lead to a conclusion. The conclusion is the logical outcome of the premise. A false premise leads to a false conclusion; a valid premise leads to a valid conclusion provided that the specific facts are correct and the reasoning is correct.



- **Inductive Arguments:** an inductive argument begins with specific evidence leading to a conclusion.



The conclusion of an inductive argument often includes a qualifying term such as *some*, *often* or *most*. This usage helps to avoid the fallacy of overgeneralization.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE:

For each story from the collection *Looking For a Rain God and Other Short Stories From Africa* there is a Reading Guide. Each Reading Guide is divided into three sections: “Preparing to Read” to use before reading the story, “While Reading” to use as you read, and “Understanding the Story” to use after you have finished reading the story. Below you will find an explanation of each element included in this guide and some tips on how best to use them.

### General Features

- Each Story Guide is preceded by the title of the story, the author’s name, and the country the author is from. Additionally, a political map highlights each country in the context of the African continent.
- Running along the right edge of each Story Guide is a list of **Idioms & Expressions** that appear in the story, along with definitions or explanation of their meaning. They are listed in the order they appear in the text and may not include every possible instance.
- After Idioms & Expressions, **Key Vocabulary** continue along the right edge of the pages. The key vocabulary were identified using a vocabulary profiler from a corpus of English (<http://www.lexutor.ca/vp/eng/>). The definitions come from the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary. To avoid too much repetition, words that appear in the vocabulary list for an earlier story are not repeated for later stories.
- Each entry in the vocabulary lists appears as it is in the story. However, some words (e.g., most adverbs, past tense and participial verbs) undergo a transformation in order to align with the dictionary entry. For example the adjective *shady* is derived from the noun *shade*, so the entry looks like this:

(**shady** (adj)) shade (n): slight darkness caused by something blocking the light of the sun

The definition given is for *shade*. *Shady*, then, along with its part of speech is bracketed. While many adverbs, some adjectives, and some nouns are defined this way, the bracketed entry is most commonly used for inflected verbs. Many verbs appear in the vocabulary lists in the simple past tense (i.e., *-ed* form) or the present or past participle (i.e., *-ing* and *-ed* forms). Due to the fact that the simple past and past participle form are very often the same (i.e., *-ed*), they are indicated in their bracketed form with *p.* (for “past” or “past participle”), while the present participle is marked with *pr. part.* (for “present participle”). For example:

(**haunted** *p.*) haunt (v): to cause repeated suffering or anxiety  
OR

(**consulting** *pr. part.*) consult (v): to discuss something with someone before making a decision

- Finally, each story also includes an original illustration by Peace Corps volunteer Megan Brown (Ed., 2013-15). The illustrations should help activate readers’ minds and help them visualize the setting and characters. Use the illustrations to aid in Making Predictions prior to reading.

### Preparing to Read

- A brief **Story Preview** appears at the beginning of each Story Guide outlining the plot of the story up to its climax. The Story Preview is intended to give readers an idea of what to expect as they read and to highlight some critical vocabulary before they begin reading. Readers should also try to connect the illustrations to the Story Preview and visualize the setting and the characters before they begin reading.

### BOTTOM-UP & TOP-DOWN: Reading Strategies

Have you ever been reading something quickly and suddenly arrived at several new words? You are required to slow down your reading to decode the new words. When you do this, you are using bottom-up strategies to understand the words. The best readers in any language are those who integrate elements of both bottom-up and top-down reading strategies.

**Top-down** reading is when comprehension is achieved by using background knowledge and making predictions. Top-down skills include skimming a text for general meaning, scanning a text for specific information, making inferences based on knowledge of the text and the world, and making predictions about what will happen next in a sentence, paragraph, or narrative.

**Bottom-up** strategies include fundamental basics of letter and sound recognition, but also knowledge of collocation (which words/parts of speech are most likely to appear before or after other words/parts of speech) and use of dictionaries to decode unfamiliar words and build working vocabularies.

*This Guide integrates bottom-up and top-down reading strategies.*

- Five words are underlined in each Story Preview and, in the **Words To Know** section, readers are asked to demonstrate understanding of this vocabulary by correctly filling each word into the five sentences of the Words To Know Section.
- Using knowledge of the story gained from the Story Preview, the title, and the illustration provided, readers are next asked to select what they think will happen after the climax by **Making Predictions**.

## While Reading

- A varying number of **Comprehension Questions** are given for each story intending to scaffold readers' understanding of the stories. The questions are designed to draw students attention to important details in the stories and, hopefully, lead them to accurately identify key events, characters, and changes that take place as the story progresses.
- A **Literary Term** is included with each story along with an explanation. Readers are then asked to **Focus** their attention on different aspects of the story as they read in order to explore and demonstrate an understanding of each term. A glossary of Literary Terms is included as an appendix.

## Understanding the Story

- In many of the stories in this collection readers will need to have an understanding of some background knowledge in order to fully comprehend the plot, themes, or some other element of the story. In order to help those readers who may not have this background knowledge, some of this information is included in sections titled **Geographical Context, Historical Context, Linguistic Context, About the Author**, etc.
- Some Key Vocabulary has been intentionally left off the lists. This is because, after each story, readers are asked to guess the meanings of some unknown words based on context. Readers are asked to go back to the story and find certain words in context and try to discern their meanings. One of three different **Guessing Meaning From Context** activities is used for each story: matching, multiple choice, and gap-fill with a word bank.

### CHECK IT OUT!

These are the online resources that were used to make this Guide and a few other cool sites to check out as you continue your study of literature:



[wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org) For general information about major world events, important people, and big ideas, Wikipedia is a great place to start. And if it's too difficult you can always try: [simple.wikipedia.org](http://simple.wikipedia.org)

[dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english/](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english/) For accurate and comprehensive definitions, examples of words in use, and other lexicographically information, an advanced learners' dictionary, especially this one, is where to go.

[bbc.co.uk/learning/subjects/english.shtml](http://bbc.co.uk/learning/subjects/english.shtml) For information on grammar, creative writing, and literature, or just to play a language game or learn about the world, try the BBC English Learning portal.

[lextutor.ca/vp/eng/](http://lextutor.ca/vp/eng/) If you have an electronic copy of a text, a quick and accurate way to identify all of the difficult vocabulary is with this vocabulary profiler.

- An important critical thinking skill in every academic discipline is the ability to make informed inferences based on limited information. While it is hoped that readers are **Making Inferences** all the time as they are reading, two or three multiple choice inference questions are included in each Story Guide.
- **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions** are given in each Story Guide. While the suggested answers are not the only correct answers for the comprehension questions, they provide examples of what adequate and accurate answers to those questions would look like.
- The Literary Terms have been arranged within the stories so that each term is exemplified in the story with which it is associated. A graphic organizer or a chart is provided in each Story Guide. Readers have an opportunity for **Analyzing the Story** with regard to the literary term with which it is associated.
- Finally, each Story Guide ends with at least one question prompting readers to engage with the story meaningfully or connect it to their own lives and knowledge of the world by **Thinking Critically**.



# LOOKING FOR A RAIN GOD

## Bessie Head—Botswana



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

The village where Mokgobja lives with his family has been suffering from drought for seven years. People there are so desperate that some have even killed themselves.

This year, when rains come in November, Mokgobja goes to the field with his family. At first, there is enough rain and they plough the fields and plant crops. But, then the rain stops and everything gets very dry.

The two small girls, Neo and Boseyong, are too young to worry about the drought and they play with dolls. The two women, Tiro and Nesta, though, are very worried. They wail and cry a lot. Then, Mokgobja remembers an old traditional ceremony where children are given as sacrifices to a rain god.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview above.

1. In the past, people killed animals as \_\_\_\_\_ in order to win favor with the gods.
2. To prepare the fields for planting, it is necessary to \_\_\_\_\_ them.
3. When it seems like a situation will not improve, people may get quite \_\_\_\_\_.
4. People sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ and scream when they are very sad or angry.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ happens when not enough rain falls and the earth is very dry.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Mokgobja will try to sacrifice the two girls, but the women will stop him and kill him instead.
- Mokgobja will sacrifice the two girls and the rain will come.
- Mokgobja will sacrifice the two girls but no rain will come.
- Mokgobja will steal a small child from another family and sacrifice that child.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. What problem has the community been facing when this story takes place?
2. What two events lead Mokgobja and his family to leave for the fields?
3. Who are the two young girls pretending to be when playing with their dolls?
4. Why do the two women “stamp their feet as though they had lost their heads”?
5. Who remembers the rain-making ceremony?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**paid no attention:** ignored  
**breaking point:** the stage at which your control over yourself or a situation is lost  
**whipped up to a frenzy:** caused to become upset in an uncontrolled or violent way  
**sentenced to death:** given a punishment of death for a crime  
**the statute books:** When a law is on or reaches the statute books, it has been formally approved and written down and can be used in a law court.  
**death penalty:** the legal punishment of death for a crime



#### Key Vocabulary:

**underground** (adj): below the surface of the Earth  
**quench** (v): to satisfy thirst by having a drink

6. What do the men do to the little girls? Why?
7. What happens to the men at the end of the story?

### **Literary term: Theme**

A **theme** is a central idea or message in a work of literature. Sometimes a story has several themes.

**Focus:** One of the themes in “Looking for a Rain God” is superstition. As you read, think about the superstitious actions that the people in the village, in general, and Mokgobja, in particular, take in response to the drought.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Cultural Context:**

Religion has always been central to people's lives in Africa. Although the majority of Africans are now Muslim or Christian, traditional religions have endured and still play a big role.

There are many different religious practices on the continent. They share some common features: belief in one God above a host of lesser gods or semi-divine figures; belief in ancestral spirits; the idea of **sacrifice**, often involving the death of a living thing, to ensure divine protection and generosity; the need to undergo rites of passage to move from childhood to adulthood, from life to death.

In the history of the continent, religion has had a powerful effect on political change: spirit mediums have led revolts against European and African rulers, ancestral spirits have commanded acts of destruction and called for the overthrow of rulers and chiefs. People have sought the help of priests and medicine men to achieve power and wealth.



### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

1. These lands are **vast** clearings in the bush, and the wild bush is lonely too.
  - a. extremely big
  - b. extremely far
  - c. extremely old
  - d. extremely hot
2. A seven-year drought fell upon the land and even the watering places began to look as **dismal** as the dry open thorn-bush country.
  - a. exciting and new
  - b. strange and interesting
  - c. sad and without hope
  - d. lush and full of life
3. All their animals had been sold during the bad years to **purchase** food.
  - a. eat
  - b. buy
  - c. give
  - d. refuse
4. He explained the ritual and as he talked, his memory became a **conviction** and he began to talk with unshakeable authority.
  - a. a funny idea or thought
  - b. a new feeling or sense
  - c. a strong opinion or belief
  - d. a strange desire or need
5. But people noted their ashen, terror-stricken faces and a **murmur** arose.
  - a. a loud pounding sound
  - b. a deep resonant sound
  - c. a soft continuous sound
  - d. a high piercing sound
6. At this, the mother of the children **broke down** and told everything.
  - a. became happier and more positive
  - b. stopped trying to do something difficult
  - c. accepted or approved officially
  - d. was unable to control her feelings

**(shady (adj)) shade (n):** slight darkness caused by something blocking the light of the sun

**lush (adj):** a lush area has a lot of green, healthy plants

**(tangled (adj)) tangle (n):** an untidy mass of things that are not in a state of order

**figs (n):** sweet, soft purple or green fruit with many seeds

**withered (adj):** dry and decaying

**(humorously (adv)) humorous (adj):** funny or making you laugh

**teaspoon (n):** a small spoon

**anguish (n):** extreme unhappiness and physical/mental suffering

**moisture (n):** water in the form of very small drops, either in the air, in a substance, or on a surface

**tragedy (n):** a very sad event or situation, especially one involving death or suffering

**majority (n):** the larger number or part of something

**utensils (n):** tools with particular uses

**charlatans (n):** people who pretend to have skills or knowledge that they do not have, especially in medicine

**(incanters (n)) incantation (n):** (the performance of) words that are believed to have a magical effect when spoken or sung

**talismans (n):** objects believed to bring good luck

**herbs (n):** a type of plants whose leaves are used in cooking to give flavour to particular dishes

**downpour (n):** heavy rain

**scanty (adj):** very little

**proclamation (n):** an official announcement

**(hedged p. (v)) hedge (n):** a line of bushes planted close together

**(rustling pr. part.) rustle (v):** if things rustle they move about and make a soft, dry sound

**(dizzily (adv)) dizzy (adj):** feeling as if everything is turning around and being unable to balance

**haze (n):** when the air is not very clear because of something like heat or smoke

**(chattered p.) chatter (v):** to talk for a long time about things that are not important

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- At the beginning of the story, “a number of men went out of their homes and hung themselves to death from trees.” They probably did this because:
  - they thought their deaths would bring rain
  - they preferred a quick death to slow starvation
  - they were tricked by the witch doctors
- The two little girls are “quite happy” even when the rain doesn't fall. This is probably because:
  - they are too young to realize how difficult the situation is
  - they are confident that the rain will come later
  - they are small and don't need very much food
- When the police ask to see the graves of the two little girls, Tiro tells the truth. She probably does this because:
  - she wanted to punish Mokgobja and Ramadi
  - she didn't think there would be any problem
  - she was overcome with guilt and remorse

**Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- There has been a drought for the past seven years.
- The rainy season began and there was an announcement in the village about the beginning of ploughing season.
- They are pretending to be their mother.
- They knew that the drought was continuing into the current rainy season and they were going to suffer all year.
- Mokgobja
- They kill them as sacrifices to a rain god.
- They are arrested and sentenced to death.

**Analysing the Story: Theme**

Look back at the explanation of **theme**. The left column in the chart below contains three themes from the story “Looking For a Rain God.” Try to find evidence for each one and write it in the right column. The first one is done for you. Can you find one more **theme**?

<b>Superstition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the start of the story, villagers are buying “talismans and herbs to rub on the plough”</li> <li>Mokgobja and his family believe in a rain-making ceremony involving ritual sacrifice of children</li> </ul>
<b>Desperation</b>	
<b>Modern vs. Traditional values</b>	

**Thinking Critically:**

- Why were the “charlatans, incanters, and witch-doctors” successful during the drought? Was what they did honest or dishonest, in your opinion?

**tone** (n): the quality of a voice  
**rags** (n): torn pieces of old cloth  
**herd** (n): a large group of animals that live and feed together  
**weird** (adj): strange and unusual, unexpected or not natural  
**high-pitched** (adj): describes a noise that is high and sometimes also loud and unpleasant  
**mournful** (adj): very sad  
**maintain** (v): to continue to have; to keep in existence, or not allow to become less  
**(haunted p.) haunt** (v): to cause repeated suffering or anxiety  
**customs** (n): ways of behaving or beliefs which have been established for a very long time  
**recall** (v): to bring the memory of a past event into your mind  
**(consulting pr. part.) consult** (v): to discuss something with someone before making a decision  
**ritual** (n): a set of fixed actions and words performed regularly, especially as part of a ceremony  
**unshakeable** (adj): if someone's trust/belief is unshakeable it cannot be made weaker/destroyed  
**authority** (n): an expert  
**nerves** (n): bravery or confidence to do something difficult, unpleasant or rude  
**(smashed p.) smash** (v): to destroy something completely  
**deathly** (adj): extreme in a way that is unpleasant  
**devouring** (adj): describes an emotion that is extremely strong and unusually destructive  
**(overwhelmed p.) overwhelm** (v): to cause someone to feel sudden strong emotion  
**(fled p.) flee** (v): to escape by running away  
**ashen** (adj): without colour  
**terror-stricken** (adj): extremely frightened  
**sorrow** (n): a feeling of sadness  
**(assuaged p.) assuage** (v): to make bad feelings less strong  
**subtle** (adj): not loud, bright, noticeable or obvious in any way  
**starvation** (n): the state of having no food for a long period of time, often causing death  
**inadmissible** (adj): unable to be accepted in a court of law  
**evidence** (n): one or more reasons for believing that something is or is not true

# UNCLE BEN'S CHOICE

## Chinua Achebe—Nigeria



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Uncle Ben is a clerk in a city in Nigeria. He is a happy young man and he likes going to dances, drinking, and talking with young women. Ben is very careful, though, not to let any women know where he lives. The only woman who knows is Margaret Jumbo.

On New Year's Evening, Uncle Ben is out drinking until three o'clock in the morning. When he finally arrives home, he gets into his bed without lighting a candle. He is surprised to discover a naked woman in his bed!

Uncle Ben suspects that the woman is Margaret and he laughs and touches her. When he touches her breasts, though, he is surprised that they are the breasts of a girl. And when he touches her hair, he notices that it is not like an African's hair, but like a European's hair.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. Babies are born completely \_\_\_\_\_, with no clothes.
2. When doing something dangerous, it is important to be \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Christmas \_\_\_\_\_ is the night before Christmas Day.
4. The paperwork at the office was filled out by the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. He isn't sure, but he \_\_\_\_\_ that his friend is lying to him.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The daughter of Uncle Ben's white boss has come to tell Ben she loves him.
- Uncle Ben is dreaming because he drank too much alcohol.
- Margaret Jumbo is wearing a wig.
- A spirit has come to trade Ben for his soul.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, answer the following questions.

1. Who is narrating the story?
2. What are two ways that the narrator made certain that no woman claimed him?
3. What is White Horse?
4. Who does the narrator think is in his bed?
5. What surprises the narrator when he touches the woman's hair?
6. Where does the narrator go after he strikes the match?
7. Who does Mathew tell the narrator was in his bed?



#### Idioms & Expressions:

**waw-waw women:** (probably) immoral women

**selling like hot bread:** very popular

**to sleep with one eye open:** to be very cautious

**before you can count A they count B:** they are very clever

**for (something's) sake:** because of something

**wonders will never end:** it was truly amazing

**as luck would have it:** by chance

**a white lie:** a harmless lie

**God forbid:** a way of saying you hope something doesn't happen

**it is the same ten and ten**

**pence:** there is no difference

**opened my eyes:** caused me to understand something that I did not understand before

8. According to the narrator, what would have happened if he had slept with the woman in his bed (identify two things)?

**Literary term: Point of view (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

“Uncle Ben's Choice” has a **first-person narrator**. This means that the story is told in the first person by the main character, Uncle Ben, rather than in the third person. The first-person narrator refers to him- or herself as “I.” Because Uncle Ben tells the story, we see what happens through his eyes. We get a clear sense, not just of what Uncle Ben says and does, but also how Uncle Ben thinks, how he feels, and what he wishes for. We get to know Uncle Ben.

Many stories, however, have a **third-person narrator**. In fact, most stories in this book have a third-person narrator, including “Looking for a Rain God.” A third-person narrator describes events and characters from outside. This type of narrator tells the story, but does not enter the story or tell us who he or she is.

**Focus:** As you read “Uncle Ben's Choice,” pay attention to the use of first person pronouns and possessives (i.e., “I,” “me,” “my,” “mine”). How would the story need to be changed if it were told from the third-person point of view?

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

**Geographical Context:**

The Niger River is the third-longest river in Africa (after the Nile and the Congo). It is the main river in West Africa and is over 4000 kilometers long. The Niger has played a central role in many West African civilizations. By the 17th century, coastal trade had replaced the trans-Saharan trade, mostly dealing in slaves. During the years when the slave trade flourished, nearly half the total number of slaves exported from Africa came from the Niger delta, which came to be known as the “Slave Coast.”

**The Niger Company** was named for the Niger river (as were the countries Nigeria and Niger). It was a British owned company that helped establish British colonial rule in the region.

**Edinburgh** is the capital city and second largest city in Scotland, while **London** is both the capital city and the largest city in England.

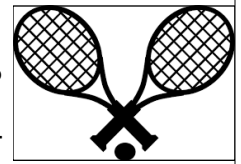
**Cultural Context:**

**Saros** were freed slaves who migrated to Nigeria in the beginning of the 1830s. They were mostly freed and repatriated slaves from various West African and Latin American countries such as Sierra Leone, Brazil and Cuba. Liberated slaves from Brazil and Latin American started migrating to Africa after slavery was abolished on the continent, while others from West Africa were recaptured and freed slaves already resident in Sierra Leone. Many of the returnees chose to return to Nigeria for cultural, missionary, and economic reasons. Many of them were originally descended from the Yoruba of western and central Nigeria.

The returnees mostly resided in the Lagos Colony and other cities in the Niger Delta. Though many were originally dedicated Anglophiles in Nigeria, they later adopted an indigenous and patriotic attitude on Nigerian affairs and were known to be cultural nationalists.

**Key Vocabulary:**

**tennis** (n): a game played between two or four people on a playing area



which involves hitting a small ball across a central net using a racket

**billiards** (n): a game played on a table covered in green cloth in which a long pole is used to hit balls against each other and into pockets around the table

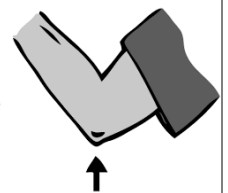
**tournament** (n): a competition for teams or single players in which a series of games is played, and the winners of each game play against each other until only one winner is left



**brand new** (adj): completely new, especially not yet used

**handshake** (n): a greeting, or an act showing that you have made an agreement, in which two people who are facing each other take hold of and shake each other's right hand

**elbow** (n): the part in the middle of the arm where it bends, or the part of a piece of clothing which covers this area



**salaried people** (n): those who are being paid a salary

**cellar** (n): a room under the ground floor of a building, usually used for storage

**injections** (n): when someone puts a liquid, especially a drug, into a person's body using a needle and a syringe





### **Monetary Context:**

The pound sterling, commonly known as the **pound**, is the official currency of the United Kingdom. It is subdivided into 100 **pence**. During the British colonial era, the pound was used in many parts of the world, including Nigeria. It is the world's oldest currency still in use.

### **Consumer Context:**

Uncle Ben mentions many different products that he owns or consumes. The **Raleigh Bicycle** Company is a bicycle manufacturer founded in 1885. It is one of the oldest bicycle companies in the world.

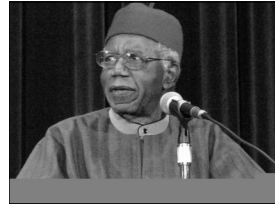


The phonograph, also called a gramophone or record player, was the first device capable of making recordings and reproducing sound. The Gramophone Company, based in the United Kingdom, was an early recording company and the parent organization of the famous "His Master's Voice" (HMV) label. Uncle Ben's **HMW Senior gramophone** refers to one of these.

**White Horse** is a blended Scotch Whisky from Edinburgh, first produced in 1861. **Guinea Gold** was a popular brand of tobacco in the early 1900s.

### **About the Author:**

**Chinua Achebe** (16 November 1930 - 22 March 2013) was a Nigerian novelist, poet, professor, and critic. He was best known for writing the novel, *Things Fall Apart* which was first printed in 1958. It is the most widely read book in modern African literature. Achebe went to Nigeria's first university, University College. Achebe wrote his first short story at university.



**(jailed p. (v)) jail (n):** a place where criminals are kept to punish them for their crimes, or where people accused of crimes are kept while waiting for their trials



**bales (n):** a large amount of something such as hay, paper, wool or cloth that has been tied tightly together

**calico (n):** a heavy plain cloth made from cotton

**capacity (n):** the total amount that can be contained or produced, or (especially of a person or organization) the ability to do a particular thing

**(overlooking (adj)) overlook (v):** to provide a view of, especially from above

**store keeper (n):** a person who owns and manages a small shop

**breasts (n):** the two soft, rounded parts of a woman's chest

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the word bank below are from the story. Find them in the story and try to understand their meaning. Then fill in the spaces in the sentences below with the correct word.

#### **WORD BANK**

surplus

eve

naked

holler

~~belly~~

desirous

convert (v)

vex

1. He got down on his belly to crawl.
2. There is a \_\_\_\_\_ of workers and not enough jobs.
3. He \_\_\_\_\_ from Christianity to Islam.
4. The head teacher listened to the parents \_\_\_\_\_ of a better way to educate their children
5. This problem has \_\_\_\_\_ researchers for years.
6. 'Look out!' I \_\_\_\_\_ over the noise of the traffic.
7. The prisoners were stripped \_\_\_\_\_ before forced to shower.
8. The students were nervous on the \_\_\_\_\_ of their graduation.

### **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

1. Uncle Ben
2. He never showed them the road to his house and he never ate the food that they cooked (for fear of love potions).
3. It is a brand of whisky (alcohol).
4. Margaret Jumbo
5. The woman's hair is soft like a European's hair.
6. He goes to Mathew Obi's house.
7. Mami Wota, the Lady of the River Niger
8. He would have been made very wealthy, but he would not be allowed to have children.

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

1. When Uncle Ben says “Drunk? It’s not in my dictionary.” He probably means:
  - a. he has never heard the word before
  - b. he has no experience ever being drunk
  - c. he has a small dictionary that is missing some pages
2. When Uncle Ben finds a woman in his bed, he assumes that it is Margaret. This is probably because:
  - a. she has visited him like this before
  - b. she had told him that she would visit
  - c. she is the only one who knows where he lives
3. If Uncle Ben had stayed with Mami Wota, it’s likely he would have:
  - a. become very wealthy but had no children
  - b. lost his job and started drinking more
  - c. married her and had children with her

**Analysing the Story: Point of view (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

Look back at the explanation of **point of view**. “Uncle Ben’s Choice” is told in Uncle Ben’s voice in the **1st person**. But, the same events could have been told to us by a **3rd person** narrator like the one in “Looking For a Rain God.” In the left hand column in the table below, some excerpts of Uncle’s Ben’s narration are given. Make changes to the excerpts so that they are from the 3rd person point-of-view. The first one has been done for you. Can you pick out one more excerpt from “Uncle Ben’s Choice” and fill in the final row of the table?

<b>1<sup>st</sup> person narration from Uncle Ben</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person narrator</b>
“Like all progressive young men, I joined the African Club. We played tennis and billiards.”	<i>Like all progressive young men, Uncle Ben joined the African Club. They played tennis and billiards.</i>
“One thing with me is I never mix my drinks. The day I want to drink whisky I call it whisky day; if I want to drink beer tomorrow then I don't touch any other thing.”	
“She did not say anything and I suspected she was annoyed because she asked me to take her to the Club that day and I said no. I said to her: 'If you come there we will meet, I don't take anybody to the club as such.' So I suspected that is what is making her vex.”	

**Thinking Critically:**

- How old do you think the narrator is when the story takes place? How old do you think the narrator is when he is telling the story? Defend your answer.
- Do you think Mami Wota is real? What other explanation can you give for Uncle Ben's story?

# THE DUBE TRAIN

## Can Temba—South Africa



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

It is Monday morning and the narrator, along with many other passengers, is on the congested Dube train in South Africa. The narrator is sitting across from a very big hulk of a man.

A girl gets onto the train and later a *tsotsi* (a trouble-making young man) also gets onto the train. The *tsotsi* begins to tease the girl and touch her and she is very frightened. None of the passengers help her though.

One woman, not happy with the *tsotsi*'s shameless behaviour, yells at the men for not helping the girl. The *tsotsi* hears the woman, goes over to her and insults her. Because of this, the hulk of a man stands up and challenges the *tsotsi*.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Preview.

1. It is rude to \_\_\_\_\_ people by saying offensive things.
2. Someone who doesn't care what other people think is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. There were many people at the graduation ceremony and the room was \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Brothers and sisters often \_\_\_\_\_ each other.
5. Something very large can be called a \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The *tsotsi* escapes from the train at the next stop.
- The *tsotsi* apologizes to the woman and stops teasing the girl.
- The *tsotsi* attacks the man and the man kills him.
- The *tsotsi* takes out a knife and kills the hulk of a man.

### WHILE READING

#### Literary term: Setting

The **setting** is the time and place of the action of the story. Often, the setting of a story has a casual relationship with the events of the story. The setting of "The Dube Train," however, is so important to the plot that it provides the title of the story.

**Focus:** As you read "The Dube Train," pay attention to how the narrator gives you a sense of setting. Can you see the Dube train and its passengers? Why are they where they are? What does the setting tell us about the **characters** and how does it influence the **plot**?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**God almighty:** an expression of anger or surprise. (Some people consider this offensive)

**cold calculation:** planning not concerned with other's safety

**make gangway:** cause people to move so that you can get someone or something through a crowd quickly

**helter skelter:** quickly and in all directions



#### Key Vocabulary:

**(shivering pr. part.) shiver (v):** to shake slightly from cold or fear

**clogged (adj):** filled so that movement or activity is difficult

**nauseous (adj):** feeling as if you might vomit

**(churning (n)) churn (v):** If your stomach is churning, you feel ill, usually because you are nervous

**(debilitated p.) debilitate (v):** to make something physically weak



### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. Why is the narrator pleased when the train comes?
2. What is impressive about the man seated across from the narrator?
3. What does the *tsotsi* do to the girl on the train?
4. Why does the woman yell at the men on the train?
5. Why does the hulk of a man finally confront the *tsotsi*?
6. What does the *tsotsi* use in the fight with the hulk of a man?
7. What happens to the *tsotsi*?

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

### Biblical Context:

*The son of Ham finding a word for his awful discovery* is a reference to the book of Genesis in the Bible. After Noah and his family survive the Great Flood, they begin to rebuild society. Noah plants grapes and eventually makes wine. One day Noah gets very drunk from his wine and falls asleep in his tent without any clothes. Ham, his son, sees him naked. When Noah wakes up, he finds out that Ham saw him naked and he places a curse on Ham's son, Canaan. Really it was Ham, who made an "awful discovery" and not Canaan, but the two are often combined because, strangely, Canaan receives the curse for his father's transgression.

### Linguistic Context:

Throughout the story, the characters use a variety of non-English words. *Tsotsi* is a Nguni word meaning gangster or a young person with no purpose and probably causing some kind of trouble. *Sies* is an expression of disgust, disappointment, annoyance, probably from Afrikaans. *Hela* is a Sesotho interjection meant to get someone's attention.



Finally, the "hulk of a man" is described by the narrator as looking like a *genie*. A genie is a spiritual creature mentioned in Islamic theology. In popular culture, genies are almost depicted as existing inside an old-fashioned oil lamp. If someone finds the lamp and rubs it or performs some other ritual, the genie emerges and is bound to grant the possessor of the lamp three wishes.

### Guessing Meaning from Context:

The words in the left column are from the story. The right column has definitions for those words. Look back at the story and try to understand the vocabulary. Then put the letter of its definition on the line next to each word.

Vocabulary		Meanings
1. ruffian	<u>g.</u>	a. unfriendly and not liking or agreeing with something
2. tirade	___	b. a usual or fixed way of doing things
3. dart (v)	___	c. a short simple song
4. drowsy	___	d. (acts of) cruel and violent behaviour
5. shove	___	e. to move quickly or suddenly
6. ditty	___	f. a long angry speech expressing strong disapproval
7. hostile	___	<del>g. a violent, wild and unpleasant person, usually a man</del>
8. routine	___	h. to push someone or something forcefully
9. nefarious	___	i. (especially of activities) evil or immoral
10. savagery	___	j. being in a state between sleeping and being awake
11. odd	___	k. strange or unexpected



**prospect** (n): the possibility that something good might happen  
**humanity** (n): people in general  
**impression** (n): an idea or opinion of what something is like  
**(malevolence** (n)) malevolent (adj): wanting to cause harm/evil  
**plumb** (adj): exactly  
**aspect** (n): the appearance or visual effect of a place, or the expression on a person's face  
**announcer** (n): someone who introduces programmes or reads the news on the television/radio  
**loudspeaker** (n): a piece of equipment used in public places so large numbers of people can hear someone speaking or music  
**fluke** (n): something good that has happened that is the result of chance instead of skill or planning  
**(lacklustrely** (adv)) lacklustre (adj): without energy and effort  
**leaden** (adj): dark grey  
**platform** (n): a raised structure at a railway station, where people get on and off trains  
**conveyance belt** (n): a continuous moving surface used for transporting objects  
**obtrusive** (adj): too noticeable  
**(tilted** p.) tilt (v): to (cause to) move into a sloping position  
**(flaring** (adj)) flare (v): to (cause to) become wider  
**nostrils** (n): openings in the nose  
**chin** (n): the part of a person's face below their mouth  
**(stubbled** (adj)) stubble (n): the short hair on a man's face  
**(corded** (adj)) cord (n): (a length of) rope made of twisted threads  
**enormous** (adj): extremely large  
**(heaved** p.) heave (v): to move something using a lot of effort  
**overall** (n): a piece of clothing that covers both the upper and lower parts of the body  
**fascinated** (adj): extremely interested  
**(winking** pr. part.) wink (v): to close one eye for a short time  
**nipples** (n): the dark part of skin which sticks out from the breast  
**(swayed** p.) sway (v): to move slowly from side to side  
**(chanted** p.) chant (v): to repeat a word or phrase continuously  
**titillating** (adj): describes sexual



### **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

1. He is pleased because the train is not full and he gets to have a seat.
2. The man is very large.
3. He touches her and harasses her verbally.
4. The woman is upset that the men are allowing the *tsotsi* to be so rude.
5. The *tsotsi* said something (we aren't told what) very rude to the woman.
6. A knife
7. The hulk of a man grabs him and throws him out the window to his death.

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

1. When the narrator sees the *tsotsi*, he says, "I know the type." By this he probably means:
  - a. he has met this boy before
  - b. he has met other boys like this one
  - c. he has something to tell this boy
2. After the *tsotsi* insults the woman, the hulk of a man says "that woman is your mother." He probably means:
  - a. that the woman is literally the boy's mother
  - b. that the woman might adopt the *tsotsi*
  - c. that the woman should be respected
3. The narrator says that "no one expressed sympathy for the boy or man." This is probably because:
  - a. they felt that both received what was deserved
  - b. they were very accustomed to such violence
  - c. they did not pay attention to what happened to them

### **Analysing the Story: Setting**

Look back at the explanation of **setting**. In the table below, some details of the setting of "The Dube Train" are given in the left column. Try to decide what the author wants us to understand about the story based on the details he uses to describe the setting. Explain those setting details in the right column. The first one is done for you. Can you identify another detail of the setting that is not in the table?

<b>Setting Details</b>	<b>What the Details Tell Us</b>
It's Monday morning and everyone is on a train.	<i>Everyone is going to work.</i>
The train has broken windows and doors.	
The people on the train are tired and unenthusiastic.	
The train is congested.	

### **Thinking Critically:**

- Why do you think that no one (except for the hulk of a man) tries to help the girl or, after he is cut by the *tsotsi*, the hulk of a man himself?
- Why do you think the *tsotsi* behaves the way he does?

images or descriptions, etc. that intentionally cause excitement

**(bawdiness (n))** bawdy (adj): containing remarks about sex

**(excited p.)** excite (v): to make someone have strong feelings of happiness and enthusiasm

**humour (n):** the ability to find things funny

**(lechery (n))** lecherous (adj): (especially of men) showing a strong sexual interest in people

**significance (n):** special meaning

**(bleared (adj))** bleary (adj): if you have bleary eyes, your eyes are red and watery, because you are tired or have just woken up

**enthusiasm (adj):** energetic interest in a subject or activity and an eagerness to be involved in it

**(undramatic (adj))** dramatic (adj): very sudden or noticeable, or full of action and excitement

**(blurring pr. part.)** blur (v): to become difficult to see clearly

**petite (adj):** small and thin in an attractive way

**juvenile (adj):** relating to a young person not yet considered adult

**structure (n):** the way the parts of a system/object are arranged

**scheme (n):** an officially organized plan or system

**(relegated p.)** relegate (v): to put someone or something into a less important rank or position

**premature (adj):** happening or done too soon

**features (n):** typical qualities or important parts of something

**pert (adj):** attractively small/firm

**arrogant (adj):** unpleasantly proud and behaving as if you are more important than others

**(petrifies 3<sup>rd</sup> person simp. pr.)** petrify (v): to frighten someone a lot, especially so that they are unable to move or speak

**(lounging (adj))** lounge (v): to spend your time sitting or lying somewhere and doing very little

**anticipation (n):** a feeling of excitement about something that is going to happen soon

**nonchalantly (adv))** nonchalant (adj): behaving calmly, often suggesting you do not care

**ledge (n):** a narrow shelf which sticks out from a vertical surface

**(swaggered p.)** swagger (v): to walk, especially with a swinging

movement, in a way that shows that you are very confident and think that you are important

**(clutched p.)** clutch (v): to take hold of something tightly, in fear, worry, or pain  
**(jutting (adj))** just (v): to (cause to) stick out, especially past the edge of something

**panic** (n): a sudden feeling of fear that prevents reasonable thought and action  
**(whimpered p.)** whimper (v): to make a series of small, weak sounds, expressing pain or unhappiness

**(snarled p.)** snarl (v): to speak or say something angrily and forcefully

**(murmurer (n))** murmur (v): to speak or say very quietly

**(drifting pr. part.)** drift (v): to move slowly, especially as a result of outside forces, with no control over direction

**(hailed p.)** hail (v): to call someone in order to attract their attention

**echoes** (n): sounds heard after they have reflected off a surface such as a wall or cliff  
**(stridency (n))** strident (adj): describes a sound which is loud, unpleasant and rough  
**(ungallant (adj))** gallant (adj): showing no fear of dangerous or difficult things

**(rattled p.)** rattle (v): to worry someone or make someone nervous

**incident** (n): an event which is either unpleasant or unusual

**(approached p.)** approach (v): to come near or nearer to something or someone in space, time, quality or amount

**confluence** (n): the place where two rivers flow together becoming a larger river

**(designed p.)** design (v): to make or draw plans for something

**(necessitated (adj))** necessitate (v): to cause something to be needed

**drab** (adj): boring, especially in appearance; having little colour and excitement

**(monotonously (adv))** monotonous (adj): staying the same and not changing and therefore boring

**identical** (adj): exactly the same

**gash** (n): a long deep cut, often in the skin  
**imposition** (n): when someone expects another to do something that is not convenient for them

**intrigue** (adj): to interest someone a lot, especially by being strange or unusual

**caveman** (n): a modern man who is rude or violent towards others, often women

**vicious** (adj): describes people or actions with an intention to hurt someone badly

**(flung p.)** fling (v): to throw something suddenly and with a lot of force

**lap** (n): the top surface of the upper part



of the legs of a person who is sitting down  
**(hurtling pr. part.)** hurtle (v): to move very fast, in what seems a dangerous way  
**(reeled p.)** reel (v): to walk, moving from side to side, as if you are going to fall



**beret** (n): a round flat hat made of soft material

**(shamelessly (adv))** shameless (adj): not ashamed, especially about something generally considered unacceptable

**spitfire** (n): person with a fierce temper.  
**(whiplashed p. (v))** whiplash (n): a neck injury from a sudden forward movement of the upper body, often in a car accident

**poltroons** (n): utter cowards

**(grabs 3<sup>rd</sup> person sing. pr.)** grab (v): to take hold of something suddenly/roughly

**thug** (n): a man who acts violently, especially to commit a crime

**(scowled p.)** scowl (v): to look at someone with a very annoyed expression

**(anatomically (adv))** anatomy (n): the structure of an animal or plant

**awful** (adj): extremely bad or unpleasant  
**(shuddered p.)** shudder (v): to shake suddenly with very small movements because of an unpleasant thought or feeling

**throne** (n): the special chair used by a ruler, especially a king or queen  
**(defilement (n))** defile (v): to spoil the beauty or importance of something

**defiance** (n): when you refuse to obey someone or something

**urchin** (n): a small child, especially one who behaves badly and is dirty

**shrill** (adj): having a loud and high sound that is unpleasant or painful to listen to

**(mumbled p.)** mumble (v): to speak quietly and in a way that is not clear so that the words are difficult to understand

**(froze p.)** freeze (v): If a person or animal freezes, it stops suddenly and becomes completely still, especially because of fear

**(shrieked p.)** shriek (v): a short, loud, high cry, especially one produced suddenly as an expression of a powerful emotion

**(scampered p.)** scamper (v): When small children and animals scamper, they run with small quick steps, in a playful or frightened way

**pointless** (adj): Something that is pointless has no purpose and it is a waste of time doing it

**clamour** (n): loud noise, especially made by people's voices

**(stampeding pr. part.)** stampede (v): when many large animals or many people suddenly all move quickly and in an uncontrolled way, usually in the same direction at the same time, because of fear

**gleaming** (adj): bright and shiny

**blade** (n): the flat part on a knife or similar tool or weapon, with a very thin edge used for cutting

**beserk** (adj): very angry or out of control  
**(splashing pr. part.)** splash (v): If a liquid splashes or if you splash a liquid, it falls on or hits something or someone

**arena** (n): a large flat area surrounded by seats used for sports or entertainment

**leer** (v): (especially of men) to look at someone in an unpleasant and sexually interested way

**impact** (n): the force or action of one object hitting another

**(plunged p.)** plunge (v): to (cause someone or something to) move or fall suddenly down or into something

**obliquely** (adv) oblique (adj): having a sloping direction, angle or position

**(instinctual (adj))** instinct (n): the way people or animals naturally behave, without having to think or learn about it

**predatory** (adj): A predatory animal kills and eats other animals

**vulnerable** (adj): able to be easily physically, emotionally, or mentally hurt, influenced or attacked

**jugular** (n): any of several large veins in the neck that carry blood from the head to the heart

**jerk** (n): to make a short sudden movement, or to cause someone or something to do this

**(deflected p.)** deflect (v): to (cause to) change direction

**(crudely (adv))** crude (adj): simple and not skilfully done or made

**(hurled p.)** hurl (v): to throw something with a lot of force, usually in an angry or violent way

**(galvanised p.)** galvanise (v): to cause someone to suddenly take action, especially by shocking or exciting them

**(darting pr. part.)** dart (v): to move quickly or suddenly

**missile** (adj): a flying weapon which can travel a long distance before exploding at the place that it has been aimed at

**full blown** (adj): fully developed

**quarrel** (n): an angry disagreement between two or more people or groups

**stunned** (adj): very shocked or surprised

**cacophony** (n): an unpleasant mixture of loud sounds

**(relishing pr. part.)** relish (v): to like or enjoy something

**thrilling** (adj): extremely exciting

**episode** (n): a single event or group of related events



# THE WINNER

Barbara Kimenyi—Uganda



## PREPARING TO READ

### Story Preview:

Pius Ndawula has won a lot of money in a football pool in Uganda. His best friend Salongo, members of the community, and members of his family all come to congratulate him and stay with him at his house.

A member of this family, Cousin Sarah, begins organizing things in Pius's house and even speaks for him in a BBC interview. Pius's friend Mukasa notices that Pius looks worn out by all the clamour in his house and invites Pius to stay with him. Cousin Sarah says that she will stay and take care of Pius's house.

In the morning, a telegram comes with news. There has been a mistake and Pius has won much less money than they had thought.

### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. The group of students was making such a \_\_\_\_\_ that I couldn't hear anything.
2. Before cell phones, people received messages by \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The old man guessed who would win the matches with his \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I was \_\_\_\_\_ after a long day and only wanted to go home and sleep.
5. After she decided to run for president, all of the newspapers wanted \_\_\_\_\_.

### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Cousin Sarah will stay and marry Pius because she doesn't care about the money.
- Pius will play in more football pools and he will lose all of his money trying to win again.
- Cousin Sarah will leave with the rest of Pius's family because he is poor once again.
- Pius will force all of the people who have been staying at his house to pay for the food that they have eaten.

## WHILE READING

### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. What has happened to Pius leading so many people to come to his house?
2. Who is Salongo? What does he do?
3. What does Pius want to do with the money he has won (two things)?
4. How does Pius feel about all of the attention he is receiving because of the football pools?

### Idioms & Expressions:

**the four corners of the kingdom:** everywhere

**the bearer of such good tidings:** someone with good news

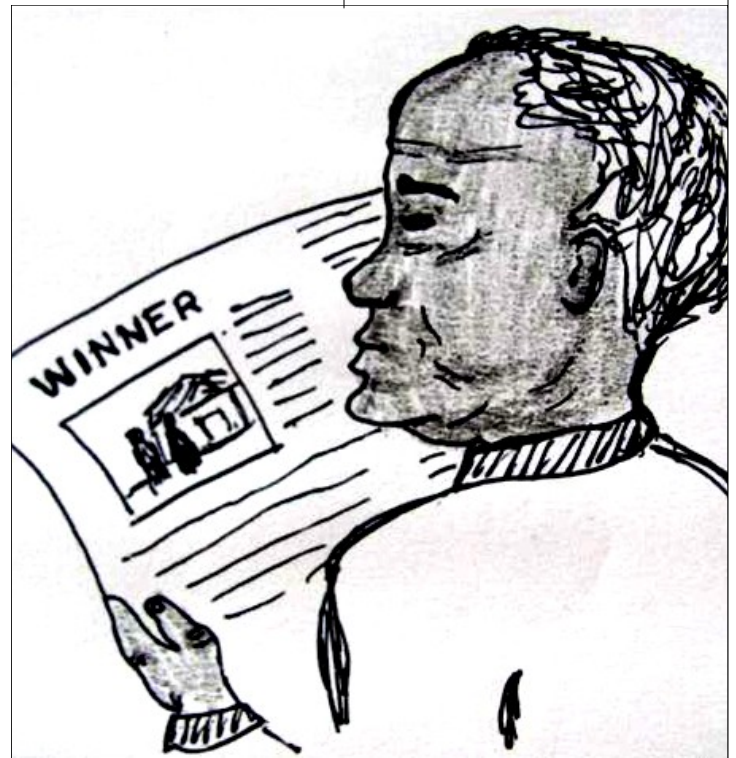
**warmed his old heart:** made him feel good and proud

**comings and goings:** movements

**caught (his) eye:** got his attention

**keep (someone) at bay:** to prevent someone or something unpleasant from harming you

**the lord giveth he also taketh away:** good things and bad things happen and we must accept them



**stroke of luck:** when something succeeds suddenly by luck

**pick his bones:** to take everything that he has

**noughts and crosses:** X's and O's used to mark a grid

5. What does the man from the BBC want?
6. Why does Pius go to Yosefu's house?
7. Who is Cousin Sarah? What does she want from Pius?
8. What news comes in the second telegram?
9. How does Pius react to the news?
10. What do Pius and Cousin Sarah plan to do at the end of the story?

### **Literary term: Plot**

The **plot** is the sequence of actions and events in a story. Often, a plot has four parts:

- The **exposition**, or introduction, is usually the beginning of the story where the main character(s) and situation are introduced
- In the **rising action**, complications, or events, happen and cause difficulties for the main character(s)
- The **climax** of the story, or the most important event, usually occurs near the end of the story and affects the final outcome
- The **falling action**, or conclusion, of a story is where the situation is resolved in some way and the story comes to an end

**Focus:** As you read "The Winner," think about how the story has these four parts of a plot. Can you correctly identify the climax?

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

### **Historical Context:**

**Buganda** is a kingdom within the country of Uganda. The Baganda are the largest ethnic group in Uganda and give the country its name. In pre-colonial times, Buganda was one of the most powerful dynasties in East Africa. In 1894 the British took control of Buganda. In 1962, when Uganda gained independence, the kingdom of Buganda was abolished. It was reinstated in 1993.

**Ssabalangira** is an honorary title for descendants of male royalty in Buganda.

### **Cultural Context:**

When all of his relatives arrive, Pius' shamba is described as "a turbulent sea of white **kanzus** and brilliant busutis." A **busuti**, also called a gomesi, is a colorful floor-length dress. It is the most commonly used costume for women in Buganda. Traditional male attire is the kanzu.

The busuti can be worn for any occasion, and in rural areas it's the form of daily dress. Residents of cities tend to wear it on special occasions such as funerals, and weddings.

A **kanzu** is a white or cream coloured robe worn by men in the African Great Lakes region. The kanzu is a floor length garment. The men of Buganda in Uganda consider it their most important dress. Kanzu is a Ganda word of Swahili origin, which means "robe" or "tunic".

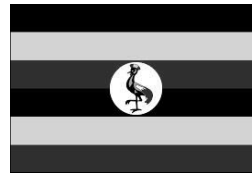
**Shamba** is also a Swahili word referring to a small subsistence farm for growing crops and fruit-bearing trees, often including the dwelling of the farmer.

### **Cultural Context:**

The **BBC** is the British Broadcasting Corporation. The **BBC World Service** is the world's largest international broadcaster, broadcasting news, speech and discussions in 28 languages to many parts of the world. The World Service was reported to have reached 188 million people a week on average in June 2009. It does not carry advertising, and the English language service broadcasts 24 hours a day.

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**aware** (adj): having knowledge or experience of a thing  
**despite** (prep): without taking any notice of or influenced by  
**downtrodden** (adj): badly and unfairly treated  
**assured** (adj): showing skill and confidence  
**capable** (adj): able to do things effectively and skilfully  
**(invested p.) invest** (v): to put money/effort/time into something  
**preferably** (adv): if possible  
**(lurking pr. part.) lurk** (v): to wait or move in a secret way so that you cannot be seen  
**unpretentious** (adj): simple and/or sincere  
**(conspicuously adv)** conspicuous (adj): very noticeable  
**edification** (n): the improvement of the mind and understanding  
**garrulous** (adj): having the habit of talking a lot  
**lame** (adj): (especially of animals) not able to walk correctly because of weakness in the legs  
**(tottered p.) totter** (v): to walk in a shaky way as if about to fall  
**stout** (adj): (especially of older people) quite fat and solid-looking, especially around the waist  
**tortuous** (adj): not direct/simple  
**worthwhile** (adj): useful, important or good enough  
**caption** (n): a short piece of text under a picture which describes the picture or explains it  
**(gloated p.) gloat** (v): to feel or express great pleasure or satisfaction because of your own success  
**(bombardment n)** bombard (v): to direct so many things at someone that they find it difficult to deal with them  
**(nudging pr. part.) nudge** (v): to push something gently  
**(muttered p.) mutter** (v): to speak quietly and in a low voice  
**persistent** (adj): trying to do something in a determined way  
**obscurity** (n): when something is not clear, difficult to understand or see  
**adjust** (v): to change slightly  
**strain** (v): to become stretched or to experience pressure  
**ruthlessly** (adv): in a way that you are not thinking or worrying about any pain caused to others





### Guessing Meaning from Context:

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

- Every Ugandan newspaper, on the following day, carried a front-page photograph of "Mr. Pius Ndawula and his happy wife," a caption that caused Pius to shake with **rage** and threaten legal proceedings.
  - extreme sadness
  - extreme joy
  - extreme confusion
  - extreme anger
- He was even more seriously **alarmed** when suddenly Salongo gave him a painful dig in the ribs.
  - happy or joyful about something
  - worried or frightened by something
  - confused or uncertain about something
  - upset or saddened by something
- Almost blind, and very lame, he had tottered out with the **aid** of a stout stick.
  - help
  - problem
  - color
  - idea
- Overnight** he seemed to become the most popular man in Buganda.
  - the night before
  - during the night
  - for one night
  - at night
- They could only call and **briefly** congratulate Pius before being elbowed out of the way by his more garrulous relations.
  - for now
  - for a long time
  - for a short time
  - for later
- He was even more confused by Salongo's **constant** nudging and muttered advice.
  - intermittent
  - playful
  - serious
  - frequent
- Pius had become very **wary** of Cousin Sarah.
  - not conscious
  - not trusting
  - not angry
  - not excited
- Your stroke of luck seems to have **exhausted** you, Pius,' Kibuka remarked.
  - extremely old
  - extremely healthy
  - extremely tired
  - extremely pleased

### Making Inferences:

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- When Salongo says that cousin Sarah is "a sticker," he probably means that:
  - she wants to marry Pius for his money
  - she wants to kill Pius and steal his money
  - she wants to ask Pius for a loan
- Pius thinks "that woman did mean business" when he realizes that Sarah had spoken for him to the BBC. By this, he probably means:
  - that she was planning to start a business
  - that she was determined to marry Pius
  - that she wanted Pius to hire her
- After staying at Yosefu's house, Pius goes back to his own home. It is empty. His family has probably left because:
  - they had to go to work and school
  - they had eaten all of the available food
  - they heard that Pius had won less money

(**hacking** *pr. part.*) hack (v): to cut into pieces in a rough and violent way, often without aiming

**meager** (adj): very small amount

**plantain** (n): a tropical fruit similar to a banana with green skin 

**dished (something) out** (ph. v): to give something to someone or distribute food to people

**acknowledgment** (n): accepting that something is true or right

**behalf** (n): representing

(**snooping** *pr. part.*) snoop (v): to look around a place secretly

**deny** (v): to say that something is not true or to refuse something

**contact** (n): a person, especially in a high position, who can give you useful information

**batch** (n): a group of things or people dealt with together

**bosom** (n): the front of a person's chest

**effusively** (adv): in a way that shows very strong feeling

**momentum** (n): the force that keeps an object moving

**resemble** (v): to look like or be like someone or something

**turbulent** (adj): involving a lot of sudden changes or violence

**limp** (adj): soft; not stiff

**fragment** (n): a small piece or a part, especially when broken from something whole

(**obliterated** *pr. part.*) obliterate (v): remove any sign of something

**steadfastly** (adv): strongly and without stopping

(**ignored** *p.*) ignore (v): to intentionally not give attention to

**mesmerized** (adj): feeling so interested by something that you cannot think of anything else

**frantically** (adv): in a hurried way

**span** (v): to cover a large space

**gap** (n): an empty space or opening in the middle of something

**audibly** (adv): heard easily, loudly

(**growled** *p.*) growl (v): to make a low rough sound, in anger

**exasperation** (n): frustration

(**chanted** *p.*) chant (v): to repeat a word/phrase continuously

**off key** (adj): notes slightly higher or lower than they should be

**imposing** (adj): having an appearance which looks important

**definite** (adj): certain/clear/fixed

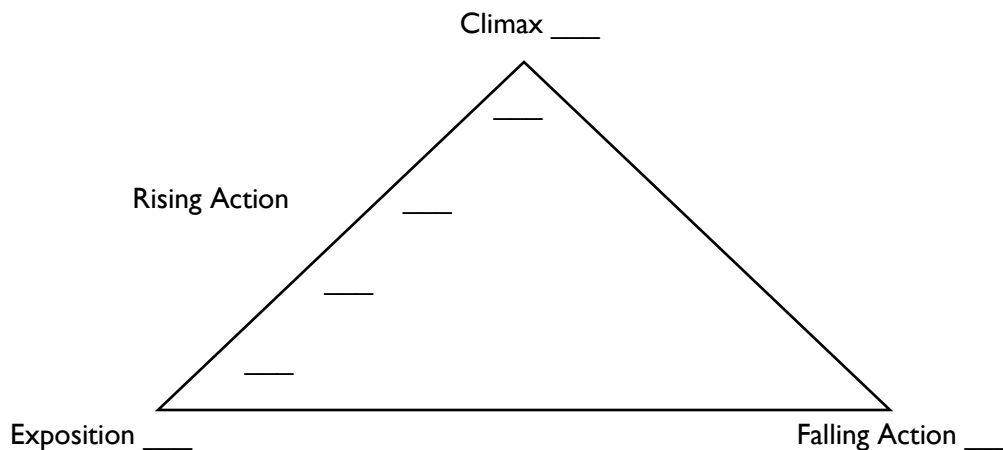
**significant** (adj): important

### **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

1. He won the football pools (and, therefore, a lot of money).
2. Salongo is Pius's best friend. He guards the tomb of Ssabalangira, a great warrior.
3. He wants to extend his coffee plantation, put a new roof on his house, begin raising hens, and help his friend Salongo (by building a new tomb for Ssabalangira).
4. He is overwhelmed by all the people, but happy to have his family around him.
5. He wants an interview with Pius.
6. He is worn out by all the people in his house who want to talk to him and needs a break.
7. Cousin Sarah is the wife of the (no longer living) stepson of one of Pius's cousins.
8. There has been a mistake and Pius has won much less money than they had originally said.
9. He is not angry at the news.
10. They will be married.

### **Analysing the Story: Plot**

Look back at the explanation of **plot**. Pay close attention to the different elements that make up the plot. The following chart shows those elements of a story. The major events in "The Winner" are listed below the chart. Show where events go in the chart by writing the numbers in the appropriate places.



1. Pius goes to stay at Kibuka's house
2. Reporters, family, and friends all show up at Pius' house
3. Cousin Sarah and Pius decide to be married
4. Pius finds out that he actually won much less money than he had thought
5. Pius wins the football pools
6. Muisi comes to see Pius at Kibuka's house with a new telegram
7. Cousin Sarah takes control of Pius house

### **Thinking Critically:**

- Do you think that all of Pius's family has come to stay at his house only to congratulate him? Or do you think that they have other motives?
- Why does Salongo say that Sarah is 'the real winner' at the end of the story?
- If you won a lot of money in a football pool (or otherwise), what would you do with it?

**glance** (n): a quick look  
**incredulity** (n): the inability to believe something is true  
**(plonked p.) plonk** (v): to put something down heavily  
**utterly** (adv): extremely  
**(enabled p.) enable** (v): to make something possible  
**virtually** (adv): almost  
**nonexistent** (adj): describes something that does not exist  
**(glared p.) glare** (v): to look directly and continuously at someone or something in an angry way  
**wither** (v): (to cause) to become weak and dry and decay  
**bother** (v): to make the effort to do something  
**wizened** (adj): having dry skin with lines in it, because of old age  
**apprehension** (n): worry about the future  
**chilling** (adj): frightening or scary  
**cherub** (n): an angel  
**formidable** (adj): causing you to have fear or respect for something because it is large/powerful



**oversight** (n): a mistake because of a failure to notice something  
**(chuckled p.) chuckle** (v): to laugh  
**well nigh** (adv): very nearly  
**(wrecked p.) wreck** (v): to destroy or badly damage something  
**drooping** (adj): hanging down  
**(revived p.) revive** (v): to come or bring something back to life  
**optimistically** (adv): in a way that is hopeful about the future  
**(remedied p.) remedy** (v): to do something to improve something  
**casual** (adj): describes clothes that are not suitable for special occasions  
**frank** (adj): honest and sincere  
**impetuous** (adj): likely to act on a sudden idea or wish, without considering the results  
**thrive** (v): to grow/be successful  
**neglect** (v): to give not enough care or attention to something  
**(grudgingly adv.) grudging** (adj): a grudging action or feeling is one which you do unwillingly  
**(sheepishly adv.) sheepish** (adj): showing embarrassment because you have done something wrong

# THE TORN VEIL

## Mabel Dove-Danquah—Ghana



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Kwame Asante is a successful young scholar in Ghana. He has achieved his ambition and become a very important man in the community. There is a problem though: he is married to Akosua, a beautiful but uneducated woman.

Kwame tells Akosua that he will give her money to start a business of her own. This is because Kwame has decided that he should marry a more educated woman. Akosua, however, does not agree to his plan and argues with him, indignantly. The next day, Akosua leaves their home and goes to her father's house with their children.

Kwame is angry, but he cannot find a way to force Akosua to come home. He decides to marry a school teacher named Martha Aryeetey. After the wedding ceremony, Martha goes to bed, but Kwame sits on the verandah and dozes off. He wakes up when he hears a noise inside. He goes in and sees Akosua sitting there in her bridal clothes.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. The student hoped that one day he would \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The old man always \_\_\_\_\_ after lunch.
3. She grew medicinal herbs on the \_\_\_\_\_ behind her house.
4. We all knew he was wrong, but still he \_\_\_\_\_ refused to admit it.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ had been working at the university for twenty years.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Kwame will yell at Akosua for coming into his home and she will kill him.
- Kwame will yell at Akosua for coming into his home and will call the police.
- Kwame will regret what he has done to Akosua and she will ask him to divorce Martha.
- Kwame will regret what he has done to Akosua, but she is not really there and he is dreaming.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. How long has Kwame been married to Akosua?
2. Why does Kwame want to give Akosua 100 pounds?
3. What does Kwame threaten to do if Akosua disobeys him?
4. Who is Kofi Asare?
5. Where does Akosua go when Kwame leaves for Kumasi?
6. What 2 things does Kwame do to try to get Akosua to return?
7. What does Kwame decide to do about Akosua in the end?
8. Who is Martha Aryeetey? What is her job?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

##### **bury (someone) alive:**

(metaphorical) to put (someone) in a situation where you have no hope of leading a satisfying life

**dawn on (someone):** If a fact dawns on you, you understand it after not understanding it

**cleared his throat:** gave a small cough

**to put up with:** to accept or continue to accept an unpleasant situation or experience

**a good match:** an appropriate or better husband or wife

**what is the world coming to:** society is becoming worse

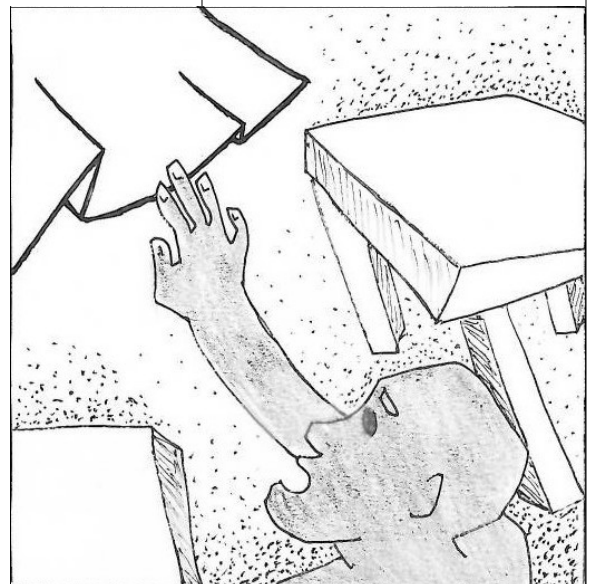
**woman chaser:** someone who enjoys seducing women by making promises that he won't keep

**pacification monies:** money to keep someone from complaining about something you did to them

**Holy Trinity:** God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit in Christianity

##### **gate crashers:**

people who go to a party when not invited





9. What happens at Holy Trinity Church?
10. At 10 p.m., where is Martha and where is Kwame?
11. Who does Kwame see in the sitting-room?
12. What happens to Kwame?
13. What news arrives in the telegram from Kofi Asare?

### **Literary term: Poetic Justice**

In real life, people don't necessarily get what they deserve. Sometimes, good people have bad things happen to them, and bad people have good things happen. However, in fiction, authors can reward or punish characters for their actions. This is called **poetic justice**.

**Focus:** Pay attention to the actions of characters in "The Torn Veil." By the end of the story, is there poetic justice? Do some characters get what they deserve while others do not?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Historical Context:**

The **Gold Coast** was a British colony on the Gulf of Guinea in west Africa that became the independent nation of Ghana in 1957. The Gold Coast was a name for the region used by Europeans because of the large gold resources found in the area. Though the slave trade was the principal exchange for many years.

The British Gold Coast was formed in 1867 and Britain steadily expanded its colony through the invasion of local kingdoms, particularly the Ashanti and Fante confederacies. The Ashanti people had controlled much of the territory of Ghana before the Europeans arrived and were often in conflict with them.

The British and the Ashanti fought many wars in the second half of the 19th century. In 1900, Ashanti were decisively defeated in the Ashanti Uprising, resulting in the British capture of the Ashanti capital city of **Kumasi**.

By 1901, all of the Gold Coast was a British colony, with its kingdoms and tribes considered a single unit. The British exported a variety of natural resources such as gold, metal ores, diamonds, ivory, pepper, timber, grain and cocoa. But by 1945, the native population was demanding more autonomy at the end of the Second World War and the beginnings of the decolonisation process across the world. In 1957 the colony gained independence under the name of Ghana.

### **Guessing Meaning Form Context:**

The words in the word bank below are all from the story. Find them in the story and see if you can understand their meaning. Then fill in the spaces in the sentences below with the correct word.

<b>WORD BANK</b>					
<del>strut</del>	mound	decent	rash	coax	zeal
	notorious	safeguard	mentality		

1. The players strutted onto the field and posed for the cameras.
2. The country is \_\_\_\_\_ for its appalling prison conditions.
3. The castle was built on top of a natural grassy \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The poster explains how to \_\_\_\_\_ against dangers in the home.
5. That was a \_\_\_\_\_ decision—you didn't think about the costs involved.
6. Perhaps you could \_\_\_\_\_ your father into taking you to the station.
7. I thought he was a \_\_\_\_\_ sort of person.
8. I can't understand the \_\_\_\_\_ of people who hurt defenceless animals.
9. The boy has a great \_\_\_\_\_ for football—his favorite sport.

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**unscrupulous** (adj): behaving in a way that is dishonest or unfair in order to get what you want  
**qualm** (n): an uncomfortable feeling of doubt about whether you are doing the right thing  
**perfume** (n): a liquid with a pleasant smell, often used on skin  
**(nervously** (adv)) nervous (adj): worried and anxious  
**ebony** (adj): black in colour  
**peculiar** (adj): strange or unusual  
**(designed** (adj)) design (v): to make plans for something  
**(shod** p.) shoe (v): to have shoes  
**zest** (n): enthusiasm, eagerness, energy and interest  
**(disinfecting** pr. part.) disinfect (v): to clean something using chemicals that kill very small living things that cause disease  
**passion** (n): a powerful feeling, of love, anger or other emotions  
**(abates** 3<sup>rd</sup> person sing.) abate (v): to become less strong  
**thrust** (v): to push suddenly  
**refined** (adj): improved by small changes that have been made  
**(conferred** p.) confer (v): to exchange ideas on a particular subject, often in order to reach a decision on what action to take  
**associateship** (n): a position as associate professor in a university  
**coveted** (adj): describes something that people want to have  
**(inanely** (adv)) inane (adj): with no real meaning or importance  
**consult** (v): to get information from a person, book, etc. with special knowledge on a subject  
**impertinent** (adj): not respectful, often towards someone older or in a higher position than you  
**(entitled** p.) entitle (v): to give someone rights to do something  
**stark** (adj): empty, simple or obvious, or without decoration  
**misery** (n): great unhappiness  
**(whining** pr. part.) whine (v): complain or express disappointment or unhappiness repeatedly  
**disgrace** (v): to cause people to stop respecting you by doing something very bad  
**wilful** (adj): determined to do exactly as you want, even if you know it is wrong  
**(doted on** p.) dote on (ph v): to love someone completely



**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- At the beginning of the story, it is said that Akosua “served her lord and master with zeal and zest.” This probably refers to:
  - God
  - Kwame
  - her father
- Kwame wants to divorce Akosua because he thinks that she is not an appropriate partner for his new position in society. This is probably because:
  - she is poor
  - she isn't highly educated
  - she is a foreigner
- At Kwame's wedding with Martha, some guests didn't receive anything to drink. This is likely because:
  - they hadn't been invited
  - they weren't thirsty
  - they were sharing

**Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- They have been married for ten years.
- Kwame wants to give Akosua 100 pounds so that she can start her own business and support herself after he divorces her.
- He threatens to make a legal claim for repayment of the money he has spent on her since they were married and for the dowry that he paid.
- Kofi Asare is Akosua's father.
- Akosua goes to Kofi Asare's house.
- He sent telegrams to Kofi Asare and he sent 2 women to Kofi Asare's house.
- He decides to stop worrying because after he has taken a second wife he will be able to keep Akosua in one house and his new wife in another.
- Martha Aryeetey is a schoolteacher Kwame decides to take as a second wife.
- Martha and Kwame are married.
- Martha has gone to bed, but Kwame is resting on the verandah.
- Kwame sees Akosua.
- He is chasing Akosua, trips, hits his head, and dies.
- Akosua had died yesterday morning.

**Analysing the Story: Poetic Justice**

Look back at the explanation of **poetic justice**. Now that you have read “The Torn Veil,” analyze the fates of the major characters. Is there poetic justice? For each of the characters below, describe their fate in the central column. Then, decide whether or not their fate was deserved and explain your reasoning to the right. The first one is done for you.

Character	The character's fate	Is there poetic justice? Why or why not?
Akosua	<i>She dies at her father's house on the day of Kwame's second marriage.</i>	<i>No. Akosua is described as a virtuous character who is wronged by her husband. She did not deserve to die at the end of the story.</i>
Kwame		
Martha		

**Thinking Critically:**

- Kwame is allowed to leave his wife, Akosua, with a small sum of money under Native Customary Law. Kwame is happy because it allows him to take a wife better suited to his new position. But the narrator worries that the law doesn't “safeguard the position of the woman.” Do you think Native Customary Law, as described in this story, is good or bad? Defend your answer.

**mood** (n): the way you feel  
**righteous** (adj): morally correct  
**(floundered p.) flounder** (v): to experience great difficulties  
**askew** (adj): not straight or level  
**outspoken** (adj): expressing strong opinions very directly  
**(intensely adj)) intense** (adj): extreme and forceful  
**(consoled p.) console** (v): to make someone who is sad or disappointed feel better  
**(squawked p.) squawk** (v): to make an unpleasantly loud cry  
**ratio** (n): the relationship between two groups or amounts, which expresses how much bigger one is than the other  
**plump** (adj): having a pleasantly soft rounded body or shape  
**(secured p.) secure** (v): to get something, sometimes difficultly  
**occupy** (v): to fill or exist in  
**dais** (n): a raised surface at one end of a room which someone can stand on when speaking  
**champagne** (n): an expensive white or pink fizzy wine  
**(overlooked adj) overlook** (v): to fail to notice something  
**shoals** (n): a large number of things or people  
**tedious** (adj): boring  
**settee** (n): a long soft seat with a back and usually with arms; a sofa  
**(brocaded adj)) brocade** (n): heavy cloth with a raised design  
**veil** (n): thin material worn by women to cover the face or head  
**wreath** (n): an arrangement of flowers and leaves in a circular shape, used as a decoration  
**blossoms** (n): small flowers  
**(eluded p.) elude** (v): if something that you want eludes you, you do not succeed in achieving it  
**(mocking pr. part.) mock** (v): to copy someone in an unkind way  
**veins** (n): tubes in the body that carry blood to the heart  
**cameo** (n): a small but noticeable performance by someone famous  
**beckoned p.) beckon** (v): to move your hand in a way that tells someone to come nearer  
**temple** (n): the flat area on each side of your head  
**(clenched p.) clench** (v): to close or hold something very tightly  
**countenance** (n): the appearance of someone's face

# WORKDAY

## Evelyn Awuor Ayoda—Kenya



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Mary is a young girl from a village in Kenya. She works as a housegirl in Nairobi for Elizabeth and Peter. In the morning, Mary wakes up and goes upstairs. She rouses the children, Okwach, Otieno, Akong'o, and Awino, to prepare them for school.

But she is too slow and Elizabeth yells at her. Peter interferes and defends Mary. Peter and Elizabeth argue because Peter goes out drinking with a girlfriend every night. In the middle of the fight, Peter slaps Elizabeth. Mary, meanwhile, burns the breakfast. Everyone but Mary leaves for work and school.

In the afternoon, Elizabeth returns with the two smallest children. Again, Mary burns the meal and Elizabeth is angry because she must return to work without eating. In the evening, Mary burns dinner. Elizabeth forces her out of the house into the back yard and slams the door behind her.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Preview.

1. It's their problem and I'm not going to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. His new house has three bedrooms \_\_\_\_\_ and one on the first floor.
3. She was so angry that she \_\_\_\_\_ the door when she left the room.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ is surrounded by a fence, so the dog doesn't need a chain.
5. She was \_\_\_\_\_ from her sleep by a knock on the front door.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Elizabeth will feel bad for Mary and will let her come back into the house.
- Mary will go stay at a friend's house for the night.
- Elizabeth will leave Mary outside all night as punishment.
- Mary will run away and return to her home village.

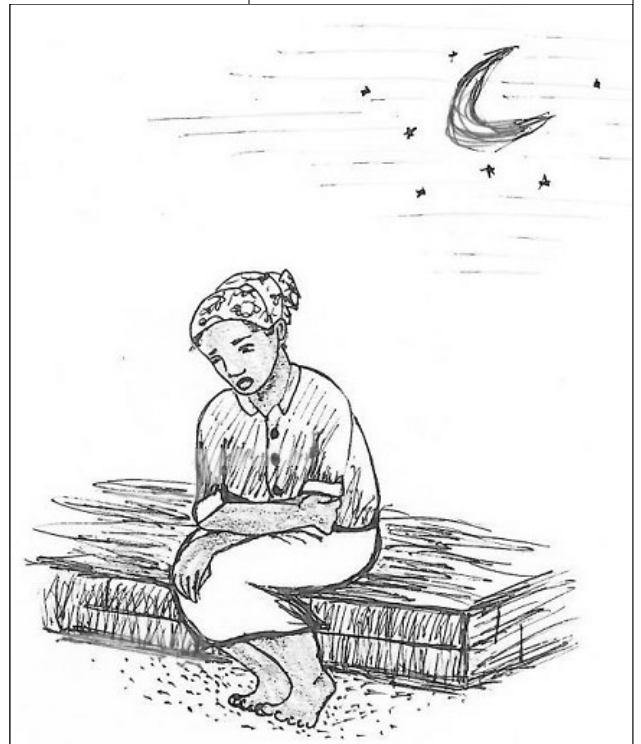
### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

1. What is Mary's job?
2. Why is Elizabeth unhappy with her husband, Peter?
3. What does Peter do to Elizabeth?
4. Where does Mary sleep?
5. This story takes place in Nairobi. Is Mary from Nairobi?
6. Mary is very unhappy with her job. Why does she still work for Elizabeth?
7. Who is Mwangi?
8. Is Elizabeth happy with the lunch that Mary prepares?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**country fool:** a person from a village who can be tricked or confused by people from a city  
**making double sure:** checking two times that something is correct and prepared  
**give a wide berth:** to avoid a person or place  
**caught her unawares:** surprised her  
**behave like animals:** act in a way that is inappropriate



**ready for a chat:** eager to talk with a friend  
**took up the refrain:** repeated the same thing  
**a look of relief:** a sudden appearance of being very happy because something unpleasant has not happened or has ended  
**lost her temper:** she suddenly became angry

9. Why does Mary slap Okwach?
10. Where does Mary take the children in the afternoon?
11. Who does Mary meet in the park? What is her job?
12. What happens to the dinner Mary cooks?
13. Where does Mary spend the night until 3 a.m.?
14. Who finds Mary and lets her into the house?

### **Literary term: Characters and Characterization**

**Characters** are the people who participate in the action of a story. The most important characters are the **main characters**. Less important characters are known as **minor characters**. The author creates characters through physical descriptions, speech, thoughts, actions, and observations from other characters. This is called **characterization**.

**Focus:** "Workday" has many characters. Pay attention to which are the major characters and which are the minor characters. How do you know? Think about how the narrator helps us see and understand the characters. Can you describe them? Can you tell what they are feeling?

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

### **Cultural Context:**

**Ugali** is a dish of maize flour and water cooked into a thick porridge. It is a staple food of the African Great Lakes region and Southern Africa. In different parts of Africa, ugali has different names: nsima, sembe, posho, etc.



**Chapatis** are one of the staple foods of South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh). They are a flatbread made from wheat flour and water. They are also common in the Horn of Africa.

In many parts of East Africa, colewort is commonly known by the Swahili name, **sukuma wiki**. The literal translation of "sukuma wiki" is "stretch the week." It is a vegetable that is generally affordable and available all-year round in this region.

It forms part of the staple dish in this region together with ugali.

When Mary goes to the park she meets up with another aya, Priscilla. **Aya** is a Hindi (widely spoken language in India) word for a nanny, or a woman who cares for someone else's children. Like **chapatis**, the word **aya** is a South Asian import to Africa likely as a result of the movement of people between South Asia and British East Africa during British colonial rule in both regions.

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the left column are from the story. The right column has definitions for those words. Look back at the story and try to understand the vocabulary. Then put the letter of its definition on the line next to each word.

Vocabulary	Meanings
1. agony <u>g.</u>	a. loud
2. contrite    ___	b. soft loose clothing which is worn in bed and consists of trousers and a type of shirt
3. pijamas    ___	c. a long passage in a building or train, especially with rooms on either side
4. corridor    ___	d. extremely hot and unpleasant
5. remove    ___	e. feeling very sorry and guilty for something bad that you have done
6. resounding ___	f. deeply
7. soundly    ___	<del>g. extreme physical or mental pain or suffering</del>
8. stifling    ___	h. to take something or someone away from somewhere, or off something

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**mattress** (n): the part of a bed, made of a strong cloth cover filled with material, which makes the bed comfortable to lie on  
**(methodically** (adv)) methodical (adj): describes people who do things in a very ordered way  
**staircase** (n): a set of stairs inside a building  
**bunk beds** (n): two beds fixed together, one on top of the other  
**(fetching** *pr. part.*) fetch (v): to go to another place to get something and bring it back  
**grill** (n): the surface in a cooker which can be heated to very high temperatures and on which you put food to be cooked  
**deaf** (adj): unable to hear, either completely or partly  
**screw** (someone) (v): to have sex with someone  
**(sighed** *p.*) sigh (v): to breathe out slowly and noisily, expressing tiredness, sadness, pleasure, etc.  
**(guardedly** (adv)) guarded (adj): careful not to give too much information or show how you really feel  
**(yanked** *p.*) yank (v): to pull something forcefully with a quick movement  
**(tugging** *pr. part.*) tug (v): to pull something quickly and usually with a lot of force  
**nerve** (adj): worried  
**(grappling** *pr. part.*) grapple (v): to fight, especially in order to win something  
**(snapped** *p.*) snap (v): to say something suddenly in an angry way



**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- Mary thinks that “she had never got used to the idea of watching the clock while she worked.” This is probably because:
  - she completed her work much more quickly before
  - she never learned to read the time on a clock
  - she didn't need to worry about time in the village
- At lunch, Elizabeth decides not to eat. This is likely because:
  - she was running late
  - she was not hungry
  - she doesn't like ugali
- At the end of the story, Peter comes home at 3 a.m. This is because:
  - he was working late
  - he had a long journey
  - he was out drinking

**Suggested Answers for Comp. Questions:**

- She is a servant for Elizabeth and her family.
- He goes out drinking every night and stays with another woman.
- He slaps her.
- She sleeps in the sitting-room.
- No. Mary is from a village.
- Her family is very poor and she has many younger brothers and sisters.
- Mwangi is a servant in the house next door.
- No. Mary burns it.
- He will not go upstairs for his nap.
- She takes them to the park.
- Mary meets Priscilla in the park. She is a servant in another house.
- Mary burns dinner.
- Mary spends the night outside of the house.
- Peter finds Mary and lets her back inside.

**Analysing the Story: Characters and Characterization**

Look back at the explanation of **characters and characterization**. We can learn about the characters in a story based on what they do, what they say (or think and feel, if the narrator allows us to know those things), and how they are described. Four of the characters from “Workday” appear below. Look back at the story and see if you can fill in the information. *Peter* is done for you.

Mary		
<u>Actions</u>	<u>Words</u>	<u>Description</u>

Peter		
<u>Actions</u>	<u>Words</u>	<u>Description</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Slaps Elizabeth</li> <li>•Stays out late drinking</li> <li>•Refuses to drive children to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Yells “Shut up” at his wife</li> <li>•Tells his wife not to speak like a whore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When he leaves in the morning he lets the door slam behind him</li> </ul>

Elizabeth		
<u>Actions</u>	<u>Words</u>	<u>Description</u>

Mwangi		
<u>Actions</u>	<u>Words</u>	<u>Description</u>

**Thinking Critically:**

- Where is Peter every night? Akong'o sees his father slap his mother and call her a whore. Do you think that will affect the way Akong'o will treat women when he is grown?
- When Peter comes home at the end of the story, he lets Mary into the house. Mary thinks to herself that “he is a good man.” Is Peter a good man?

# MISTA COURIFER

Adelaide Casely-Hayford—Sierra Leone



## PREPARING TO READ

### Story Preview:

Mista Courifer is a coffin-maker and a preacher in Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone. Though he is an African, he very much likes European things—he wears European clothes and lives in a house built in the European style. Mista Courifer especially wants his son, Tomas, to be like a European.

Mista Courifer buys Tomas clothes from England and he is proud that Tomas works in the government service. Tomas, though, resents that his father buys his clothes and one day decides to burn them all! But his sister, Keren, stops him.

Tomas then confides to his sister that he is unhappy with his job. He thinks that it is unfair that he never gets a holiday. But, to avoid his father's ire, Tomas doesn't resign. Instead, he comes to work late, does a poor job, and breaks the rules. Finally, his employer, Mr Buckmaster, calls Tomas into his office.

### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Preview.

1. She bitterly \_\_\_\_\_ her father's new wife.
2. The old man's \_\_\_\_\_ was feared by all of the children.
3. The new \_\_\_\_\_ is so boring that people no longer go to church.
4. I only \_\_\_\_\_ my secrets to my closest friends.
5. Before his boss could fire him, he \_\_\_\_\_.

### Making Predictions:

From the Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions is most *probable*?

- Tomas will ignore Mr Buckmaster and go to work in Mr Courifer's workshop.
- Mr Buckmaster will fire Tomas and Mr Courifer will not help his son because he is so angry.
- Tomas will apologize to Mr Buckmaster and begin doing proper work again.
- Mr Buckmaster will grant Tomas a holiday and Tomas will stop wearing European clothes.

## WHILE READING

### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. What is Mista Courifer's profession?
2. What is Mista Courifer's other "official capacity"?
3. What 2 biblical figures does Mista Courifer like to preach about?
4. Why does Mista Courifer always wear black?
5. Where do Tomas' clothes come from?
6. How is Keren different from her brother?
7. Why does Tomas decide not to burn all of his clothes?
8. Why does Tomas want to leave his job as a clerk?

### Idioms & Expressions:

**pillars of the church:** a n important member of the church  
**to and fro:** in one direction and then in the opposite direction, a repeated number of times  
**followed suit:** did the same  
**high water mark:** the most successful point of something  
**red tape:** official processes that seem unnecessary/delay results  
**eight years his junior:** eight years younger than him  
**piled up high:** increased in number in an uncontrolled way  
**not care a damn:** not caring about something, especially the annoying things that someone else is doing or saying



**his heart in his mouth:** if his heart is in his mouth, then he is very nervous  
**in vain:** unsuccessfully/uselessly

9. What does Mr Buckmaster do when Tomas tells him why he is producing poor work?
10. What does Mr Buckmaster tell Mista Courifer that he will do for Tomas?
11. What does Tomas plan to do during his holiday?
12. Is Mista Courifer happy Tomas plans to build a mud hut? Why or why not?
13. What type of clothes does Tomas wear to church at the end of the story?
14. What happens to Mista Courifer at the end of the story?

### **Literary term: Dialect**

**Dialect** is the form of a language spoken in a particular place by a group of people. Dialects vary in pronunciation, vocabulary, expressions, and grammatical constructions. Writers use dialect to establish setting and describe characters.

**Focus:** The title character of “Mista Courifer” and his daughter, Keren, speak a dialect of English. Pay attention to how their speech is different from that of Tomas and Mr Buckmaster. What do you think the author wants us to understand about the characters by having two of them speak in a dialect?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Historical Context:**

The **Wolof** Empire was a medieval West African state that ruled parts of Senegal and the Gambia from approximately 1350 to 1890. Wolof is the name of the language of the Wolof people. At least 50% of Senegal's population are native speakers of Wolof. The majority of the Wolof people are Sufi Muslims.



### **Biblical Context:**



In the Old Testament book of **Jonah**, the Prophet Jonah was called by God to Nineveh, which God would destroy if the people didn't repent. After being rejected, Jonah was swallowed by a great fish (probably a **whale**). Eventually, after Jonah repented for three days, God made the whale spit Jonah onto land. He then obeyed God and told the people of their sins to God.



In the Book of Genesis, **Noah** and his family kept believing in God in a time when most people did not. Therefore, God told Noah he was going to flood the world to drown out evil. He told Noah to build a boat called an **ark**. On the ark, Noah, his family, and two of every kind of animal would survive the flood. To find land Noah sent out a dove, which returned with an olive branch. After the flood, God made a rainbow as a promise that he would never destroy the Earth by flood again.



Mista Courifer is described as descending into **de profundis** when singing. **De profundis** references the first words of the Latin translation of Psalm 130:

**From the depths** I have cried out to you, O Lord;  
 Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.  
 If you, Lord, were to mark iniquities, who, O Lord, shall stand?  
 But with you is forgiveness, that you may be revered. I trust in the Lord;  
 My soul trusts in his word.  
 My soul waits for the Lord,  
 More than watchmen wait for the dawn, let Israel hope in the Lord.  
 For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.  
 And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

### **Musical Context:**

When Mista Courifer descends into **de profundis**, he is singing in the **pitch** (musical level) of **bass**, or the lowest range of musical notes. But he also soars into **treble**, or the highest range of musical notes. In music, the **key** is a particular set of musical notes based on one individual note.

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**(incessantly** (adv)) incessant (adj): never stopping, especially in an annoying or unpleasant way  
**(wagging** *pr. part.*) wag (v): (especially of a tail or finger) to move from side to side or up and down, quickly and repeatedly  
**pendulum** (n): a device consisting of a weight which moves from one side to the other, especially forming a part of a clock  
**capacity** (n): a position or job  
**chapel** (n): a room which is used for Christian worship  
**(conducting** *pr. part.*) conduct (v): to organize and perform  
**(superintending** *pr. part.*) superintend (v): to be in charge of  
**pulpit** (n): a raised place in a church for speaking  
**consequently** (adv): as a result  
**(descended** *p.*) descend (v): to go or come down  
**congregations** (n): groups of people who come together in a building for worship and prayer  
**(soared** *p.*) soar (v): to rise very quickly to a high level  
**(volleyed** *p.*) volley (v): to hit or kick a moving ball before it touches the ground  
**mites** (n): very small animals similar to spiders  
**collapse** (n): the sudden failure of a system, organization, etc.  
**sheer** (adj): used to emphasize how very great, important or powerful a quality or feeling is  
**(confined** *p.*) confine (v): to limit a person or problem  
**outlying** (adj): far from centre  
**similarity** (n): when people or things look or are the same  
**discourse** (n): communication  
**beloved** (adj): loved very much  
**(adulterous** (adj)) adultery (n): sex between a married person and someone their spouse  
**generation** (n): people of about the same age within a society  
**refuge** (n): (a place which gives) protection or shelter  
**(convinced** *p.*) convince (v): to persuade someone  
**undertakers** (n): people whose job is to prepare dead bodies and to organize funerals  
**attire** (n): formal clothes  
**(erected** *p.*) erect (v): to build a building, wall or other structure

**Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

- His voice was **remarkable** for its wonderful gradations of pitch.
  - soft
  - typical
  - loud
  - unusual
- Having read somewhere that English undertakers generally appeared in **sombre** attire, he immediately followed suit.
  - bright and colourful
  - cheap and ugly
  - dark and serious
  - new and fancy
- He had noticed how the houses were built and furnished and had **forthwith** erected himself one after the approved pattern.
  - immediately
  - slowly
  - cautiously
  - normally
- He **summoned up** courage to look boldly at the countenance of his chief.
  - remembered very clearly
  - called together or gathered
  - lacked or did not have
  - thought about deeply
- Mr. Courifer's **dejection** grew deeper with each moment.
  - happiness
  - excitement
  - anger
  - sadness

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- Tomas receives new European clothes from his father every year, but Keren has never received any. This is probably because:
  - she doesn't want them or think that they are nice
  - Mista Courifer thinks sons are more important than daughters
  - it is illegal for women to wear such clothes
- Why did Tomas receive two months for a holiday?
  - That was the normal practice in Mr Buckmaster's office
  - He threatened Mr Buckmaster that he would quit otherwise
  - Mr Buckmaster listened to Tomas and sympathised with him
- The story ends by saying, "Mista Courifer is the local preacher no longer." This probably happened because:
  - he was so embarrassed and confused by his son's decisions
  - he decided to let Tomas take his position
  - he lost his faith in God and religion completely

**Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- He is a coffin maker.
- He acts as a preacher in the church.
- He likes to preach about Jonah and Noah.
- He has read that Englishmen with his profession always wear black.
- His clothes are all brought from England.
- She isn't attractive and doesn't get English clothes (though she likes them).
- Keren convinces him not to burn them.
- He never gets a holiday, but the white men who work in the same place do.
- Mr Buckmaster listens to Tomas and then grants him a holiday.
- Mr Buckmaster tells Mr Courifer that he will write a testimonial for Tomas.
- He plans to marry a woman and build a mud hut.
- Mr Courifer does not want Tomas to build a mud hut because that is the African style and not the European style.
- Tomas wears Wolof clothes (traditional African clothes).
- He is so disturbed by his son's actions that he stops being the local preacher.

**stuffy** (adj): a stuffy a room or building has no fresh air  
**poky** (adj): having a small distance from one side to the other  
**crammed** (adj): very full  
**hopelessly** (adv): extremely  
**unsanitary** (adj): dirty and therefore likely to cause disease  
**economy** (n): the system of trade and industry by which the wealth is made and used  
**(impressed p.)** impress (v): to cause someone to admire you  
**somewhat** (adv): slightly  
**feminine** (adj): having qualities which are traditionally considered to be suitable for a woman  
**(distinctly adv)** distinct (adj): clearly noticeable  
**masculine** (adj): having characteristics that are traditionally thought to be typical of men  
**paterfamilias** (n): the man at the head of a family  
**checks and plaids** (n): patterns on clothing  
**vivid** (adj): Vivid descriptions or memories produce very clear and detailed images in the mind  
**decorative** (adj): looks attractive  
**(vying pr. part.)** vie (v): to compete to achieve or get something  
**patent** (adj): the official legal right to make or sell an invention  
**fragile** (adj): easily damaged  
**texture** (n): the quality of something that is decided by touch  
**(chucked p.)** chuck (v): to throw something carelessly  
**diminutive** (adj): very small  
**dimensions** (n): measurements of height, length or width  
**(lavished v p.)** lavish (adj): more than enough  
**boundless** (adj): having no limit  
**positive** (adj): complete  
**torture** (n): the act of causing great physical or mental pain  
**tenacity** (n): the determination to continue what you are doing  
**faggots** (n): sticks of wood, tied together, used as fuel for a fire  
**conflagration** (n): a large fire  
**superior** (adj): better than average or better than other people  
**daredevil** (n): a person who does dangerous things  
**elated** (adj): extremely happy  
**(accentuated p.)** accentuate (v): to emphasize a particular feature  
**cerise** (adj): a dark pink



### Analysing the Story: Dialect

Look back at the definition of **dialect**. Though Mista Courifer speaks in a dialect, we can understand him. In the table below, change Mista Courifer's speech into standard English. The first one is done for you. Can you find one more instance to add to the chart?

Mista Courifer	Standard English
Just like 'e no use for teach woman carpentering; she nebba sabi for hit de nail on de head.	<i>Just like there's no use teaching a woman carpentering; she never knows how to hit the nail on the head.</i>
You see my beloved Brebren, den two man berry much alike.	
Day bof seek a refuge fom de swelling waves.	
Tomas, you must larn for make coffins. You get fine chance now.	

### Thinking Critically:

- Mista Courifer thinks Tomas should dress like the English, work for the English, speak English well, but marry a traditional wife who would be his servant. Tomas wants to marry a woman he loves and respects, but also to dress in Wolof clothes and live in a mud hut. Who do you agree with? Why?
- Mista Courifer and Keren speak a local dialect of English, while Mr Buckmaster and Tomas speak standard English. What does this tell you about them?

**costume** (n): the set of clothes typical of a particular country  
**heterogeneous** (adj): consisting of parts or things that are very different from each other  
**frill** (n): a long, narrow strip of cloth with folds along one side  
**furbelows** (n): pleated borders of a skirt  
**array** (n): a large group of things  
**(outshone p.) outshine** (v): to be more successful than others  
**melancholy** (n): sad  
**preceding** (adj): happening before someone or something  
**woes** (n): great problems  
**pension** (n): a sum of money paid regularly to a person who does not work any more because they are too old or ill  
**nemesis** (n): Someone's nemesis is a person that is very difficult for them to defeat.  
**(incurring pr. part.) incur** (v): to experience something, as a result of your actions  
**vehemently** (adv): in a strong and emotional way  
**chaps** (n): men  
**(consolingly adv)** console (v): to make someone who is disappointed feel better

**resign (yourself) to (something)** (v): to make yourself accept something you don't like because you can't change it  
**(sauntered p.) saunter** (v): to walk in a slow and relaxed way  
**hitherto** (adv): until now  
**discreet** (adj): careful not to cause embarrassment or attract too much attention  
**rebuke** (n): to speak angrily to someone because you disapprove of what they did  
**vociferous** (adj): Vociferous people express their opinions and complaints loudly  
**(humblest superlative) humble** (adj): not proud or not believing you are important  
**fortnight** (n): two weeks  
**(pigeonholed adj)** pigeonhole (v): to have an unfair idea of what someone is  
**(commenced p.) commence** (v): to begin  
**(stammered p.) stammer** (v): to speak with unusual pauses or repeated sounds,  
**(unmerited adj)** merit (v): important enough to be treated a certain way  
**sheaf** (n): many things, especially pieces of paper held/tied together  
**(stuttered p.) stutter** (v): to speak with difficulty, repeating several times  
**penitent** (adj): showing that you are sorry for something you have done

**endurance** (n): the ability to keep doing something difficult/painful for a long time  
**deductions** (n): when part of something is taken away from a total  
**whatsoever** (adv): used after a negative phrase to add emphasis to an idea  
**(haggled p.) haggle** (v): to attempt to decide on a price, usually by arguing  
**(bartered p.) barter** (v): to exchange goods for other things rather than money  
**(exhortation n)** exhort (v): to or try to persuade someone to do something  
**(proffered p.) proffer** (v): to offer something by holding it out, or to offer advice  
**(bristled p.) bristle** (v): to react angrily  
**(exultation n)** exult (v): to express great pleasure or happiness  
**testimonial** (n): a statement about the character or qualities of someone  
**(dubiously adv)** dubious (adj): thought not to be completely true  
**(persevering adj)** persevere (v): to try to do or continue doing something in a determined way, despite having problems  
**(surveying pr. part.) survey** (v): to look at or examine all of something,  
**(peering pr. part.) peer** (v): to look carefully or with difficulty

**(patting pr. part.) pat** (v): to touch something gently and repeatedly with the hand  
**(affectionately adv)** affectionate (adj): showing feelings of love  
**grave** (adj): seriously bad  
**(retorted p.) retort** (v): to answer quickly in an angry way  
**sotto voce** (adj): (said) in a quiet voice so that only people near can hear  
**(sarcastically adv)** sarcasm (n): remarks which mean the opposite of what they say  
**wrath** (n): extreme anger  
**(delineated p.) delineate** (v): to describe  
**madhouse** (n): a place with no order  
**(ironically adv)** ironic (adj): interesting, strange or funny because different from what you would usually expect  
**wretch** (n): a person who experiences something unpleasant  
**bellowed p.) bellow** (v): to shout loudly  
**irate** (adj): very angry  
**lest** (conj): in order to prevent any chance something will happen  
**aisle** (n): a long narrow space between rows of seats in an aircraft/cinema/church  
**pantaloons** (n): an old word for trousers;  
**(unnerved p.) unnerve** (v): to make someone feel less confident

# THE EMPTY BASKET

Grace Ogot—Kenya



## PREPARING TO READ

### Story Preview:

Aloo is returning from the field when she sees a crowd of people outside her hut. She thinks that some misfortune has happened to her small children, Ouma and Akoth, or Anyango, the little girl who cares for them. When she arrives, she learns that the baby, Akoth, is alone in the hut with a huge snake!

Aloo is not happy that the men have not tried to save her baby and she calls them cowards. Then she enters the house and bravely rescues her child.

The men are angry at Aloo for calling them cowards. But, inspired by Aloo's ourageous act, Obwolo enters the house to search for the snake. After much searching, Obwolo takes a basket off the wall. It is very heavy, but Aloo says that it should be empty. Obwolo throws the basket and the snake comes out of it, trapping Obwolo inside the house.

### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. I hope you always have good luck and never suffer \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A large \_\_\_\_\_ awaited the president when she came to visit the village.
3. The man \_\_\_\_\_ ran into the burning hut to rescue his children.
4. The girls were \_\_\_\_\_ by the successful businesswoman who came to speak at their school.
5. Don't be a \_\_\_\_\_! Go fight.

### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following do you think is most *probable*?

- Obwolo will escape through a window and kill the snake.
- The snake will bite Obwolo before it escapes into the bush.
- The snake will bite Obwolo, but he will cut off its head and both will die.
- Aloo will try to rescue Obwolo, but the snake will bite her.

## WHILE READING

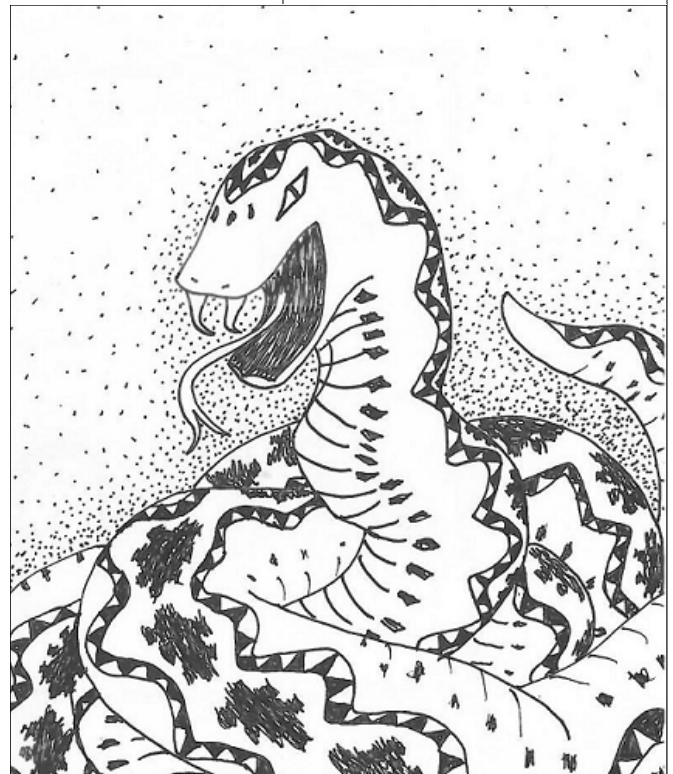
### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. What does Aloo see outside her hut when she is returning from the field?
2. What does she think has happened?
3. Who did Aloo leave at home in the hut?
4. What is inside the hut?
5. Why does Aloo call the men cowards?
6. Which men go into the house?

### Idioms & Expressions:

**in good health:** very healthy  
**knees suddenly went weak:** If you go weak at the knees, you lose your strength usually because of something frightening  
**empty handed:** without bringing or taking anything  
**dead weight:** the heaviness of something that does not move  
**brushed her aside:** to not consider something seriously because you feel that it is not important  
**declaring open war on:** (metaphorically) prepared to battle with someone or something  
**searched every corner of the house:** searched everywhere  
**to the bitter end:** until something is finished  
**followed suit:** did the same thing



7. What does Obwalo think is in the basket?
8. What is *actually* in the basket?
9. How does Obwolo escape?
10. Who kills the snake? How?
11. Who arrives at the end of the story? Why?

### **Literary term: Personification**

**Personification** is a figure of speech in which human qualities are attributed to an object, animal, or idea. Writers use personification to make feelings or images understood by the reader.

**Focus:** The snake in “The Empty Basket” is personified in many different ways. Pay attention to how the author helps us see the snake and feel the fear the people have for the snake by describing it as if it were a human. The snake isn't the only thing personified in the story, though. Can you find other example of personification?



## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Biblical Context:**

**Pentecost** in the Christian church is a religious holiday that takes place 50 days after Easter. It is to remember the coming of the Holy Spirit in the form of a flame to the Apostles and other followers of Jesus as described in the book of Acts in the Bible. This mass baptism is often considered the true beginning of Christianity.

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the word bank below are from the story. Find them in the story and try to understand their meaning. Then fill in the spaces in the sentences below with the correct word.

#### **WORD BANK**

amid	heap	dazed	malicious	<del>thoroughly</del>	retreat
	permanently	supposedly	abandon		

1. After using the toilet, it is important to wash your hands thoroughly.
2. The army had to \_\_\_\_\_ from the battle after losing many soldiers.
3. His lungs were \_\_\_\_\_ damaged from smoking.
4. Their family had to \_\_\_\_\_ their home after the flooding began.
5. He was \_\_\_\_\_ after falling down and hitting his head on the ground.
6. Although it is not certain, this is \_\_\_\_\_ the place where the lion was last seen.
7. All of the remaining bricks were piled up in a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. She was not able to hear the teacher \_\_\_\_\_ all of the noise of her classmates.
9. The presidential candidate started to spread \_\_\_\_\_ rumours about the other political parties.

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

1. When Aloo is standing outside her house, she feels “sick in her stomach.” This is probably because:
  - a. she is hungry
  - b. she is worried
  - c. she is ill
2. After Obwolo becomes trapped by the snake, the crowd yells “The bedroom window!” They probably yell this because:
  - a. The snake is headed for the window
  - b. Obwolo should escape through the window
  - c. The window is broken and dangerous

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**panicky** (adj): feeling worried or frightened  
**numb** (adj): If a part of your body is numb, you are unable to feel it, usually for a short time  
**(entangled** (adj)) entangle (v): to become caught in something such as a net or ropes  
**shambles** (n): a state of confusion or untidiness  
**stiffly** (adv): straight/not bending  
**(crawled** p.) crawl (v): to move slowly or with difficulty, especially on hands and knees  
**ghost** (n): the spirit of a dead person  
**(hypnotised** p.) hypnotise (v): to keep attention so strongly you feel unable to move/look away  
**(paralysed** p.) paralyse (v): to cause a person or part of the body to lose the ability to move  
**(involuntarily** (adv)) involuntary (adj): not done by choice; done without the decision or intention of the person involved  
**furious** (adj): extremely angry  
**puffy** (adj): slightly swollen  
**(soaked** p.) soak (v): to make very wet  
**ghastly** (adv): unpleasant and shocking  
**(snatched** p.) snatch (v): to take hold of something suddenly and roughly  
**demolished** p.) demolish (v): to completely destroy a building, especially in order to use the land  
**unbearable** (adj): too unpleasant to continue to experience  
**hind** (adj): an animal's back  
**precariously** (adv): in a way that is likely to fall, be damaged, etc.  
**(timidly** (adv)) timid (adj): nervous; without much confidence  
**(shattered** p.) shatter (v): to break suddenly into small pieces  
**dignity** (n): calm, serious and controlled behaviour that makes people respect you  
**supplemented** p.) supplement (v): to add something to something to make it larger or better  
**meagre** (adj): not enough  
**(clambered** p.) clamber (v): to climb up, across or into somewhere with difficulty  
**horrifying** (adj): very shocking  
**(flopped** p.) flop (v): to fall or drop heavily

3. Aloo says, "Don't believe an old man when he says he is tired of living." She probably says this because:
- the old men were the most scared of the snake
  - the old men were very brave when the snake came out
  - the old men are believed to have power of the snake

### **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- She sees a crowd of people.
- She thinks that something must have happened to her children.
- She has left her two year old, Ouma, her baby, Akoth, and Anyango, the young nurse.
- A giant snake is inside the hut (along with Akoth).
- She calls them cowards because they won't enter the hut to rescue her baby.
- Ochieng and Obwolo go into the hut.
- Obwolo thinks that there must be nails in the basket.
- In fact, the snake has hidden itself inside the basket.
- Obwolo escapes through a window.
- Obwolo kills the snake with a bow and arrow.
- Ojwang, Aloo's husband arrives at the end of the story because the night before he had dreamed that something bad was happening.



### **Analysing the Story: Personification**

Look back at the explanation of **personification**. As you were reading, perhaps you noticed that some objects and animals are described using the technique of personification. Some of the things that are personified in this story are listed in the left column. Try to find where in the text they are personified and fill in the right column. The first one is done for you. Can you find one more?

What is personified?	How is it described?
the snake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"It looked as though it was telling Aloo, 'I give you only one minute.'"</li> <li>"...hissing in anger"</li> <li>"...the snake's anger"</li> </ul>
clouds	
the main table	
the uncultivated land	

### **Thinking Critically:**

- After Aloo calls the men cowardly for not rescuing her baby, they want to beat her. They don't do it, but would it have been justifiable for the men to do so? Why or why not?

**mighty** (adj): very large, powerful or important

**(emerged p.)** emerge (v): to appear by coming out of something or from behind something  
**(hissing pr. part.)** hiss (v): to make a noise like the first sound in the word 'sing' but which lasts a lot longer

**(unwound p.)** unwind (v): If you unwind something wrapped around an object, you unfasten it  
**forked** (n): with one end divided into two parts

**(miraculously adv)** miraculous (adj): very effective or surprising or difficult to believe

**(wriggled p.)** wriggle (v): to move part of your body, with small, quick movements

**(gaspd p.)** gasp (v): to take a short quick breath, especially because of surprise/pain/shock  
**hailstones** (n): a small hard ball of ice which falls from the sky

**(dodged p.)** dodge (v): to avoid being hit by something by moving quickly to one side

**(restlessly adv)** restless (adj): unwilling or unable to stay still or to be quiet and calm

**serpent** (n): a snake

**sheath** (n): a close-fitting covering to protect something

**shrieks** (n): short, loud, high cries, produced suddenly as an expression of a powerful emotion  
**(aroused p.)** arouse (v): to cause someone to have a feeling

**revenge (one's self)** (v): to harm someone as a punishment for harm they have done to you

**(trampling pr. part.)** trample (v): to step heavily on something, causing damage or injury

**close range** (adj): (from) a short distance away

**afar** (adv): at a great distance

**(quivered p.)** quiver (v): to shake slightly, often because of strong emotion

**(surged p.)** surge (v): to increase suddenly and strongly

**saliva** (n): the liquid produced in your mouth to keep it wet

**(flogging pr. part.)** flog (v): to beat someone very hard with a whip or a stick, as a punishment

**(unexpectedly adv)** unexpected (adj): not expected

# JUSTICE

## Traditional—Ethiopia



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

A woman has lost her goats. While searching, she asks a man if he has seen them. But the man is deaf. He thinks she is looking for the river and points to it. By coincidence, the goats are there. One of the kids has broken a foot.

The woman is glad that she found her goats and, in gratitude, she tries to give the deaf man the kid. The man thinks that she is accusing him of injuring the kid and he strikes her. As a result, the man and woman go to see the judge.

They explain what happened to the judge. But they don't know that the judge is also deaf. In addition, he is near-sighted!

#### Key Vocabulary:

**(brewing pr. part.) brew (v):** If you brew tea/coffee, you add boiling water to it to make a hot drink

**kid (n):** a young goat

**hereafter (adv):** starting from this time; in the future

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

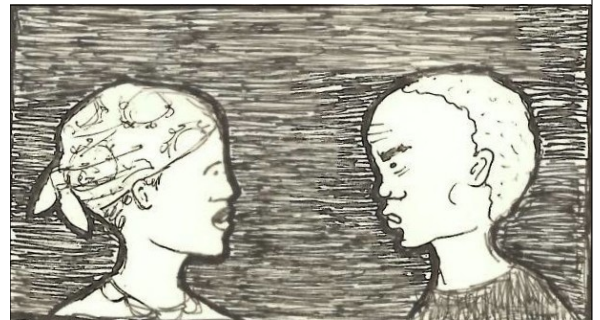
1. By some strange \_\_\_\_\_, he was passing by right when it happened!
2. The man \_\_\_\_\_ the oxen repeatedly with a stick so that the oxcart would move.
3. That man is completely \_\_\_\_\_. So use your hands to communicate with him.
4. He is so \_\_\_\_\_ that he is legally blind.
5. She sent them a present to express her \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story.

Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The judge will ask for the kid for himself as payment.
- The judge will believe that they are a married couple arguing.
- The judge will say he is deaf and they'll write their complaints.
- The judge will tell the man to apologize and the woman will give him the kid.



### WHILE READING

#### Literary term: Mood and Tone

**Mood** is the feeling, or atmosphere, that a writer creates for the reader. Descriptive words, the setting, and figurative language contribute to the mood of a work, as do the sound and rhythm of the language used.

**Tone** is the attitude the narrator takes toward a subject. Unlike mood, which is intended to shape the reader's emotional response, tone reflects the feelings of the narrator. To identify tone, you might find it helpful to read the story aloud. Try to decide what emotions you feel as you read.

**Focus:** The tone of "Justice" is formal and serious. The narrator gives a straightforward account of what happened. Certain descriptive words, or the lack of them can contribute to tone. Similarly, some words, especially verbs and adverbs help establish mood. How would you describe the mood of this story?

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. The woman in the story is looking for what?
2. Why does the deaf man point to the river?
3. What happened to one of the woman's kids?
4. What does she try to do with the kid?
5. Why does the deaf man grow angry?
6. What does the deaf man do to the woman?
7. Where do the two go to settle their dispute?
8. What is wrong with the judge?
9. How does the judge think the woman and the deaf man know each other?
10. What does the judge think that the injured kid is?

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

### Historical Context:

Ethiopia has one of the most well known histories as a country in Africa and the world. Unlike other African countries, Ethiopia stayed together during the colonial period, except for 5 years when it was ruled by Italians. Ethiopia used to be called Abyssinia. Until 1975, Ethiopia was ruled by Emperors who claimed to be descended from King Solomon of the Old Testament and the Queen of Sheba. The final **Emperor** was Haile Selassie I (Ras Tafari Makonnen) Among the Rastafari movement, whose followers are estimated at between 600,000 and 1,000,000, Haile Selassie is revered as the returned messiah of the Bible, God incarnate.



### Guessing Meaning from Context:

The words in the left column are from the story. The right column has definitions for those words. Look back at the story and try to understand the vocabulary. Then put the letter of its definition on the line next to each word.

Vocabulary		Meanings
1. spectators	<u>h.</u>	a. a noisy argument or fight
2. row	—	b. to say that someone has done something wrong, illegal, or unkind
3. emperor	—	c. a very young baby
4. affront	—	d. in a way that is gentle, loving, or sympathetic
5. mistreat	—	e. to treat a person or animal badly, unfairly, or cruelly
6. infant	—	f. a remark or action that is intended to insult or offend someone else
7. tenderly	—	g. a male ruler of an empire
8. accuse	—	<del>h. people who watch something (like a football match) but do not participate in it</del>

### Making Inferences:

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- The deaf man pointed to the river when the woman asked him a question. He probably did this because:
  - most people need water
  - he knew the goats were there
  - she signed to him she was thirsty
- The judge thinks that the kid is:
  - a gift
  - a child
  - a problem

### Analysing the Story: Mood and Tone

Look back at the explanation of **mood** and **tone**. The tone seems to be serious. What about the mood? The setting at the end of the story is a type of court, which would seem to imply a formal and serious mood as well. But to establish the mood, we need to take into account the attitudes of the characters toward the conflict in the story. We can tell the character's attitudes by paying attention to what they do and how they do it. So, if we document the verbs and adverbs of the story, we can add that information to our developing sense of mood. What words could you find that helped you decide on the mood?

<b>Words contributing to the mood of the story</b>	<i>shouted,</i> _____, _____, _____, _____, <i>solemnly</i>
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So the mood is also serious. But are you sure that the tone is? Are you sure that the narrator wants *us* to interpret the story seriously? While the words above certainly contribute to a formal tone (and mood), the misunderstandings that arise as a result of the fact that the man is deaf and the judge is both deaf and nearsighted do seem to be rather funny—as if the narrator is laughing at the characters. So if the apparent tone is different from what would be expected for the events depicted and if the tone is at odds with what we think the narrator is feeling, then we might describe the tone as *ironic*. What misunderstandings happen in the story?

<b>Misunderstandings</b>	<i>The deaf man thinks the woman is looking for water</i>				
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### Thinking Critically:

- The final sentence in this story is: “How did we ever get along before justice was given to us?” Do you think that this is a serious statement or a joke? Why?

# THE CASE OF THE PRISON MONGER

## Hama Tuma—Ethiopia



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

The narrator of this story claims that the culture in Ethiopia is to desire very little. There are anomalies, he admits, but most Ethiopians are satisfied with poverty and servility. Those who are not often suffer for wanting more.

The best example of this philosophy of poverty, says the narrator, is the case of the prison-monger, Matteos. He is happy in prison because he is from a poor family. He is young, healthy, and a skilled carpenter, but it is impossible for him to find work.

In prison, Matteos is able to continue his studies, he has a place to stay, and he eats. Each time he is released, he commits a small crime. That way he returns to prison, but won't be executed. The prosecutor, however, wants the judge to release Matteos this time because he thinks that would be better punishment.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Preview.

- Joyce Banda was an \_\_\_\_\_ because most presidents have been men.
- \_\_\_\_\_ does not suit the chief well.
- The lawyer is eager to put criminals in jail, so he became a \_\_\_\_\_.
- The criminal was \_\_\_\_\_ by the government for his crimes.
- After many years of study, she developed her own \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

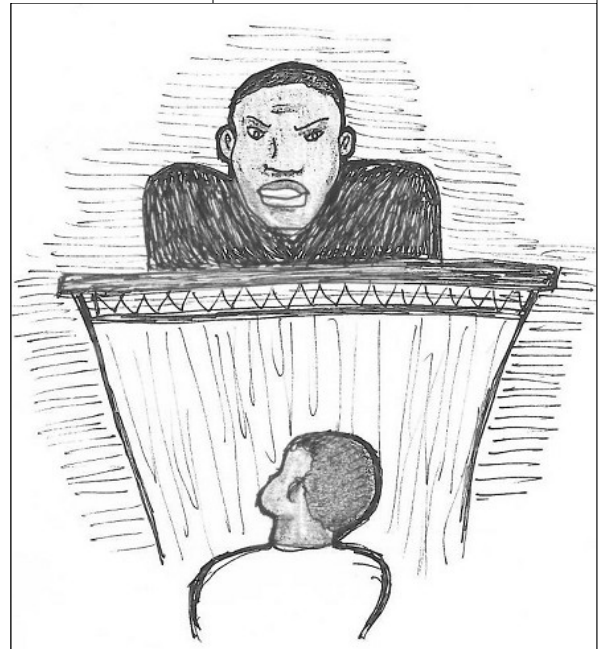
- The judge will release Matteos, but Matteos will insult the judge and be sent back to prison.
- The judge will release Matteos and Matteos will commit another crime and receive the death penalty.
- The judge will ignore the prosecutor and send Matteos back to prison.
- The judge will ignore the prosecutor and sentence Matteos to death.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

- According to the narrator, why should one not 'yearn for big things'?
- According to the narrator, what is strange about St Gebre and Zarayacob?
- What's the narrator say about Ethiopians who desire more than they have?
- For the first 7 paragraphs the narrator speaks generally about Ethiopians, but when the prosecutor begins to speak, the story begins. Who is 'the accused'?
- Each time the prison-monger is released from prison, what does he do?
- What does the prosecutor want?



#### Idioms & Expressions:

**struck alliances:** formed an agreement to work with someone to achieve the same thing  
**the highest bidder:** someone who offers to pay the most money for something  
**the late king:** the king who has died most recently  
**empty stomach:** hungry  
**diet conscious:** careful about what one eats in order to be healthy and fit



**Western world:** Europe and North America  
**scot free:** without receiving the deserved or expected punishment or without being harmed



7. What do the prison-monger and his defence lawyer want?
8. What is the prison-monger's name?
9. List three reasons the prison-monger likes to be in prison.
10. How many times has the prison-monger been sent to prison?
11. What happens if the prison-monger commits three more crimes?
12. What is the initial sentence from the judge?
13. Why does the prison-monger insult the judge when he hears the sentence?
14. How does the judge respond to the insults?
15. Is the prison-monger pleased with the final punishment?

### **Literary term: Paradox**

A **paradox** is a statement that appears to contradict itself but, in fact, reveals some element of truth. Religious and spiritual writings often contain paradoxes. Such paradoxes are intended to shake readers out of their normal ways of thinking and point them toward a higher level of understanding.

**Focus:** The plot of "The Case of the Prison-Monger" is based on the paradox that the main character feels more free when he is in prison. Pay attention to the reasons that he gives for this. Do his reasons make sense to you?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Historical Context:**

Rising inflation, corruption, a famine, and the growing discontent of urban interest groups meant that Ethiopia was ripe for revolution in the early 1970s. The unrest that began in January 1974 became an outburst of general discontent. The Ethiopian military, with assistance from the Soviet Union, began to both organize and incite a full-fledged revolution.



On September 12, 1974, a provisional administrative council of soldiers, known as the Derg ("committee") seized power from the emperor and installed a government which was socialist in name and military in style. The Derg executed 59 members of the former government. Emperor Haile Selassie died on August 22, 1975. He was allegedly strangled in the basement of his palace.

The Ethiopian Red Terror (1977–1978), was a violent political campaign in Ethiopia that most visibly took place after Communist Mengistu Haile Mariam achieved control of the Derg. It is estimated that 30,000–500,000 people were massacred over the course of the Red Terror (referred to by the narrator of this story as the *TM diet*).

**The Lenin Prize** was a very important award given by the Soviet Union to individuals for their accomplishments in science, literature, arts, architecture, and technology. It was named for Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, who was the first leader of the Soviet Union until his death in 1924. **The Chairman's Medal of Valor** and the **Medal of Ingenuity in Accordance with the Teachings of Our Great Chairman** are, presumably, other similar (possibly imaginary) awards.

**St. Gebre the Poor** was an Ethiopian Christian saint. **Zarayacob** (1599–1692) was a seventeenth-century Ethiopian philosopher. His writing came at a period when African philosophy was significantly oral in character. He believed in following one's natural reasoning instead of believing what one is told by others.



### **Key Vocabulary:**

**realists** (n): someone who hopes for only what seems possible and does not expect more

**outset** (n): the beginning

**yearn** (v): to wish strongly, especially something difficult to have

**(liquidated p.) liquidate** (v): to cause a business to close, so that its assets can be sold to pay debts

**(swiftly adv) swift** (adj): happening quickly and smoothly

**terror** (n): (violent action which causes) extreme fear

**massacres** (n): acts of killing a lot of people

**(peddled p.) peddle** (v): to sell things, especially by taking them to different places

**sovereignty** (n): the power of a country to control its own government

**rabid** (adj): expressing extreme and unreasonable feelings

**anti-socialist** (adj): someone who opposes of socialism

**(metamorphosed p.) metamorphose** (v): to change into a completely different form or type

**symbol** (n): a shape or object which represents something else

**socialism** (n): the set of beliefs which states that all people are equal and should share equally in a country's money

**(expounded p.) expound** (v): to give a detailed explanation

**coherent** (adj): clear/carefully considered; each part connects

**manuscript** (n): the original copy of a book before it's printed

**capacities** (n): the total amounts that can be contained/produced

**deprivation** (n): when you do not have things that are considered necessary for a pleasant life

**eternal** (adj): lasting forever

**court (something)** (v): to try to get support from other people

**contempt** (n): a strong feeling of disliking someone or something

**contradictions** (n): when things are the opposite of other things, so one must be wrong

**(rebelled p.) rebel** (v): to fight against the government or to refuse to obey rules, etc

**rendition** (n): the way something is performed/written/drawn

**guerillas** (n): members of an unofficial military group



**Biblical Context:**

*The valley of the shadow of death* is a reference to Psalm 23:4. It is often used as a *symbolic* description of the world, meaning darkness and death are (symbolic) valleys on earth one must walk through.

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

*He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through **the valley of the shadow of death**, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

**Legal Context:**

“The Case of the Prison Monger” along with other stories in this collection take us to **court**, or a large room where trials and other legal cases happen. In this story, Matteos is **the accused**, or the person on trial, because he **violated** the law. His **defence counsel** is arguing his case in opposition to the **prosecutor**. The **prosecutor** is responsible for proving that **the accused** is guilty. **Evidence** is given by both sides and witnesses are called to answer questions on the **witness stand**. At the end of a trial, the **judge** must give a **sentence** appropriate to the crime according to the **penal code**. If the crime is severe, **the accused** could be sent to a **labour camp** or even receive a **death sentence**.

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- The narrator says that St Gebre the Poor and Zarayacob are anomalies in their society. By this he means that most Ethiopians:
  - are not religious
  - eat too much food
  - dislike thinking
- Based on the things that the narrator and the prison-monger say, Ethiopian society at the time this story takes place is probably:
  - repressive and run by a dictatorship
  - progressive and run by a king
  - flourishing and democratic
- The narrator probably feels how about the prison-monger:
  - he is impressive but hard to understand
  - he is repulsive but worthy of sympathy
  - he is strange but likely to be imitated

**Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

- We do not even think about it, we just act by **reflex**.
  - a purposeful reaction to something
  - an uncontrollable reaction to something
  - a belief in the afterlife
  - a strong desire to win something
- All in order to keep what he has—**absolute** power.
  - much
  - some
  - little
  - total
- The less you expect, the less you get **frustrated**, and the greater is your happiness if you get more.
  - busy
  - lonely
  - annoyed
  - sad

**upheavals** (n): great changes, involving difficulty or trouble

**mutiny** (n): when a group of people, especially soldiers, to take control from the authorities

**adherents** (n): people who support a particular person/principle

**cherish** (v): to love, protect and care for someone or something

**robust** (adj): strong and healthy

**contribute** (v): to give something, especially money, in order to achieve something together with other people

**(inventiveness** (n) inventive (adj): very good at thinking of new and original ideas

**addict** (n): a person who cannot stop doing something harmful

**via** (prep): through; using

**correspondence** (n): official or business letters

**comrade** (n): a friend who you have been involved in difficult or dangerous activities with

**(briskly** (adv)) brisk (adj): quick, energetic and active

**shoplifting** (n): the illegal act of taking goods from a shop without paying for them

**(kleptomaniac** (n) kleptomania (n): a very strong and uncontrollable wish to steal, especially without any need or purpose

**prisonomaniac** (n): [not a real word] a strong and uncontrollable wish to be in prison

**suffocate** (v): to die because they do not have enough oxygen

**reverse** (n): the opposite of what has been suggested

**claustrophobia** (n): fear of being in closed spaces

**dozen** (n): twelve

**pavement** (n): a path with a hard surface on one or both sides of a road, that people walk on

**guttersnipe** (n): a child who is dirty and dressed badly

**submit** (v): to offer something for a decision made by others

**release** (v): to give freedom or free movement to someone

**(cooped up** p.) coop up (ph v): to keep in a closed space

**roam** (v): to move about without a clear idea of what you are doing

**illusion** (n): an idea or belief which is not true

**writhe** (v): to make large twisting movements with the body

4. Not all Ethiopians **subscribe** to the teachings of St Gebre.
  - a. agree with
  - b. write about
  - c. argue about
  - d. disagree with
5. And each time he **deliberately** makes sure that the crime he commits does not get him the death sentence.
  - a. quickly
  - b. purposefully
  - c. stupidly
  - d. angrily
6. I wonder if St Gebre would have approved of such **unorthodox** methods.
  - a. inspired by tradition
  - b. shared by everyone
  - c. similar to what is usual or expected
  - d. different from what is usual or expected

**Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

1. If you yearn for big things, then you may lose what you already have.
2. They were philosophers/thinkers and most Ethiopians don't enjoy thinking.
3. They face a hard life of suffering.
4. The accused is the prison-monger.
5. He commits another crime so that he will get sent back to prison, but not a severe enough crime that he will get the death penalty.
6. The prosecutor wants the judge to release the prison-monger.
7. The prison-monger wants to be sent back to prison.
8. His name is Matteos Gudu.
9. He likes to be in prison because he can study, he has work, he has a place to sleep, and he doesn't need to worry about food.
10. He has been sent to prison 6 times. This will be his seventh time.
11. If he commits three more crimes, he will be sentenced to death.
12. The judge initially decides to free the prison-monger.
13. The prison-monger insults the judge in order to make the judge angry so that he will send him to prison.
14. He gets very angry and sends the prison-monger to a labour camp.
15. He is very pleased.

**Analysing the Story: Paradox**

Look back at the definition of paradox. Many of the characters in this story desire paradoxical things or do paradoxical things. In fact, the entire basis of the plot is a paradox. The four major characters are in the table below. Think about what they do that is paradoxical and complete the phrases in the right column. The first one is done for you.

Character	Paradox
The judge...	wants to punish Matteos, but... <i>he gives Matteos exactly what he wants</i>
The prosecutor...	is responsible for convicting Matteos, but...
The defence lawyer...	is supposed to work to keep Matteos out of prison, but...
Most people...	want to avoid prison, but Matteos Gudu...

**Thinking Critically:**

- The narrator claims at the beginning of this story that if you are ambitious (desire great things), then you will not only fail, but lose what you already have. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- How does the prison-monger get what he wants at the end of the story? Who is smarter: the prison-monger or the judge? Justify your answer.

**intellectuals** (n): very educated people interested only in studying  
**(anarchist** (n)) anarchism (n): the political belief that there should be little or no formal or official organization to society  
**(saturated** (adj)) saturate (v): to fill a thing or place completely so that no more can be added  
**spies** (n): people who secretly collect and report information about the activities of others  
**prime of your life** (adj): the period in your life when you are most active or successful  
**palace** (n): a large house that is the official home of a king  
**gilded** (adj): covered with a thin layer of gold  
**monk** (n): a member of a group of religious men who do not marry and usually live together  
**isolation** (n): the condition of being alone, especially when this makes you feel unhappy  
**commendable** (adj): deserving praise  
**eligible** (adj): having the necessary qualities  
**pensive** (adj): thinking in a quiet way, often with a serious expression on your face  
**testicles** (n): either of the two round male sex organs  
**source** (n): the place something comes from or starts at  
**chaos** (n): a state of total confusion with no order  
**hereby** (adv): with these words or with this action  
**protest** (n): a strong complaint expressing disagreement  
**revelation** (n): when something is made known that was secret  
**ignorant** (adj): not having knowledge about something  
**bench** (n): a long, usually hard, seat for two or more people,  
**impotent** (adj): not having the power to improve a situation  
**(fumed** p.) fume (v): to be angry  
**castrated** (adj): male animal or human with testicles removed  
**foul-mouthed** (adj): If someone is foul-mouthed, they swear a lot and use offensive language.  
**(manhandled** p.) manhandle (v): to touch someone roughly and with force  
**bondage** (n): the state of being another person's slave

# FLIGHT

## Sindiwe Magona—South Africa



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

The narrator of this story is remembering a time when she was a young girl in her home village.

She is outside playing with other children when a commotion distracts them from their dolls. An old man is yelling 'catch her.' The narrator can see a woman attempting to elude a group of male pursuers over a mountain covered in clouds. The woman is the new wife of the narrator's uncle. The narrator just watches her aunt scurry over the mountain and hopes that she will not be captured.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. The antelope \_\_\_\_\_ the hunters and disappeared into the forest.
2. Park officials found a warthog that was \_\_\_\_\_ by a poacher's trap.
3. He looked up to see what all the \_\_\_\_\_ was about.
4. She sped up on her bicycle to escape her \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The mouse \_\_\_\_\_ quickly across the floor.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The woman will escape over the mountain and the narrator will feel sad that her aunt has gone.
- The woman will escape over the mountain and the narrator will feel excited for her.
- The woman will be captured by the men and brought back quietly to the community.
- The woman will be captured by the men and punished in front of the whole community.

### WHILE READING

#### Literary term: Imagery

**Imagery** consists of descriptive words and phrases that re-create sensory experiences for the reader. The majority of images are visual, but imagery may also appeal to the other senses.

**Focus:** Usually images are only a small part of a story, but "Flight" consists almost entirely of the narrator's images as she remembers the events from her childhood. As you read, try to see the scene that is described. Are there instances of imagery appealing to senses other than sight?

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. When the story begins, what is the narrator doing?
2. What is the old man shouting? Why?
3. How does the narrator feel as she watches the scene described?
4. What helps the woman escape her pursuers?
5. How is the narrator related to the woman escaping over the mountains?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

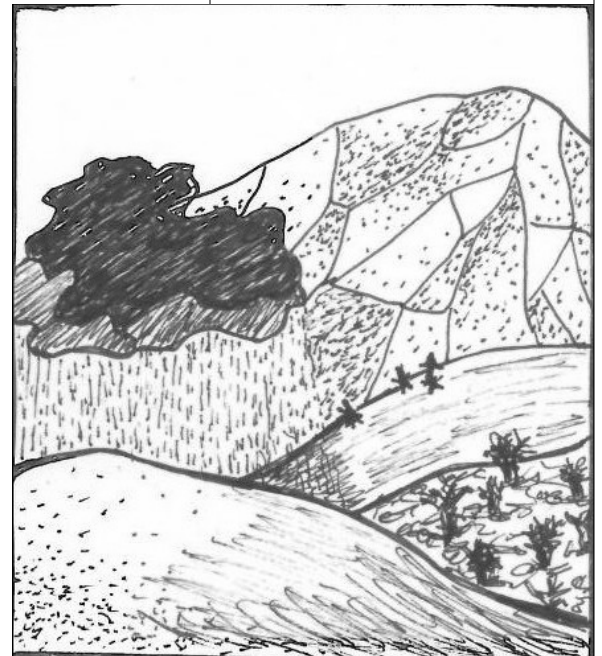
**here and there:** in different places

**hide and seek:** a children's game in which a group of children hide in secret places and then one child has to go to look for them

**no idle players:** important participants

**third party:** a third person or organization less directly involved in a matter than the main people or organizations that are involved

**not to be outdone:** not wanting someone else to do better



#### Key Vocabulary:

**(nestling pr. part.) nestle (v):** to be in a protected/sheltered position, with bigger things around it

**scrub dotted (adj):** (an area of land with) short trees and bushes

**(clashed p.) clash (v):** when two events happen at the same time in a way that is not convenient

**mid-air (n):** a point in the air, not on the ground

6. Has the woman been living in the narrator's community for a long time?
7. Is the narrator a child or an adult when the story takes place?
8. Where is the woman's husband?

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

### Guessing Meaning from Context:

The words in the word bank below are all from the story. Find them in the story and see if you can understand their meaning. Then fill in the spaces in the sentences below with the correct word.

#### WORD BANK

earnest jumbled bony distress capture ~~glimpse~~ flitting rearranged

1. After I ran all the way to the stage, I could glimpse the bus as it turned the corner and sped away.
2. Did the man eventually \_\_\_\_\_ his runaway goat?
3. Because their child was malnourished, he looked very \_\_\_\_\_.
4. As he sat for the exam, the boy felt \_\_\_\_\_ since he had not studied.
5. When I came home, I could not find anything because it had all been \_\_\_\_\_ by my sister.
6. The club wants someone who is \_\_\_\_\_ to step up and be a leader.
7. Birds were \_\_\_\_\_ across the sky.
8. My thoughts were \_\_\_\_\_ and I could not think clearly.

### Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:

1. The narrator is playing with dolls.
2. The old man is shouting 'catch her' because a woman is trying to run away from the community.
3. The narrator is nervous for the woman and hopeful that she escapes.
4. There is a lot of mist on the mountain.
5. The woman is married to the narrator's uncle.
6. No. The woman was a new wife.
7. The narrator is a child when the story takes place, but she is telling the story as an adult.
8. The woman's husband is working in mines far away from the community.

### Analysing the Story: Imagery

Look back at the explanation of **imagery**. "Flight" includes many instances of imagery despite its short length. In fact, there are instances of visual (seeing), tactile (feeling), and auditory (hearing) imagery. Find at least 2 of each and fill in the chart below.

Seeing	Feeling	Hearing
Anyway, half the mountain disappeared.	My insides churned. A hot ball of fear curled inside my stomach.	Cries of 'Khawulele!' 'Wen'umntu!' shattered the stillness

### Thinking Critically:

- The old man cries 'Mbambeni' which we are told means 'catch her.' He also yells 'Khawelele' and 'Wen'umntu.' What do you think these mean? Why?

**(ricocheted p.)** ricochet (v): If a something ricochets, it hits a surface and moves away at an angle  
**(invading pr. part.)** invade (v): to enter an area of activity in a forceful and noticeable way  
**(jamming p.)** jam (v): to push something forcefully or with difficulty into something else  
**magnet** (n): an object that is able both to attract iron and steel objects and also push them away  
**(clasped p.)** clasp (v): to hold someone or something firmly in your hands or arms  
**toga** (n): a piece of clothing worn by people in ancient Rome, consisting of a long piece of cloth wrapped around the body and hanging loosely from the shoulders  
**(accelerated p.)** accelerate (v): When a vehicle or its driver accelerates, the speed of the vehicle increases  
**(shrunk p.)** shrink (v): to become smaller, or to make something smaller  
**(witnessed p.)** witness (v): to see something happen, especially an accident or crime  
**spray** (n): a mass of very small drops of liquid carried in the air  
**insides** (n): a person's or animal's internal organs, especially their stomach or bowels  
**(churned p.)** churn (v): to mix something, especially a liquid, with great force  
**(enveloped (adj))** envelope (n): a flat, usually square or rectangular, paper container for a letter  
**boulders** (n): very large rocks  
**(plodded p.)** plod (v): to walk taking slow steps, as if your feet are heavy  
**waft** (v): to (cause to) move gently through the air  
**(gliding pr. part.)** glide (v): to move easily without stopping and without effort or noise  
**(slicing p.)** slice (v): to cut something into thin, flat pieces  
**(harried p.)** harry (v): to repeatedly demand something from someone, often causing them to feel worried or angry  
**(tarried p.)** tarry (v): to stay somewhere for longer than expected and delay leaving

# THE OLIVETREE

## Tololwa Marti Mollen—Tanzania



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Nyangusi lives on his Grandfather's farm with many cousins. The large farm is filled with fruit trees and, according to Nyangusi and his cousins, demons. But there is only one olive tree and it marks the farthest point in the farm.

Grandfather often asks his grandchildren to go on errands at night. If he thinks that you ran to or from your destination because of fear, he punishes you by sending you to get a leaf from the olive tree. Grandfather hates cowardice.

Nyangusi has never been told to go to the olive tree at night because, on night errands, he always stops before entering Grandfather's hut and slows down his breathing to fool Grandfather. But one day, while on an errand for Grandmother, Nyangusi is caught red-handed. He runs right into Grandfather and falls down.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Preview.

1. The superstitious children believed that the forest was filled with \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The boy had been stealing from the vegetable garden for weeks before he was \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I wasn't \_\_\_\_\_ by the mask. I knew it was you!
4. My mother sent me on an \_\_\_\_\_ to the store.
5. A river \_\_\_\_\_ the border between the districts.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Nyangusi will be sent to the olive tree by Grandfather and return with a hundred leaves.
- Nyangusi will not be sent to the olive tree because he was going on an errand for Grandmother.
- Nyangusi will not be sent to the olive tree until much later when he has forgotten about it.
- Nyangusi will be sent to the olive tree by Grandfather, but will refuse to go.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

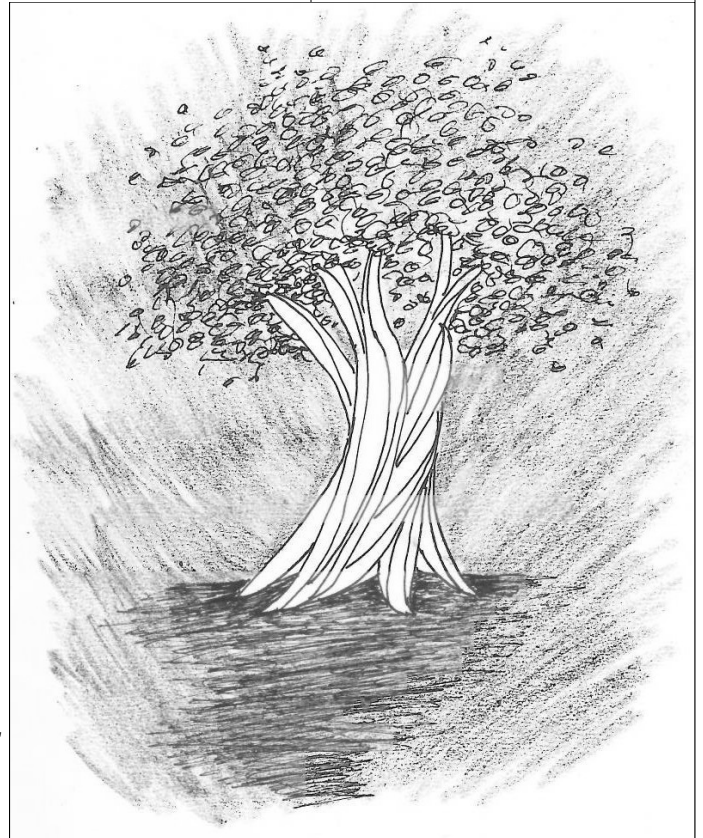
As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. What does 'olmukuna' mean?
2. What is at the 'olmukuna' on Grandfather's farm?
3. What does Grandfather often ask his grandchildren to do?
4. How does Grandfather tell if his grandchildren were afraid while on errands?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**hammering of your heart:** the physical signs that you are frightened or nervous

**pounding of blood in your veins:** the physical signs that you are frightened or nervous



**cold spells:** periods of cold  
**a hush fell:** a sudden calm silence became

**sweat out the night:** to wait nervously all night for an unpleasant situation to end or improve  
**skin me alive:** to punish or tell someone off severely

**a cold sweat:** a state of uncontrollable worry and fear

**omen of death:** a sign that death will come in the near future

5. If he thinks one of his grandchildren was afraid, what's the punishment?
6. Does the narrator run with fear when he is on errands? Why or why not?
7. Before the events described in the story, how many times has the narrator been sent to get a leaf from the olive tree?
8. What is a 'nenauner'?
9. What happens to the narrator when Grandmother sends him for salt?
10. What are three differences between Grandmother's and Grandfather's huts?
11. What does Grandfather ask the narrator to do two weeks later?
12. What happens to the narrator when he hears the owl?
13. What does Grandfather tell the narrator at the end of the story?

### **Literary term: Protagonist**

The **protagonist** is the central character or hero of a story. The protagonist is always involved in the central conflict of the plot and often changes during the course of the story. When a story is told from the 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view, the narrator is often, but not always, the protagonist.

**Focus:** As you read "The Olive Tree," pay attention to what Nyangusi does and thinks. Does he change over the course of the story?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the left column are from the story. The right column has definitions for those words. Look back at the story and try to understand the vocabulary. Then put the letter of its definition on the line next to each word.

<b>Vocabulary</b>		<b>Meanings</b>
1. unique	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	a. showing strong feelings
2. respond	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	b. successfully
3. coward	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	c. in a way that is funny and not serious
4. collision	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	d. too bad to be expressed in words
5. playfully	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	e. existed in large numbers
6. unutterable	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	f. a person who avoids danger, difficulty, or pain
7. abounded	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	g. the situation of being alone
8. solitude	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	h. having a very pleasant taste or smell
9. triumphantly	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	i. very great in amount or degree
10. delicious	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	j. an accident when two things hit each other with force
11. tremendous	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	k. to say or do something as a reaction to something else
12. ardent	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	<del>l. special or unusual in some way</del>

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

1. Nyangusi says that those boys or girls who refused to go get an olive leaf, got Grandfather's 'strap' instead. By this, he probably means that Grandfather:
  - a. made cowards wear the strap to embarrass them
  - b. beat cowards with the strap to punish them
  - c. asked cowards to find the strap to keep them busy
2. Grandfather probably thinks that Grandmother's tales about monsters and 'nenauner' are:
  - a. frightening and true
  - b. funny and interesting
  - c. blasphemous and false
3. Nyangusi says that he and another boy stay in Grandfather's hut. The other boy is probably Nyangusi's:
  - a. cousin
  - b. uncle
  - c. nephew

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**imaginable** (adj): possible to think of  
**olive tree** (n): a Mediterranean tree that produces a small bitter green or black fruit that is eaten or used to produce oil  
**jungle** (n): a tropical forest with trees growing very close together  
**(craziest superlative) crazy** (adj): stupid or not sensible  
**(nightmarish (adj)) nightmare** (n): a frightening/upsetting dream  
**eucalyptus** (n): a type of tree, found especially in Australia, which produces an oil smell used in medicine and industry  
**task** (n): a piece of work to be done, especially one done regularly, unwillingly or with difficulty  
**dawn** (n): the time of day when light begins to appear in the sky  
**terrified** (adj): very frightened  
**(thumping pr. part.) thump** (v): If your heart thumps, it beats more strongly and quickly than usual, from exercise/fear/excitement  
**(infested (adj)) infest** (v): (of animals and insects which carry disease) to cause a problem by being present in large numbers  
**(rumoured p.) rumour** (v): an unofficial interesting story or piece of news that might be true or invented, which quickly spreads from person to person  
**hide** (n): the strong thick skin of an animal used for making leather  
**(inspecting pr. part.) inspect** (v): to look at something or someone carefully in order to discover information, especially about their quality or condition  
**sunset** (n): the time in the evening when the sun goes down  
**moonless** (adj): When there is no moon in the sky  
**pounding** (n): a thumping sound  
**impatient** (adj): easily annoyed because you have to wait  
**(croaked p.) croak** (v): to speak with a rough voice because you have a sore or dry throat, you  
**ankle** (n): the joint between the foot and the leg  
**(huddled p.) huddle** (v): to hold your arms and legs close to your body, because of cold or fear  
**hearthstones** (n): stones in the area around a fireplace or the area of floor in front of it

### Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:

1. "Olmukuna" is the Maasai word for the farthest point on the farm.
2. There is an olive tree at the "olmukuna" of Grandfather's farm.
3. He often asks his grandchildren to go on errands for him, sometimes at night.
4. He could tell they had been frightened because of the beating of their hearts or frightened looks in their eyes.
5. The punishment was to go to the olive tree at night and bring back a leaf.
6. Yes, he does.
7. No, he has not. Every time he is sent on a night errand, he stops and calms down and slows his breathing and heart before going in front of Grandfather.
8. A 'nenauner' is an imagined creature in the scary stories told by Grandmother.
9. The narrator is running while on the errand out of fear and runs directly into Grandfather.
10. Grandmother's hut has a grass thatched roof, while Grandfather's has a corrugated iron roof. Grandfather's hut is where the two oldest boys stay, while the other grandchildren stay in Grandmother's hut. Grandmother's hut is warmer because she cooks there. Grandfather's hut smells like tobacco from his smoking. Grandmother's hut is one big room, while Grandfather's hut is divided into three rooms.
11. Grandfather asks the narrator to go to 'olmukuna' and get an olive leaf.
12. He is frightened by the owl and runs into a tree and is injured.
13. Grandfather tells the narrator that when he is well he will still have to go get the olive leaf.


### Analysing the Story: Protagonist

Look back at the explanation of **protagonist**. Does Nyangusi change over the course of the story? How does he react to the central conflict? In the table below some information about Nyangusi at the beginning of the story (or at some point in the story) is listed. How does this information (and Nyangusi) change as the story progresses? Put your answers in the right column.

At the start of the story...	By the end of the story....
Nyangusi has never been sent to the olive tree as a punishment.	
Nyangusi has always managed to control his breathing and heart beat before seeing Grandfather after a night errand.	
Nyangusi promises himself that he will not be afraid and will bring back twenty leaves from the olive tree.	

### Thinking Critically:

- Why do you think Grandfather waited 2 weeks to send Nyangusi to the olive tree?
- Do you think the character of Grandfather is fair? Is he cruel? Is he loving? Why or why not?

**(stoked p.)** stoke (v): to add fuel to a large closed fire so that it burns well and produces heat  
**(fanned p.)** fan (v): to blow air at a fire to make it burn strongly  
**(rumbling pr. part.)** rumble (v): to make a continuous low sound  
**calf** (n): a young cow  
**(tethered v) p.)** tether (n): a rope or chain used to tie especially an animal to a post or other fixed place, usually so that it can move freely within a small area  
**pipe** (n): a short narrow tube used for smoking tobacco 

**(marked out p.)** mark out (ph v): to show the shape of something by drawing a line around it  
**quarters** (n): an area where a particular persons stays  
**territory** (n): (an area of) land which is considered as belonging to a particular country or person  
**(dimly adv)** dim (adj): not giving or having much light  
**legends** (n): very old stories from ancient times  
**(barking pr. part.)** bark (v): the loud, rough noise that dogs make  
**(creaked p.)** creak (v): When a door or floorboard, etc. creaks, it makes a long low sound when it moves or is moved  
**chill** (n): a feeling of cold  
**resolution** (n): an official decision that is made after a group or organization have voted  
**dense** (adj): close together  
**(reclined p.)** recline (v): to lean back with the upper part of your body in a near horizontal position  
**(tensing pr. part.)** tense (v): If you tense, your muscles become stiff and tight because you are frightened or nervous  
**(hooting pr. part.)** hoot (v): the sound an owl makes  
**(oozing pr. part.)** ooze (v): to flow slowly out of something through a small opening  
**bang** (n): to hit part of the body against something by accident  
**bump** (n): a round, raised area on a surface or on the body  
**(perched p.)** perch (v): to sit on or near the edge of something  
**(incredulously adv)** incredulous (adj): not able to believe something, and usually showing it



# DIFFERENT VALUES

## Barbara Makhalisa—Zimbabwe



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Liza is a thirty-two year old domestic worker in Zimbabwe. Though she is supposed to be playing with Popi, her employer's dog, she is talking on the phone with her friend Clara. She tells Clara that she hates playing with the dog and she complains about her work.

Liza continues to talk about people she knows. Their friend Tina is married to a miserly man who won't let her use his first name. Another friend has to contend with the beastly treatment of a drunken husband. Liza then talks about how the police have been arresting all women found outside in the evening for prostitution, even though the women have done nothing wrong.

Liza has to hang up because the woman she works for returns. The woman asks Liza why she hasn't played more with Popi and Liza says she hurt her ankle. The woman calls Tommy, another servant.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

- Poverty drove her to \_\_\_\_\_, even though she hated having sex for money.
- Lots of people have \_\_\_\_\_ about the noise coming from the bar.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ student was always pushing and teasing other students.
- He was so \_\_\_\_\_ that he would not pay the school fees for his daughters because he wanted to save the money.
- At the age of nine, he had the death of his parents to \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following do you think is most *probable*?

- The woman will ask Tommy if Liza hurt her ankle and he will lie for Liza because he loves her.
- The woman will tell Tommy to play with Popi and he will be angry that he must do Liza's work.
- The woman will tell Tommy to play with Popi but Tommy will tell the woman that Liza is lying.
- The woman will ask Tommy if Liza hurt her ankle and he will tell her that Liza is lying.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

- Who is Clara? Who is Popi?
- How is the narrator communicating with Clara?
- What is the narrator's job? Does she like it?
- Who is Tina? Who is the 'miser'?
- Is the narrator supposed to be on the phone?
- What does the narrator say is typical of marriage?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

- huffing and puffing away:** breathing heavily from physical exercise
- whirl of a time:** lots of fun
- energy to burn:** extra power to be physically and mentally active
- shelled off some of the extra fat:** became thinner
- it beats me:** said when you do not understand a situation
- not a bean to our names:** we are very poor
- high and mighty airs:** false ways of behaving that are intended to make other people feel that you are important and belong to a high social class
- all for outward show:** in order for others to see, but not real
- makes his senses snap:** to lose control of your good judgment
- set a thief to catch a thief:** in order to catch a criminal, you have to think like a criminal



7. What happens to women who are on the street in the evening?
8. Why does the narrator hang up the phone?
9. Who is Tommy?
10. What is the narrator's name?
11. Why does the madam ask Tommy to play with Popi?
12. Did Liza really hurt her ankle?

### **Literary term: Metaphor**

A **metaphor** is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two things that are basically not alike but that have something in common. Unlike similes, metaphors do not use the words *like* or *as*.

**Focus:** In “Different Values,” Liza refers to prostitution as “an age-old social cancer.” We know that prostitution is not a cancer, but we understand her point that it can be harmful just as cancer is harmful. Can you find one or two other metaphors in this story?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Cultural Context**

Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, a *n'anga* are traditional healers who use a combination of herbs, medical advice and spiritual guidance to heal people. They are believed to have religious powers to tell fortunes, and to change, heal, bless or even kill people. Traditionally N'angas were people's main source of help in all matters of life. They existed for decades well before the British colonial era.

**Muti** is a term for traditional medicine in Southern Africa as far north as Lake Tanganyika. In Southern Africa, the word muti is in widespread use in most indigenous African languages, as well as in South African English and Afrikaans where it is sometimes used as a slang word for medicine in general.

### **Gender Context:**

In the early 1980s, under Robert Mugabe's government in Zimbabwe soldiers and policemen seized hundreds of women, including several foreign teachers and schoolgirls, in what they said was a **crackdown on prostitution**. Soldiers and policemen raided nightclubs, movie theaters, hotels, supermarkets and some homes. At least 800 women were detained. No men were arrested.

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

1. That is the only **benefit** I get for my efforts, though I am not particularly grateful, because I just hate it all.
  - a. a small effect
  - b. a bad effect
  - c. a good effect
  - d. a big effect
2. My dear—don't you be **deceived** by all this outward gloss and high and mighty airs about education from abroad.
  - a. discouraged
  - b. fooled
  - c. depressed
  - d. impressed
3. Some husbands like 'Miser' treat their wives in the most **atrocious** fashion.
  - a. terrible
  - b. generous
  - c. loving
  - d. silly
4. Yes, probably that good furniture and other property in there are all for outward show and **prestige**, you know—shocking!
  - a. wealth
  - b. status
  - c. shame
  - d. celebration



**a men's world:** a society that values men more than women  
**have to toe the line:** to do what you are expected to do  
**age old:** very old  
**social cancer:** a harmful activity that spreads quickly in society  
**leaves one with a sour taste in the mouth:** If an experience leaves a sour taste in your mouth, you have an unpleasant memory  
**window shopping:** when you spend time looking at the goods on sale in shop windows without intending to buy any of them  
**goodness knows:** used to mean 'I don't know'  
**without batting an eyelid:** without showing signs of surprise at something unexpected  
**a wrong number:** an accidental call to the wrong phone  
**redhot eye:** a look that is supposed to make the person being looked at understand that the person looking is angry

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**madam** (n): employer  
**bored** (adj): feeling unhappy because something is not interesting or you have nothing to do  
**(drooling pr. part.) drool** (v): to let saliva flow from your mouth  
**resume** (v): If an activity resumes, it starts again after a pause  
**lawn** (n): an area of grass which is cut regularly to keep it short  
**silly** (adj): showing little thought  
**pranks** (n): tricks that are intended to be funny but not to cause harm or damage  
**soiled** (adj): dirty  
**nappies** (n): squares of thick soft paper or cloth which are fastened around a baby's bottom and between its legs to absorb its waste  
**circumstances** (n): a fact that makes a situation the way it is  
**minimum wage** (n): the smallest amount of money that an employer is legally allowed to pay someone who works for them  
**better off** (adj): to be in a better situation when smth happens  
**communal** (adj): belonging to or used by a group of people rather than one single person  
**fowls** (n): birds of a type that is used to produce meat or eggs

5. I've heard from very **reliable** sources that she is not permitted to call him by his first name, yet all the office girls use his first name.
- a. able to be read                      c. able to be found  
b. able to be heard                      d. able to be trusted
6. I know she is not **finicky** but we've been on the phone for ages.
- a. difficult to please                      c. difficult to understand  
b. difficult to talk to                      d. difficult to believe

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

1. "Lolly" is most likely:  
a. Clara's child    b. Clara's employer's child    c. Liza's employer's child
2. For some time Clara and Liza are discussing their friend Tina. Liza says that she has "never seen her wearing lipstick yet she used to before she got married." This is probably because:  
a. her husband forbids it  
b. she no longer wishes to wear it  
c. she can no longer afford it
3. Mushumbi Pools are probably:  
a. a shopping center    b. a detention center    c. a learning center

### **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- Clara is a friend of the narrator and a servant in another home. Popi is a dog that belongs to the narrator's employers.
- The narrator and Clara are talking on the phone.
- The narrator is a servant and one of her responsibilities is to play with Popi, the dog, and clean up his messes. She really dislikes it.
- Tina is a friend of the narrator. The miser is the husband of friend of theirs.
- No, she is not supposed to be on the phone.
- The narrator says that typical marriages are unhappy.
- Women on the street at night are arrested as prostitutes even if they are not.
- The narrator hangs up because her employer (madam) returns home.
- Tommy is the gardener, another servant in the same home as the narrator.
- The narrator's name is Liza.
- Madam asks Tommy to play with Popi because Liza says she hurt her ankle.
- No, she is lying about her ankle.

### **Analysing the Story: Metaphor**

Look back at the explanation of **metaphor**. Two metaphors from the story are listed in the table below. Try to give the meaning of the second one. Then, include any other metaphors that you found in the left column and give an explanation for it in the right column.

Metaphor	Meaning
Prostitution is an age-old social cancer	<i>Prostitution has been around for a very long time and there is no way to keep it out of society</i>
Some of us who haven't a bean to our names are better off than her.	

### **Thinking Critically:**

- When Liza's madam returns she can tell that Liza was on the phone. How?
- Which character do you sympathise with more, Liza or her madam? Why?

**(cackling pr. part.)** cackle (v): to make the loud, unpleasant sound of a chicken

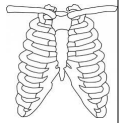
**slaughter** (n): the killing of many people cruelly and unfairly

**gloss** (n): a smooth shiny appearance on the surface of something

**housekeeping** (n): the money used for buying food and other things necessary for living

**(snapping at (someone) pr. part.)** snap at (someone) (ph v): to suddenly be unable to control a strong feeling, especially anger

**ribs** (n): bones that curve round from your back to your chest



**(courting pr. part.)** court (v): to have a romantic relationship with someone that you hope to marry



**lipstick** (n): a coloured substance that women put on their lips to make them more attractive

**bliss** (n): perfect happiness

**bulk** (n): something or someone that is very large

**(discouraging pr. part.)** discourage (v): to make someone feel less confident, enthusiastic and positive about something

**displace** (v): to force something out of its usual/original position

**crackdown** (n): when someone starts to deal with bad or illegal behaviour in a more severe way

**issue** (n): a problem which people are thinking and talking about

**stamp out** (ph v): to get rid of something that is wrong/harmful

**success** (n): the achieving of the results wanted or hoped for

**(randomly (adv))** random (adj): happening, done or chosen by chance rather than by a plan

**agony** (n): extreme physical or mental pain or suffering

**(sprained p.)** sprain (v): to cause an injury to a joint (= place where two bones are connected) in the body by a sudden movement



**the ironing** (n): the activity of making clothes flat and smooth

**limp** (v): to walk slowly and with difficulty because of having an injured or painful leg or foot

**laundry room** (n): room where

# THEY SOLD MY SISTER

## Leteipa Ole Sunkuli—Kenya



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Naliki is a young girl in rural Kenya. One day some people come to visit her home. They are very rich and give her parents many gifts as a dowry for her sister, Nyamalo. They wish for Nyamalo to marry their son, Ole Sirayo.

Naliki's father tells her brother Tumuka to go and bring Nyamalo from boarding school. But Tumuka defiantly says that he will not go. So, their father goes and escorts Nyamalo home. When Nyamalo learns she is to be married to Ole Sirayo, she and her mother weep.

Still, Nyamalo knows that she must go. Naliki accompanies her sister to her new home. That night, Nyamalo tries to sleep in Naliki's bed, but Ole Sirayo is angry. They yell and then Ole Sirayo picks up Nyamalo and forces her into his bed.

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**tender age:** very young

**shed a tear:** cry

**father-in-law:** father by marriage

**mother-in-law:** mother by marriage

**tied up the loose ends:** conclude things that still need to be done or explained

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. Before they could be married, the man had to pay a \_\_\_\_\_ to his bride's parents.
2. The woman \_\_\_\_\_ a lot when her son joined the army and left home.
3. The prisoners were \_\_\_\_\_ by two guards back to the prison.
4. Tomorrow I will \_\_\_\_\_ my older brother to the depot when he leaves for town.
5. The soldier \_\_\_\_\_ refused to obey orders.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Naliki will stay with her sister and marry Ole Sirayo's brother.
- Naliki will run away because she is scared and never return to her home.
- Naliki will return home and her father will try to marry her off as well.
- Naliki will tell her parents what happened and they will come rescue Nyamalo.



### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. How old is the narrator?
2. Who comes to visit the narrator's family? Why?
3. Where is Nyamalo?
4. Why won't Tumuka go to get Nyamalo?
5. Is Nyamalo happy that she is to be married?
6. Who travels with Nyamalo to her new husband's home?
7. Where does Nyamalo stay for the first four nights at her husband's home?
8. What does Nyamalo try to do on the first night she stays with Ole Sirayo?
9. What does Ole Sirayo want?

#### Key Vocabulary:

**suitor** (n): a man who wants to marry a particular woman

**flock** (n): a group of sheep, goats or birds, or a group of people

**(quaked p.) quake** (v): to shake because you are very frightened or to feel or show great fear

**(dilated (adj)) dilate** (v): to (cause a part of the body to) become wider or further open

10. What does Ole Sirayo do when Nyamalo won't obey him?
11. What does the narrator do the next day?
12. Who comes to visit the narrator's home two years later?
13. What does this man want?
14. What does the narrator say that she will do?

### **Literary term: Antagonist**

The **antagonist** in a story is the character in opposition to the hero, or protagonist. Sometimes the antagonist is not a character, but something else, like a force of nature (the drought in “Looking For a Rain God”), some aspect of society (lack of opportunity in “The Case of the Prison Monger”), or an internal force within the protagonist (fear in “The Olive Tree”).

**Focus:** As you read “They Sold My Sister,” see if you can identify the antagonist(s). Try to identify not only more than one character acting as antagonists, but also aspects of the society in the story that act as antagonists.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Linguistic Context:**

Many of the male characters in “They Sold My Sister,” indeed even the author, have the word **Ole** as part of their names. **Ole** means “Son of.”

### **Gender Context:**

Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female **circumcision**, is the ritual removal of some of the external female genitalia. FGM is primarily concentrated in Africa and the Middle East. The procedures differ by ethnic group, including: removal of the clitoral hood and clitoral glans (the visible part of the clitoris), removal of the inner labia and, in severe form (known as infibulation), removal of the labia and closure of the vulva. Health effects vary, but can include recurrent infections, chronic pain, cysts, an inability to get pregnant, complications during childbirth and fatal bleeding. There are no known health benefits.

The practice stems from gender inequality, attempts to control women's sexuality, and ideas about purity and aesthetics. It is usually carried out by women, who fear that not cutting their daughters will expose the girls to social exclusion. FGM has been outlawed in most countries where it occurs, but laws are poorly enforced. The United Nations has recognized FGM as a human-rights violation.

In parts of Africa, a traditional marriage ceremony depends on payment of a **bride price** to be valid. In some parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the bride price must be paid first in order for the couple to get permission to marry in church or in other civil ceremonies. The amount can vary from a token to a great sum.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the visits between families to negotiate the bride price are traditional customs that are considered by many Africans to be central to African marriage and society. In some African cultures, the price of a bride is connected with her reputation and esteem in the community, an aspect that has been criticized as demeaning to women.

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

1. How old is Naliki at the end of the story?
  - a. 10
  - b. 12
  - c. 14
2. Naliki says that her father's “hands quaked as he took the money” offered by the father of the man to marry her sister. His hands ‘quaked’ probably because he was feeling:
  - a. nervous
  - b. sad
  - c. excited

**proverbs** (n): short sentences, etc., usually known by many people, stating something commonly experienced or giving advice  
**(circumcised** (adj)) circumcise (v): to cut the protecting loose skin off a boy's penis, or to cut away a girl's clitoris and the skin around it, for medical, traditional or religious reasons

**agape** (adj): with the mouth open, showing surprise or shock

**cheeks** (n): the soft part of your face which is below your eye and between your mouth and ear

**forsake** (v): to leave someone forever—when they need you

**shed** (v): to get rid of something you do not need or want

**departure** (n): when a person or vehicle, etc. leaves somewhere

**loincloth** (n): a cloth that hangs down from around the waist, worn by men in hot countries

**belt** (n): a strip of leather or material worn around the waist to support clothes or for decoration

**waist** (n): the part of the body above and narrower than the hips



**ornament** (n): an object which is beautiful rather than useful

**gourdful** (n): the contents of the shell of a large fruit

**(anointed p.) anoint** (v): to make someone holy in a ceremony by putting holy water or oil on them

**promenade** (n): a path for walking on, especially next to the sea

**(transferred p.) transfer** (v): to move someone or something from one place, vehicle, person

or group to another

**choke** (v): If you choke, you stop breathing because something is blocking your throat

**eaves** (n): the edge of a roof that sticks out over the top of a wall

**(eavesdropping pr. part.) eavesdrop** (v): to listen to someone's private conversation without them knowing

**heifer** (n): a young cow that has not yet given birth



**(inquired p.) inquire** (v): to ask for information

3. When Nyamalo is leaving for her husband's home, her father says "This girl will bring us shame." He probably says this because:
- she is marrying a bad man
  - she is too young to be married
  - she is clearly unhappy with the marriage

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the word bank below are all from the story. Find them in the story and see if you can understand their meaning. Then fill in the spaces in the sentences below with the correct word.

#### **WORD BANK**

**insolent** ~~wad~~ **resolutely** **politely** **tremulous** **offensive** **fond** **embraced** **bitterly**

- When she went to pay the driver, he pulled out a wad of bills.
- We \_\_\_\_\_ each other when we saw each other for the first time in a year.
- To gain another person's respect, it helps to behave \_\_\_\_\_ when you first meet.
- When my father was young, he was very \_\_\_\_\_ of playing football.
- Because he was afraid, when he spoke his voice was \_\_\_\_\_.
- The teacher made \_\_\_\_\_ comments about women, and as a result, he was fired.
- Their relationship ended \_\_\_\_\_ because they could not stop fighting with one another.
- Because the student acted \_\_\_\_\_ on a daily basis, he was expelled from school.
- Her parents wanted her to get married, but she continued to \_\_\_\_\_ deny proposals because she wanted to continue with her education.

### **Suggested Answers for Comp. Questions:**

- The narrator is ten years old when the story begins.
- Some men and women visit the narrator's home to meet her parents and pay a dowry for Nyamalo.
- Nyamalo is away at boarding school.
- He won't go because he disagrees with his parents and wants Nyamalo to finish school.
- No, she is very unhappy.
- Her mother-in-law and father-in-law come to take her home and the narrator goes along as well.
- She stays with her new mother-in-law.
- She tries to sleep in the bed with the narrator.
- He wants Nyamalo to come sleep in his bed.
- He picks her up and forces her to sleep with him.
- She goes back home.
- Another man, Ole Timau, comes to her home.
- He wants to marry the narrator.
- She says that she will run away to the city and stay with her brother if possible.

### **Analysing the Story: Antagonist**

The narrator of this story is also the protagonist, along with her brother, Tumuka, and her sister, Nyamalo. The three of them face many different problems throughout the story, including: Maasai culture, their parents, Ole Sirayo, and Ole Timau. Look back at the explanation of **antagonist**. In the table below, the left column contains some problems they face. In the right column, fill in the principle antagonist for each one.

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Antagonist</b>
• Nyamalo is forced to leave school.	
• Nyamalo is forced to marry.	
• Nyamalo is forced to sleep with her husband.	
• Naliki fears that she will be forced to marry.	

### **Thinking Critically:**

- The narrator of this story is a young girl, but the author is a grown man. As you were reading could you tell that the author was a man? If so, how?
- Can you write a brief (2-3 paragraph) story from the perspective of a *1st person narrator* who is very different from yourself?
- Tumuka and his father disagree very strongly about Nyamalo's education. Who do you agree with? Why?



# THE INTRUDER

## Peter Songa—Uganda



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Mungo is from Dar-es-Salaam, the capital of Tanzania, but he is visiting Engaruka in Maasailand, a very rural and traditional part of the country. Two Maasai (local people who raise cattle) see him and come to greet him. Mungo feels uneasy, so he increases the volume on his radio to interest the Maasai.

Mungo and the Maasai begin chatting. Mungo looks out at the harsh land around them. He asks the Maasai why they don't live in the nearby mountains where the land is greener. But the Maasai are not cultivators and the mountains would be difficult for their cattle.

Mungo and the Maasai discuss Dar-es-Salaam and listen to the radio. They see an aeroplane in the sky. Mungo wonders if the Maasai would like to live in Dar-es-Salaam. Then, the Maasai yell excitedly because they see a car approaching.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. The Sahara Desert is a \_\_\_\_\_ area without water or vegetation.
2. I cannot hear the radio. Could you \_\_\_\_\_?
3. The only way to travel from Malawi to America is by \_\_\_\_\_.
4. She felt \_\_\_\_\_ when the stranger began asking her questions.
5. Many people in Malawi are \_\_\_\_\_, growing maize and tobacco.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The car will pass by and Mungo will decide to stay with the Maasai.
- The car will pick up the Maasai and leave Mungo in Maasailand.
- Mungo will ask the Maasai to go to Dar-es-Salaam with him and they will go.
- Mungo will say goodbye to the Maasai and go to Dar-es-Salaam in the car.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

1. While Mungo is sitting on the hill, who approaches him?
2. Why does Mungo increase the volume on his radio?
3. What does "Ol Donyo" mean?
4. Why does Mungo tell the Maasai the price of radios in cows and not money?
5. What are the "black colonialists" doing in Maasailand?
6. Why do the Maasai live on the plain though the mountains are greener?
7. Where is Mungo from?
8. Other than Mungo, what other "intruders" show up in Maasailand?
9. Mungo wonders if these Maasai would like to live in a big city like Dar-es-Salaam. Does he think they would like it? Why or why not?
10. What does Mungo dream of doing in Maasailand?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**a sleeping giant:** something extremely dangerous, but not at the moment

**cast a critical eye:** to look deeply and meaningfully at something

**in sharp contrast:** a very noticeable difference between things  
**reaped the fruits:** got the benefits, etc. that is the result of your own actions

**agape with wonder:** amazed; impressed



**the outside world:** things that are common in normal society, but which you have no experience of

**cast a spell:** to use words thought to be magic, especially in order to have an effect on someone



**Literary term: Simile**

A **simile** is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two things using the word *like* or *as*.

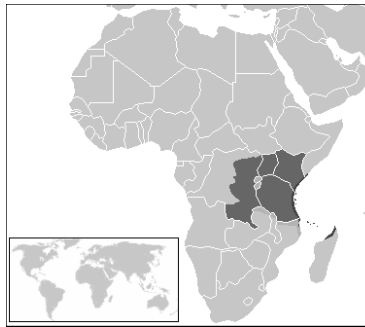
**Focus:** Like and as are necessary to form a simile. However, like and as are very common words that are often used for other purposes. As you read “The Intruder,” pay attention to the many similes, but also pay attention to the other uses of like and as.

**UNDERSTANDING THE STORY****Cultural Context:**

The **Maasai** are an ethnic group of people living in Kenya and the north of Tanzania. The Maasai are pastoralists, and are known as fearsome warriors and cattle-rustlers. A Maasai homestead, or **manyatta**, is a group of low huts made of bent branches daubed with dried mud and cow-dung surrounded by a thorn fence, with separate huts for the father, and each wife with her young children.

**Linguistic Context:**

The Swahili language or **Kiswahili** is a Bantu language. It is spoken by various communities in the African Great Lakes region and Southeast Africa, including Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).



Although only around fifteen million people speak Swahili as a mother tongue, it is used as a *lingua franca* in much of Southeast Africa. Swahili serves as an official language of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and the DRC. It is also an official language of the African Union.

Some Swahili vocabulary is derived from Arabic through contact with Arabic-speaking Muslim inhabitants of the Swahili Coast. It has also incorporated German, Portuguese, English, Hindi and French words into its vocabulary through contact with empire builders, traders and slavers during the past five centuries.

**Jambo, Bwana** is a Kiswahili salutation meaning, “Hello, sir.” When the Maasai say this to Mungo he replies with **Sijambo. Abari gani?** or “Hello, how are you?”

**Geographical Context:**

**Engaruka** is an abandoned system of ruins in the Great Rift Valley of northern Tanzania. Sometime in the 15th century, an iron age farming community developed with a large continuous village area on the slope of the Rift Valley escarpment. Several thousand people lived there and developed an intricate irrigation and cultivation system, involving a stone-block canal channelling water where needed. It is uncertain who these people were or why they left. Today, the area of Engaruka is inhabited primarily by Maasai.

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- Based on the story, the Maasai most likely don't use:
  - money
  - spears
  - milk
- Mungo is glad the two Maasai don't ask how a man from 'Dasalamu' can be heard in a box so far away probably because:
  - it is illegal to share that information with the Maasai
  - he is tired of talking with the Maasai
  - he doesn't know how to explain it to them

**Key Vocabulary:**

**crag** (n): a high rough mass of rock which sticks out from the land around it  
**dome-shaped** (adj): shaped like one-half of a ball  
**flatness** (n): the quality of being level and without curved, high or hollow parts  
**(vanished p.) vanish** (v): to disappear or stop being present or existing, especially in a sudden, surprising way  
**(harshly adv.) harsh** (adj): unpleasant, unkind, cruel or unnecessarily severe  
**(tumbling pr. part.) tumble** (v): to fall quickly and without control  
**gorge** (n): a deep narrow valley with steep sides, usually formed by a river or stream cutting through hard rock  
**transistor radio set** (n): a small radio containing transistors, used especially in the p.  
**(panting pr. part.) pant** (v): to breathe quickly and loudly through your mouth, usually because you have been doing something very energetic  
**(exposing pr. part.) expose** (v): to remove what is covering something so that it can be seen  
**coppery** (adj): reddish-brown  
**(ventured p.) venture** (v): a new activity, usually in business, which involves risk  
**(ensued p.) ensue** (v): to happen after something else, especially as a result of it  
**concentration** (n): the ability to think carefully about something you are doing and nothing else  
**(tilled p.) till** (v): to prepare and use land for growing crops  
**colonialists** (n): a group of people who live in a colony  
**newcomer** (n): someone who has recently arrived in a place  
**scourges** (n): something or someone that causes great suffering or a lot of trouble  
**alternative** (n): something that is different from something else, especially from what is usual, and offering the possibility of choice  
**(pastoralists n.) pastoral** (adj): farming which involves keeping sheep, cattle, etc.



3. The 'intruders' in the story are:
- the river, mountains, and oasis
  - the Maasai, cows, and their spears
  - Mungo, the aeroplane, and the Land Rover

### Guessing Meaning from Context:

The words in the left column are from the story. The right column has definitions for those words. Look back at the story and try to understand the vocabulary. Then put the letter of its definition on the line next to each word.

Vocabulary	Meanings
1. volcano	<u>g.</u> a. a place in a desert where there is water and therefore plants
2. extinct	___ b. the farthest place you can see where the sky touches the land
3. horizon	___ c. to explain something in more detail
4. onlooker	___ d. no longer active or alive
5. oasis	___ e. a person who watches something but is not involved
6. balanced	___ f. to stop moving or doing something suddenly
7. handicapped	<u>g.</u> <del>a mountain with a hole at the top through which lava is released</del>
8. clad	___ h. the most important pieces of information about something
9. elaborate	___ i. describes a condition when things are of equal weight or force
10. gist	___ j. dressed or wearing or covered with
11. halt	___ k. not able to use part of your mind because it is damaged

### Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:

- Two Maasai approach Mungo while he is sitting on the hill.
- He is nervous about the Maasai and thinks the radio will interest them.
- It means "mountain."
- The Maasai don't use money.
- They are cultivating the fertile land near the river.
- The plain is better for the cows which are their primary source of livelihood.
- Mungo is probably from Dar-es-Salaam.
- An aeroplane flies over them.
- He decides they would not like the city because they are and dependent on their families/communities and in the city they would not have that support.
- He thinks about developing the land and turning it into a city.

### Analysing the Story: Simile

Look back at the explanation of **simile**. Remember: not every use of 'like' or 'as' is a simile. But, every simile will have 'like' or 'as' in it! In the chart below put some examples of similes from the story in the left column and explain their meaning in the right. One is done for you. Can you find another example of a simile and add it the chart?

Simile	Meaning
"Engaruka spread out before him like a shallow bowl."	<i>The view of the land in Engaruka was flat and resembled a wide, open dish.</i>
"He was like a fly sitting on a limp of food."	
"The basin was like a hot bath in the afternoon heat "	

### Thinking Critically:

- Authors often write about characters that may share different beliefs or values than they hold themselves. Do you think the author of this story is sympathetic of Mungo or do you think he sees Mungo as foolish? Why?

**(reasonableness (n))** reasonable (adj): based on good judgment and therefore fair/practical  
**(reciting pr. part.)** recite (v): to say a piece of writing aloud from memory, or to publicly state a list of things

**(droning pr. part.)** drone (v): to make a low continuous noise which does not change its note  
**overhead** (prep): above your head, usually in the sky  
**absorption** (n): the process of taking something into another substance

**agoggle** (adj): not a word, but likely meaning surprised  
**intruder** (n): someone in a place where they are not wanted



**plane** (n): a vehicle designed for air travel, which has wings and one or more engines

**mission school** (n): a school run by a Christian mission

**vices** (n): moral faults or weaknesses in someone's character  
**prick** (v): to make a very small hole or holes in the surface of something, sometimes in a way which causes pain

**fertile** (adj): describes land that can produce good quality crops

**transform** (v): to change completely the appearance of something or someone, especially so that they are improved

**cattle stalls** (n): small closed areas within farm buildings in which there is space for animals to be kept

**amusement parks** (n): large permanent areas for public entertainment, with activities and big machines to ride on or play games on, restaurants, etc., connected with a single theme  
**mansion** (n): a very large expensive house

**(awakened p.)** awaken (v): to stop sleeping or to make someone stop sleeping

**escarpment** (n): a steep slope or cliff, such as one which marks the edge of a range of hills

**visible** (adj): able to be seen

**pimple** (n): a small raised spot on the skin which is temporary



# THE TOILET

## Gcina Mhlope—South Africa



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

The narrator of this story is a young woman who has just finished secondary school. Instead of listening to her elders and doing something respectable, like teaching or nursing, she goes to stay with her sister in Johannesburg.

In Johannesburg, she stays secretly in her sister's room in the house of her sister's employer. At first, she just reads all day, but later she gets a job in a factory. So that her sister's employer will not see her, the narrator has to sneak out of her sister's room very early in the morning. But this means that she must wait outside for two hours before getting a bus to work.

One day, to escape the rain during her two hour wait, the narrator goes into a public toilet. She discovers that very few people use that toilet and she begins to go there regularly to read and daydream. Some time later, the narrator is discovered by the white woman who employs her sister while she is waiting outside of her sister's room. After this happens, she feels a longing to get to 'her' toilet.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. He never paid attention. He was always lost in a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. His mother did not think that his new job working in a bar was \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is an important health care profession.
4. He felt a great sense of \_\_\_\_\_ to see his wife when he received a letter from her.
5. I managed to \_\_\_\_\_ in when no one was looking.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The narrator will go to the toilet the next morning, but someone else will be inside it.
- The narrator will go to the toilet the next morning and begin writing a story.
- The narrator will take her sister to the toilet the next morning.
- The narrator will decide never to go to the toilet again.



#### Idioms & Expressions:

**empty stomach:** without eating anything

**comings and goings:** movements

**kicking my heels:** doing something which I enjoy

**longing inside:** a feeling of wanting something or someone very much

**at double speed:** two times as fast; very fast

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. What did the narrator's mother wish that the narrator had done when she finished secondary school?
2. How old do you think the narrator is when this story takes place?
3. Where does the narrator stay when she goes to Johannesburg?
4. What are "Fair Lady" and "Women's Weekly"?
5. Eventually, where does the narrator go to work?

#### Key Vocabulary:

**(acquired p.) acquire (v):** to get something

**grove (n):** a group of trees

**outing (n):** when a group of people go on a short journey, usually for pleasure or education

**(painting her nails pr. part.)**

**paint (one's) nails (ph v):** to put make-up on her nails

**knit (v):** to make clothes, etc. by

6. Who is Gwendolene?
7. Why does the narrator have to sneak in and out of her sister's room?
8. Why did the narrator first go into the public toilet?
9. What does the narrator think about while sitting in the toilet?
10. One Thursday evening, the narrator goes into the back yard at the usual time, but her sister is not in the room. What does the narrator do?
11. When the dogs discover the narrator, who comes to see what has happened?
12. What had occurred that morning between the narrator and her sister?
13. How does the narrator's sister react when she finds her in the street?
14. When the narrator goes to the toilet the next morning, what does she do?

### **Literary term: Foreshadowing**

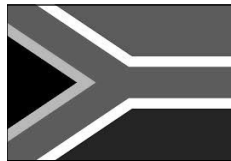
**Foreshadowing** is a writer's use of hints or clues to indicate events and situations that will occur later in the plot. The use of this technique creates suspense while preparing the reader for what is to come.

**Focus:** The opening paragraph of "The Toilet" includes clues about how the story will end. As you begin reading the story, can you guess what the protagonist will do at the end of the story?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Historical Context:**

Apartheid (which is an Afrikaans word meaning "apartness") was a political and social system in South Africa while it was under white minority rule (meaning white people ruled the country, even though there were a minority) from 1948 to 1994. Under apartheid, the people of South Africa were divided by their race and the races were forced to live apart from each other. There were laws that kept up the racial separation. The system of apartheid in South Africa was ended in 1994 during the presidency of Frederik Willem de Klerk. Nelson Mandela was then elected as the first black president. Both were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts.



### **Linguistic Context:**

South Africa has 11 official languages. Most South Africans speak more than one. Two of the languages spoken in South Africa, Afrikaans and English, came from Europe. The other nine languages are Bantu. **Sotho** is spoken by around 4 million South Africans. **Zulu** is spoken by nearly 10 million South Africans and is the mother language of almost one quarter of South Africans. **Xhosa** is very closely related to Zulu and is spoken by almost 8 million people.

### **Monetary Context:**

The **Rand** is the currency of South Africa. The rand is subdivided into 100 cents. It is the currency of the Common Monetary Area between South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho. It takes its name from the Witwatersrand, the ridge where most of South Africa's gold deposits were found.

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

1. Then I got this **temporary** job in a clothing factory in town.
  - a. low-paying
  - b. not lasting long
  - c. high-paying
  - d. lasting a long time
2. The noise was **comforting**—to know I had escaped the wet, only a few heavy drops had got me.
  - a. making you feel dry
  - b. making you feel worried
  - c. making you feel calmer
  - d. making you feel stronger

using two long needles to connect wool into joined rows  
**ladies boutiques** (n): a small shop that sells fashionable clothes, shoes, jewellery, etc.  
**sleeves** (n): the parts of a piece of clothing that covers the arms  
**dump** (v): to suddenly end a romantic relationship with someone



**purse** (n): a small container for money, usually used by a woman

**sketches** (n): simple, quickly-made drawings

**(publishing pr. part.) publish** (v): to make information available to people, especially in a book, magazine or newspaper

**openings** (n): holes or spaces that something can pass through

**eyelashes** (n): the hairs which grow along the edges of the eye  
**(fluttered p.) flutter** (v): to make a series of quick delicate movements up and down

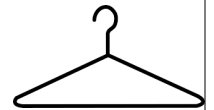
**high heeled shoes** (n): women's shoes in which the heels are raised high off the ground

**alarm** (n): a device which makes a loud noise to warn of danger

**tiptoe** (v): to walk on your toes with the heel of your foot lifted off the ground, especially in order not to make a noise

**soup dish** (n): a container from which soup is eaten

**hanger** (n): a curved piece of wire on which clothes are



hung while they are being stored

**screech** (n): a long loud high noise which is unpleasant to hear

**premises** (n): the land and buildings owned by someone

**(briefed p.) brief** (v): to give someone information about what they should do or say

**(munched p.) munch** (v): to eat something, especially noisily

**snack** (n): a small amount of food that is eaten between meals

**(boiled p.) boil** (v): to reach the temperature at which a liquid starts to turn into a gas

**depressed** (adj): unhappy and without hope for the future

**kin** (n): family and relations

**supervisor** (n): a person whose job is to supervise someone

3. The plastic bag in which I carried my book was a little **damp** because I used it to cover my head.
  - a. wet
  - b. old
  - c. dirty
  - d. heavy
4. I enjoyed that kind of **privacy**.
  - a. not being friendly to others
  - b. not being helpful to others
  - c. not being understood by others
  - d. not being watched by others
5. For the first time, I realised how stupid it was of me not to have cut myself a **spare** key long ago.
  - a. unnecessary
  - b. small
  - c. extra
  - d. secret

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

1. The narrator gets a bus to work at half past seven, but leaves her sister's room at half past five because:
  - a. she has a long journey to the bus stop
  - b. she has to leave the house before the white people get up
  - c. she enjoys spending her mornings in the park
2. The narrator says "I realised how stupid it was of me not to have cut myself a spare key long ago." She probably says this because:
  - a. the owners of the house want her to get one
  - b. she could get in when her sister is not around
  - c. her sister asked her to get one but she didn't
3. In the narrator's home village most people probably speak:
  - a. English
  - b. Sotho
  - c. Xhosa and Zulu

### **Suggested Answers for Comp. Questions:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The narrator's mother wished the narrator had gone to school to be a nurse or a teacher.</li> <li>2. She's likely 18 because she just left secondary school.</li> <li>3. She stays in her sister's room.</li> <li>4. They are magazines.</li> <li>5. She goes to work in a clothing factory.</li> <li>6. Gwendolene is another girl at the factory where the narrator goes to work.</li> <li>7. She is not supposed to be staying there and so she doesn't want the white people to see her.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. One morning while she was waiting for the bus it was raining very hard.</li> <li>9. She thinks about the writing she used to do when she was in school.</li> <li>10. She sits down on the steps and reads because she thinks if she tries to go back out she will be seen.</li> <li>11. The owner of the house comes over and finds her.</li> <li>12. They had argued because the narrator had not turned off her alarm quickly enough.</li> <li>13. She calls her stupid, but lets her into the room.</li> <li>14. She begins writing a poem.</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

### **Analysing the Story: Foreshadowing**

Look back at the explanation of **foreshadowing**. There are several hints about how the story will turn out. The left column of the table below contains some instances of foreshadowing. In the right column, write what is foreshadowed by each instance.

Instance of foreshadowing	What is foreshadowed?
"People thought these professions were respectable, but I knew I wanted to do something different."	
"I was getting bored with the books I was reading—the love stories all sounded the same."	
"I bought myself a notebook in which I was hoping to write something."	

### **Thinking Critically:**

- The story begins with the narrator saying that sometimes she "wanted to give up and be a good girl who listened to her elders" and become a teacher or a nurse. Do you think this would have been a good idea for the narrator? Why or why not?

# BINDEH'S GIFT

## Sarif Easmon—Sierra Leone



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

This story is told by Kallon in the present day to Mr Brassfoot. They are standing on a rock above Moa Falls that was once used by war leaders to punish cowards in battle by drowning them. The story Kallon tells describes events that took place long ago in the 1800s:

Kai Borie is an old war leader who has assembled his entire army around the rock for the execution of his nephew and heir, Bensali. Kai Borie asks Bensali to tell his story once again. Bensali explains that he led a war party to scale the walls of the enemies' camp. But, somehow, their enemies knew about the attack and Bensali's brothers were killed. Though Bensali managed to kill Gbaserie, the leader of the enemies, Bensali was badly injured and ran away. This is why he will be executed.

Even though women are not allowed at such a ceremony, Bindeh, Bensali's wife, comes up to the rock where Kai Borie is and asks him to have mercy on Bensali. When Kai Borie will not listen, Bindeh says that she has one final gift for Kai Borie in a basket she has brought with her.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. In some cultures, the \_\_\_\_\_ of a leader is the first born son.
2. She did not want her children to play near the river because they could fall in and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. When the politician visited the village, everyone \_\_\_\_\_ at the grounds.
4. The captured thief begged for \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The children \_\_\_\_\_ the school walls and ran from school.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The basket contains gold and money and Kai Borie will accept it and free Bensali.
- The basket contains the head of Kai Borie's greatest enemy and he will accept it and free Bensali.
- The basket contains the head of Kai Borie's wife and Bindeh will throw it at Kai Borie before leaping into the falls.
- The basket contains deadly snakes and Bindeh will throw it at Kai Borie before leaping over the falls.



#### Idioms & Expressions:

**oared in:** spoke on a topic for the first time

**took up the story in earnest:** began telling a full version of a story

**as thick as the flies:** dense

**the individual lot:** the quality of someone's life and the experiences that they have

**towered a head above:** was much taller than; their heads only came up to his shoulders

**sorely tempted:** to want something very much

**losing his balance:** falling over  
**guard our rear:** protect the backs of a group of soldiers while they focus on advancing

**lines of communication:** ways of getting a message from one place to another

**an untold number:** many

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. What is Kailondo's rock? Where is it?
2. What was Kailondo's rock used for in the 1860s (and earlier)?
3. Who is Kai Borie?

4. Who is Bensali?
5. Why are the “war boys” gathered at the river?
6. What does Kai Borie want Bensali to tell?
7. A week earlier, what was Bensali sent to do?
8. What went wrong with the attack?
9. Who is Gbaserie? Who kills him?
10. Why did Bensali stop fighting?
11. Kai Borie tells how he lost his eye. What happened?
12. Who comes to the rock where the men are assembled?
13. What does she want?
14. When she unties the cloth around her body, what does everyone see?
15. Who does Kai Borie say will be his new heir?
16. What does Bindeh do with the basket? What happens to her?
17. What is in the basket?
18. What happens to Kai Borie?
19. What happens to Bensali?

### **Literary term: Frame Story**

A **frame story** exists when a story is told within a narrative setting or frame—hence creating a story within a story.

**Focus:** “Bindeh's Gift” is an example of a frame story. Can you separate the frame (more recent) from the story inside (in the past)?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Cultural Context:**

In Sierra Leone, as in many other countries in Africa and elsewhere, mothers carry infants on their backs. In Sierra Leone this is done with a brightly colored cloth or *lappa*. This cloth is often used as a skirt or a blouse as well. The cloth is very similar in style and use to the *zitenje* of Malawi.

### **Geographical Context:**

The *Moa Falls* likely appear somewhere on the Moa River (also known as the Makona River). It arises in the highlands of Guinea and flows southwest, forming parts of the Guinea–Liberia and the Guinea–Sierra Leone borders.

### **Historical Context:**

When Europeans first arrived at Sierra Leone, slavery among African peoples was rare. If Africans were not much interested in acquiring slaves, the Portuguese—as well as the Dutch, French, and English who arrived later—certainly were. Initially, their method was to cruise the coast, conducting kidnapping raids when opportunities arose. Soon, however, they found local actors willing to partner with them in these vicious but profitable affairs: some chiefs were willing to part with a few of the less desirable members of their tribes for a price; others went into the war business—a bevy of battle captives could be sold for a fortune in European rum, cloth, beads, copper, or muskets.



The slave owners were originally white and foreigners, but the late eighteenth century saw the emergence of powerful slave-trading chiefs, who were said to own large numbers of 'domestic slaves.' Export slavery remained a major business in Sierra Leone from the late 15th century to the mid 19th century. It was estimated in 1789 that 74,000 slaves were exported annually from West Africa. The transatlantic slave trade was banned by the British in 1807, but illegal slave trading continued for several decades after that.

**a sorry exchange:** you gave someone something worth more than what was then given to you  
**so dearly bought:** gained by suffering a lot as a result of a particular action or event  
**within our grasp:** possible  
**coursed like a brook:** ran freely

**closed in on the trail:** identified the direction that something you were hunting was moving

**the top of her voice:** as loudly as possible

**set the hair of every mortal on end:** made everyone very frightened

**blood turning into water:** losing all courage

**buried his face in his hands:** put his hands to his face in order to indicate how upset/sad he was  
**a last resort:** when all other methods fail

**on bended knees:** in a position in which the knee of one leg is touching the floor

**the goddess of vengeance:** the supernatural deity that some people may believe guide people when vengeful

**rending the night:** (figurative language) tearing the night sky; meant to express how all present could share in a terrible feeling

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**granite** (n): a very hard, grey and black rock, used for building

**(trussed up p.)** truss up (ph v): to tie the arms/legs of someone together tightly with rope to prevent them from moving/escaping

**stalwart** (n): person who has been loyal for a long time

**(recovered p.)** recover (v): to get back something lost, especially health, ability, possessions,

**leap** (v): to make a large jump or sudden movement

**vapour** (n): gas or extremely small drops of liquid which result from the heating of a liquid

**upstream** (adj): (moving) on a river or stream towards its origin

**(evanescently adv)** evanescent (adj): lasting for only a short time, then disappearing quickly

**cauldron** (n): a large round container for cooking in, usually supported over a fire



**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- Kallon is shouting into Mr Brassfoot's ear at the start of this story. He is probably doing this because:
  - the waterfall is very loud
  - Mr Brassfoot is nearly deaf
  - Kallon is extremely excited
- Two soldiers escort Bensali to the rock where he is to be executed. One of the soldiers whispers "Courage, Bensali" to him. He probably does this because:
  - He is worried that he will die with Bensali
  - He will be the one who executes Bensali
  - He still respects and likes Bensali
- Bindeh's act in this story ends both her own and Kai Borie's lives. Just before he dies, how does Kai Borie probably feel about her act:
  - resentment and reluctance
  - anger and vengeance
  - forgiveness and awe

**Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

**WORD BANK**

<b>demonstrate</b>	<b>keen</b>	<b>numberless</b>	<b>hideous</b>	<b>surrender</b>
<b>relentlessly</b>	<b>accusation</b>	<b>grief</b>	<b>seething</b>	<b>sham</b>

- The rain fell relentlessly for days causing damage to homes and fields.
- After losing many soldiers, the rebels were forced to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Overcome with jealousy, the man watched his rival and the woman he loved with a \_\_\_\_\_ expression on his face.
- Many claimed the election was a \_\_\_\_\_ and their votes weren't counted.
- There were so many stars in the sky they appeared \_\_\_\_\_.
- Please do not make an \_\_\_\_\_ unless you have proof.
- After his friends betrayed him, he was \_\_\_\_\_.
- Since she was very good at the experiment, the teacher asked her to \_\_\_\_\_ the procedure.
- I wasn't very \_\_\_\_\_ on going to the party since I don't like social events with big crowds.
- When his wife died, he was overcome with \_\_\_\_\_ and depression.

**Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- Kailondo's Rock is a boulder above a large waterfall.
- It was used to execute cowards in battle.
- He was a war chief in the 1800s.
- Bensali was the son of Kai Borie's sister and his hier.
- They are gathered to witness the execution of Bensali.
- He wants Bensali to tell the story of the battle and his cowardice.
- He was sent to attack the war town of Gbaserie, an enemy of Kai Borie.
- Gbaserie knew about the attack and he and his men trapped Bensali and the others inside the town and defeated them badly.
- Gbaserie is the leader of the enemy town and Bensali kills him.
- Bensali is wounded and loses the use of one of his arms.
- Kai Borie was hunting a deer as a young man and was attacked by a leopard.
- Bindeh, the wife of Bensali, comes to the rock along with her grandmother.

**(blasted p.)** blast (v): to break through or hit something with a very strong force  
**(gouged p.)** gouge (v): to make a hole in something in a rough way  
**awhile** (adv): for a short time  
**administration** (n): the arrangements needed to control the operation of plans/organizations  
**palm** (n): the inside part of your hand from your wrist to fingers  
**(enacted p.)** enact (v): to put something into action, especially to change something into a law  
**amateurish** (adj): having no skill  
**battlefields** (n): places where battles are fought  
**(created p.)** create (v): to make something new  
**nimbus** (adj): dark clouds which often produce rain  
**shock wave** (n): a very strong reaction that spreads through a group of people when something surprising or bad happens  
**concourse** (n): a large space or room in a public building such as a station or airport which people meet in or pass through  
**(blazing pr. part.)** blaze (v): to burn brightly and strongly  
**palisades** (n): a strong fence made out of wooden or iron poles that is used to protect people or a place from being attacked  
**downstream** (adj): in the direction a river or stream is flowing  
**statue** (n): an object made from a hard material, especially stone/metal, to look like a person  
**(carved p.)** carve (v): to make something by cutting into especially wood or stone  
**chiaroscuro** (n): the use of areas of light/darkness in a painting  
**(glinted p.)** glint (v): to produce small bright flashes of light reflected from a surface  
**indefinite** (adj): not exact, not clear, or without clear limits  
**(eerily adv)** eerie (adj): strange in a frightening/mysterious way  
**shaft** (n): a pole or rod forming the handle of a tool or weapon  
**(festering pr. part.)** fester (v): becomes infected/produces pus  
**rhythm** (n): a strong pattern of sounds, words or musical notes used in music, poetry and dancing  
**unaided** (adj): without any help



13. She wants Kai Borie to forgive Bensali and free him.
14. She reveals that she is pregnant with Bensali's child.
15. Kai Borie declares that Bindeh's child will be his heir.
16. She puts the basket over Kai Borie's head, then leaps over the falls and dies.
17. Many poisonous snakes are in the basket.
18. Kai Borie is bitten many times by the snakes and dies.
19. Before he dies, Kai Borie forgive Bensali and declares him the new ruler.

### Analysing the Story: Frame Story

Look back at the explanation of **frame story**. The opening of the story begins in the present day with Kallon talking to Mr Brassfoot. But after a few paragraphs, Kallon starts telling a long story about Kailondo's Rock and that becomes the majority of the narrative. Were you able to separate the two? Fill in the missing information about the elements of the two narrative inside and outside of the frame. Some of the blanks have been filled in for you.

	Outside frame story	Inside frame story
<b>Characters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kallon</li> <li>• Mr Brassfoot</li> <li>• White</li> </ul>	
<b>Place</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kailondo's Rock</li> </ul>
<b>Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present day</li> </ul>	

### Thinking Critically:

- Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the *protagonist* and the *antagonist* in a story. Bensali is a passive character who has lost his honour in his society, Kai Borie is willing to sacrifice his heir in order to continue waging war, Bindeh kills herself, her unborn child, and Kai Borie all to save Bensali. Which character do you think is the protagonist? Why?
- Which character do you sympathise with the most? Why?

**(twitching pr. part.)** twitch (v): (to cause) to make a sudden small movement with a part of the body, usually without intending to  
**expressionless** (adj): not showing what someone thinks or feels  
**sortie** (n): a short quick attack by a military force, such as a small group of soldiers or an aircraft, made against an enemy position

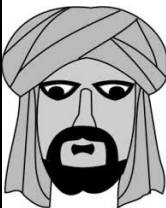


**fatal** (adj): causes death  
**(hardily (adv))** hardy (adj): strong enough to bear extreme conditions or difficult situations

**equivalent** (n): having the same amount, value, purpose, qualities  
**(stooped p.)** stoop (v): to bend the top half of the body down  
**heartbreak** (n): feelings of great sadness or disappointment  
**(emboldened p.)** embolden (v): to make someone brave  
**(gushed p.)** gush (v): to flow/send out quickly, in large amounts  
**(seasoned p.)** season (v): to improve the flavour of savoury food by adding salt, herbs or spices  
**(willed p.)** will (v): to try to make something happen by the power of your thoughts  
**furry** (adj): covered with fur  
**savage** (adj): extremely violent

**(throttled p.)** throttle (v): to press someone's throat tightly so they cannot breathe  
**restraint** (n): calm/controlled behaviour  
**dirge** (n): a slow sad song/piece of music  
**prostrate** (adj): lying with the face down and arms stretched out, often in obedience/worship  
**midleg** (n): half way up the leg  
**(pigmented (adj))** pigment (n): a substance which gives something a particular colour when present in it or added to it  
**incontestable** (adj): impossible to question because of being obviously true  
**proof** (n): a fact or piece of information which shows something exists or is true  
**orphan** (n): a child whose parents died  
**code** (n): a set of rules which are accepted as general principles  
**powerless** (adj): having no power  
**creed** (n): a set of beliefs expressing a particular opinion/influencing how you live  
**(crucified p.)** crucify (v): to kill someone by tying or fastening them with nails to a cross and leaving them there to die  
**(quavered p.)** quaver (v): (of a person's voice) to sound shaky, because of emotion

**rapt** (adj): giving complete attention, or showing complete involvement, or (of attention) complete  
**(enhanced p.)** enhance (v): to improve the quality/amount/strength of something  
**lightning** (adj): extremely quickly  
**hood** (n): part of a piece of clothing which can be pulled to cover the top of the head  
**multitude** (n): a large number of things  
**momentarily** (adv): for a very short time  
**(turbaned p. (v))** turban (n): head covering for men made from long pieces of cloth wrapped around head many times  
**undulations** (n): moving gently up and down  
**brow** (n): forehead (face above eyes)  
**(spiralling pr. part.)** spiral (v): a shape of curves, each above/wider than before  
**forearm** (n): the part of the arm between the wrist and the elbow  
**stabs** (n): pushing knives into someone  
**(grasped p.)** grasp (v): to take something and hold it firmly  
**(brained p.)** brain (v): to hit on the head



**reptile** (n): an animal which produces eggs and uses the heat of the sun to keep its blood warm  
**unbind** (v): to release someone or something from a rope, string, etc. that has been tying them up  
**(profusely (adv))** profuse (adj): produced in large amounts  
**oath** (n): a promise, often to tell the truth in a law court  
**lad** (n): a boy or young man  
**rasped p.)** rasp (v): to make a rough unpleasant sound, while breathing/speaking  
**(gigantically (adv))** gigantic (adj): extremely large  
**(glazing over pr. part.)** glaze over (ph v): If your eyes glaze over, they stay still and stop showing any emotion because you are bored or tired (or dead)  
**(convulsed p.)** convulse (v): to (cause to) shake violently with sudden uncontrolled movements  
**whereupon** (conj): immediately after



# THE VILLAGE PASTOR

## Leonard Kibera—Kenya



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Reverend Mwaura is a highly respected Christian pastor in his village in Kenya. He is struggling with his community, however, because a new bar, Muriuki's, has opened next to his church. All of the men in the village, against the advice of the pastor, go to Muriuki's on Sunday instead of church.

The pastor is so perturbed that on Christmas Day, he leads his small congregation into Muriuki's and sings hymns. The men in the bar are surprised by this, but they all respect the pastor, so they do not protest. Some people in the bar are secretly fighting the British colonialists in the Mau Mau rebellion. They explain to the pastor that they do not wish to worship in a white man's religion.

The pastor gives up and takes his congregation back to the church. After a few minutes, though, the pastor is surprised to see all the men from the bar coming into his church. Then, a young British soldier with a rifle bursts in searching for a terrorist who has taken shelter in the church.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. When it started to rain, they \_\_\_\_\_ inside.
2. Though it was bad news, he didn't seem \_\_\_\_\_ when he heard.
3. The choir gathered every week to practice singing \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ showed up in the village to run the new church the community had built.
5. The students \_\_\_\_\_ when the teacher punished them without a good reason.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The pastor will yell at the soldier for being rude and tell him to look for the terrorists in Muriuki's.
- The pastor will point out the terrorist and then continue with the service.
- The pastor will ignore the soldier and the soldier will shoot and kill the pastor.
- The pastor will tell the men in the church to attack the soldier and kill him.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. Is Reverend Mwaura respected in his community? Why or why not?
2. What problem does the reverend face in his community?
3. What is Muriuki's?
4. On what day does this story take place?
5. Why are the men missing from the church?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**well below the mark:** not good enough

**ministered the oath in the forest:** (probably) promised to fight with the Mau Mau

**half-asleep:** very sleepy

**bedside manner:** the way in which a doctor treats people who are ill, especially in relation to kind,

**When the Saints Go Marching In:** a popular Christian hymn

**held in high esteem:** highly respected

**in this vein:** in the same fashion

**lost his temper:** suddenly became angry

**an iota:** a very small amount

**come home to roost:** to return to cause problems

**the language barrier:** difficulty in communicating because the people talking don't speak the same language

**blast it:** an expression of anger



6. Where does Reverend Mwaura take the people at church?
7. Why did Muriuki build his bar near the church?
8. What reason do the men in the bar give for not going to church?
9. When the reverend returns to the church, who comes in after him?
10. Who shoots a gun? Why?
11. How does the Reverend Mwaura respond?
12. When the Johnnie leaves, where do the men from Muriuki's go?
13. When Reverend Mwaura dies, do many people come to mourn him?

### **Literary term: Epithet**

An **epithet** is a brief descriptive phrase that points out traits associated with a particular person or thing. An epithet is often used for characterization.

**Focus:** Many of the characters in "The Village Pastor" are described using epithets. Pay attention to them as you read. Do they help you understand who the characters are?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Historical Context:**

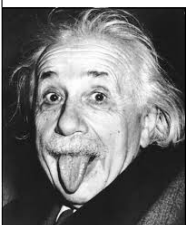
The **Mau Mau Rebellion** was a military conflict in Kenya between 1952 and 1960. Many British settlers came to Kenya at the beginning of the twentieth century because the soil in Kenya was very fertile and Kenya was under British colonial control. In the years after World War II, Britain slowly began a process of decolonization. In Kenya, the white settlers owned much of the valuable land, making the process of decolonization more complicated. The Mau Mau started as a secret society in opposition to British rule. The Mau Mau were organized by Kikuyu people, the largest ethnic group in Kenya. The Mau Mau were never widely supported by the Kenyan public, and the British ultimately defeated the rebels. However, in the years following the rebellion, Kenyans gained the rights to own more of the land, eventually leading to complete independence in 1963. While both sides in the conflict committed terrible violence, the Mau Mau are now remembered as early freedom fighters in Kenya.

Jomo Kenyatta, who was later elected the first president of independent Kenya, was accused of organizing the Mau Mau. He was a well educated intellectual who authored several books, and is remembered as a Pan-Africanist. He is also the father of Kenya's fourth and current President Uhuru Kenyatta.

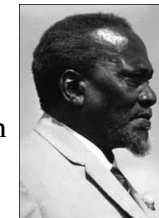
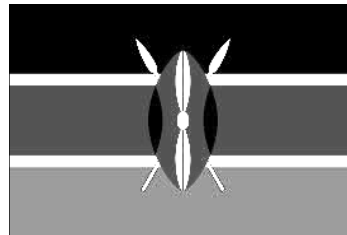
### **Cultural Context:**

In this story, Reverend Mwaura exclaims that Jesus was not an Englishman, but a **Jew**. Jews consider themselves as a people, therefore a Jew is one who practices the religion of Judaism, but is also of Jewish heritage. The Old Testament in the Christian Bible is a Jewish text and, indeed, Jesus was Jewish.

Israel is the only Jewish country, but there are Jewish minorities in many places in the world. Most of them live in large cities in the United States, Argentina, Europe and Australia. Both Israel and the U.S. have over five million Jews.



Jews have been victims of various persecutions. One of the most well known happened during the Second World War, when almost six million Jews were killed by the Nazis. It is known as The Holocaust. Many Jewish people have done great things in science, literature, business, and the arts. Albert Einstein, who came up with the equation  $E=mc^2$ , was Jewish.



### **Key Vocabulary:**

**(enviously (adv))** envious (adj): If someone is in an enviable situation, you wish you were also in that situation

**(endeavoured p.)** endeavour (v): to try to do something

**(scriptural (adj))** scriptures (n): the holy writings of a religion

**combat** (v): to try to stop something unpleasant or harmful from happening or increasing

**apparently** (adv): used to say you have read or been told something although you are not certain it is true

**attitude** (n): a feeling or opinion about something, or a way of behaving that is caused by this

**mete** (v): to give or order a punishment or make someone receive cruel or unfair treatment

**(trodden p.)** tread (v): to put your foot on something or to press something with your foot

**unflinching** (adj): not frightened of danger or unpleasantness

**unmovable** (adj): fixed and impossible to move

**horde** (n): large group of people

**(consisted p.)** consist (v): to be made of or formed from

**indulgences** (n): when you allow someone or yourself to have something enjoyable, especially more than is good for you

**hangover** (n): a feeling of illness after drinking too much alcohol

**(sobered p.)** sober (v): to become less drunk, or to make someone become less drunk

**(serenity (n))** serene (adj): peaceful/calm; worried by nothing

**(intercepted p.)** intercept (v): to stop something/someone before they are able to reach a place

**(diverted p.)** divert (v): to cause something to change direction

**(got kicked out p.)** get kicked out (ph v): to be forced to leave a place or organization

**acquainted** (adj): familiar (with)

**padre** (n): priest (Spanish for father)

**(blemished (adj))** blemish (v): to spoil something

**(sought p.)** seek (v): to try to find or get something, especially that which is not a physical object

**carols** (n): happy or religious songs, sung at Christmas

**Biblical Context:**

Much of the language in “The Village Pastor” is taken from Christianity. *Allusions* are made to many different stories from the bible and expressions are taken from the Christian register.



**The five foolish virgins** is a reference to a parable told by Jesus. Jesus' parables are simple and memorable stories, often with *imagery*, and each conveys a message. According to the Gospel of Mathew, Jesus tells the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. A bridegroom, or man about to be married, is coming in the night and ten virgins go to meet him. Five are wise and five are foolish. They all bring lamps, but only the wise virgins bring enough oil to keep their lamps lit. At midnight, when the bridegroom is coming, the foolish virgins run out of oil, leave to get more, and miss the bridegroom's arrival. The bridegroom is salvation into heaven, the wise virgins are saved while the foolish virgins are damned.



**Prodigal** is a reference to another of Jesus' parables, The Prodigal Son. It is found only in the Gospel of Luke. The parable is about a son who wastes his share of his father's estate. He repents and returns to his father's house. He is welcomed and a feast is held. His older, dutiful brother who has worked without reward for his father resents the forgiveness of the prodigal son. His father reminds the older son that all he has is his. He says they should still celebrate the return of the younger boy because he has come back to them. The Christian God, or father, is forgiving of sinners if they ask for forgiveness.

**Gehenna** is used in the New Testament to mean hell. **Sodom and Gomorrah** are two ancient cities mentioned in the Book of Genesis. Both cities were destroyed by fire from God because of their sexual wickedness, including rape and child sexual abuse. Because Jesus is often compared to a shepherd in the New Testament, Christians who believe in him are referred to as **the faithful sheep** or **the Lord's flock**. According to the Gospel of Mathew, Jesus says “get thee behind me, Satan” to Peter the Apostle when he believes that Peter is trying to tempt him. When the Village Pastor says “**get thee behind the Lord, Satan**” to the owner of the bar, he is implying that alcohol is a temptation from the devil.

**Linguistic Context:**

**Thee** means “you” in an older version of English used in a popular translation of the bible. When preaching, the Village Pastor often uses this older English, such as when he says **guideth and protecteth**, for “guides and protects.”

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- In his sermon, Reverend Mwaura says that the night before he had assembled his family together to pray and was surprised to find out that his second son was 'under that roof.' 'That roof' probably means:
  - the church
  - Muriuki's
  - the forest
- When Reverend Mwaura is in the bar, Kairu says to him, “This is no black man who has done this to me.” By this he probably means:
  - a white man caused him to lose his leg
  - he got his religious beliefs from a black man
  - his alcohol addiction was caused by Christianity
- When Reverend Mwaura goes back to his church, he is surprised that so many of the men join him. The men probably come into the church because:
  - Reverend Mwaura helped them to remember their faith
  - They were escaping British soldiers searching for rebels
  - Their wives made them feel guilty for drinking on Christmas

**(submittance (n))** submit (v): to give or offer something for a decision to be made by others  
**(trickled p.)** trickle (v): to arrive or move somewhere slowly and gradually, in small numbers  
**(beheld p.)** behold (v): to see  
**(lured p.)** lure (v): to persuade someone to do something by offering them something exciting  
**abide (v):** to live somewhere  
**(sparkling pr. part.)** sparkle (v): to shine brightly with a lot of small points of light  
**(appealed p.)** appeal (v): to make a serious or formal request, for money or help  
**reverent (adj):** showing great respect and admiration  
**(declining pr. part.)** decline (v): to gradually become less, worse, or lower  
**occupants (n):** people who live or work in a room or building  
**tow (v):** to pull a car, boat, etc. along, using a rope or a chain tied to another vehicle or boat  
**(sacrilegious (adj))** sacrilege (n): (an act of) treating something holy without respect  
**(vigorously (adv))** vigorous (adj): very forceful or energetic  
**pace (n):** the speed at which something moves, or with which something happens or changes  
**(suitably (adv))** suitable (adj): acceptable for something  
**counter (n):** a long flat narrow surface in a shop, bank, restaurant at which people are served  
**crammed (adj):** very full  
**(encountered p.)** encounter (v): a meeting, especially by chance  
**outburst (n):** a sudden expression of emotion, especially anger  
**version (n):** a particular form of something which varies slightly from other forms of the same  
**(blaspheming pr. part.)** blasphemy (v): to use words which show no respect for God/religion  
**hymn (n):** a song of praise that Christians sing to God  
**(impiously (adv))** impious (adj): showing no respect, especially for God or religion  
**(skilfully (adv))** skilful (adj): done or made very well  
**manifest (adj):** easily noticed  
**tattered (adj):** (especially of cloth or paper) badly torn

### Guessing Meaning from Context:

The words in the left column are from the story. The right column has definitions for those words. Look back at the story and try to understand the vocabulary. Then put the letter of its definition on the line next to each word.

Vocabulary	Meanings
1. navigate <u>h.</u>	a. a large group of people
2. patronising ___	b. familiar with
3. unflinching ___	c. a place where someone lives
4. horde ___	d. the total amount that can be contained or produced
5. duly ___	e. willing to give money, help, or kindness
6. acquainted ___	f. not showing the expected level of respect
7. escapism ___	g. drunk or very intoxicated
8. abode ___	<del>h. to direct the way across water or land, in a ship, aircraft, or car</del>
9. generous ___	i. avoiding real life by thinking about exciting, impossible activities
10. inebriated ___	j. not frightened
11. capacity ___	k. in the correct way or at the correct time
12. irreverent ___	l. speaking to someone as if that person is stupid/unimportant

### Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:

1. Reverend Mwaura is highly respected because he lives honorably.
2. Many of the men in the village prefer to go to the bar than to his church.
3. Muriuki's is a popular bar next to Reverend Mwaura's church.
4. It takes place on Christmas Day.
5. They have recently received their Christmas bonuses and are spending the money at Muriuki's.
6. Reverend Mwaura leads the people into the bar signing hymns.
7. Near the church was the only place that he owned land.
8. They don't believe in the Christian God of the Europeans because of the things that have happened to them by the Europeans.
9. All of the men from the bar come into the church behind the reverend.
10. A "Johnnie," or British soldier, shoots a gun into the air to get everyone's attention. He is searching for one of the Mau Mau rebels ("terrorists").
11. Reverend Mwaura yells at the soldier for being disrespectful in a church.
12. After the Johnnie leaves, all the men go back to the bar.
13. Yes, many people come to mourn the reverend.

### Analysing the Story: Epithet

Look back at the explanation of **epithet**. Different epithets are used throughout "The Village Pastor" to refer to characters and to places. Four epithets from the story are listed in the table below. Look back at the story and see if you can identify what or whom each refers to.

Epithet	Describes what/who?
"The Lord's house"	
"the padre"	
"Satan" and "the devil"	
"Johnnie"	

### Thinking Critically:

- Some of the men say they do not go to the Christian church because it is a white man's religion and they are fighting white colonialists. The Reverend says Jesus is not connected with the English. Who do you agree with? Why?

**(spied p.)** spy (v): to secretly collect and report information about the activities of another country or organization  
**terrorists** (n): those who uses violent action, or threats of violent action, for political purposes  
**(amputated p.)** amputate (v): to cut off a part of the body  
**plight** (n): an unpleasant condition, especially a serious, sad or difficult one  
**marvels** (n): things or persons that are very surprising or causes a lot of admiration  
**pious** (adj): strongly believing in religion, and living in a way which shows this belief  
**(bayoneted p.)** bayonet (n): a long sharp blade on to rifle



**rifle** (n): a type of gun with a long barrel (= part shaped like a tube), which is fired from the shoulder and is designed to be accurate at long distances

**(recruited p.)** recruit (v): to persuade someone to become a new member of an organization, especially the army

**yonder** (adv): in the place or direction shown; over there

**deserted** (adj): If a place is deserted, there are no people in it

**(strayed p.)** stray (v): to travel along a route that was not originally intended, or to move outside a limited area

**(meandered p.)** meander (v): to walk slowly without direction

**abroad** (n): in or to a foreign country or countries

**pardonable** (adj): able to be forgiven

**(butting in pr. part.)** butt in (ph v): to interrupt a conversation

**(braced p.)** brace (v): to prepare yourself physically or mentally for something unpleasant

**(mustered p.)** muster (v): to produce or encourage especially an emotion or support

**rancid** (adj): tasting or smelling unpleasant because not fresh



# IN THE SHADOW OF WAR

Ben Okri—Nigeria



## PREPARING TO READ

### Story Preview:

Omovo is a young boy living with his father in a village in Nigeria. He and his father listen to an old radio about the war happening in the interior of the country. They hear that there will be an eclipse of the moon that night.

Omovo's father leaves and Omovo sits on the windowsill. He is waiting to see a woman with a black veil who passes by each day. He has heard that she has no shadow and he wants to see if that is true. Across the street, three soldiers who came to the village that day are drinking and playing a game.

Omovo notices that the soldiers are giving children money, so he goes outside. One of the soldiers tells him they are looking for a woman with a black veil. But when the soldier tries to give him money, he refuses. He goes back to the window and succumbs to sleep. When he wakes, the woman has already passed by and the soldiers are stumbling after her. Omovo runs outside and follows them into the woods.

### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. There are fewer people living in the \_\_\_\_\_ than along the coast.
2. As the sun went down, the \_\_\_\_\_ of the tree got longer and longer.
3. When the moon passes in front of the sun, it is called an \_\_\_\_\_.
4. She \_\_\_\_\_ over the roots of a tree as she tried to find her way in the dark.
5. I felt it would only be a matter of time before she \_\_\_\_\_ to my charms.



### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Omovo will catch up with the woman in the black veil and warn her about the soldiers.
- Omovo will see the soldiers murder the woman in the black veil and run away.
- Omovo will see the woman murder the soldiers and then ask to join her.
- Omovo will catch up with the soldiers and tell them where the woman in the black veil stays.

## WHILE READING

### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. Who does Omovo watch from the window?
2. Who is Omovo waiting to see?

### Idioms & Expressions:

**eclipse of the moon:** when the moon becomes darker while the shadow of the Earth passes it  
**polythene wrappings:** a light usually thin, soft plastic that covers food in a dish to keep air out  
**not long afterward:** soon  
**beating of wings:** to wave wings quickly and noisily  
**blacked out:** became unconscious suddenly for a short while

### Key Vocabulary:

**palm** (n): a tree that grows in hot countries and has a tall trunk with a mass of leaves at the top  
**frond** (n): a long thin leaf  
**calabash** (n): (a tropical plant which produces) a large fruit, the outside of which gets hard when dried and is used as a container  
**bombings** (n): attacks on a place or area using bombs  
**air raids** (n): attacks by enemy aircraft, usually dropping bombs  
**(outgrown p.) outgrow** (v): to grow too big for something  
**(irritated p.) irritate** (v): to make angry or annoyed





3. What strange event will happen that night?
4. What does Omovo do when his father leaves?
5. When Omovo notices that the children outside are being given money by the soldiers, what does he do?
6. Who are the soldiers looking for?
7. What do the soldiers do when the woman in the black veil walks past?
8. What does Omovo do?
9. Where does the woman go?
10. When the soldiers capture the woman, what do they do?
11. What does Omovo see in the water?
12. When the soldiers shoot the woman, what happens to Omovo?
13. Who brings Omovo home?

### **Literary term: Suspense**

**Suspense** is the excitement or tension that readers feel as they become involved in a story and eager to know the outcome of the plot.

**Focus:** As you read "In the Shadow of War," try to predict what will happen to the characters. Do you begin to feel anxious or worried for the protagonist or the woman with the black veil?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Historical Context:**

From 1901 to 1960, the United Kingdom ruled Nigeria. However, by 1960 the people wanted independence very much, and Britain finally let them have it. For some time after this, Nigeria was a dictatorship, where the leaders stayed in control even if many people disliked them. At this time, Nigeria had a big war called the Biafra War with Christian Igbo people who wanted their own country in the East. They did not want to be a part of Nigeria, which was ruled by a Muslim, and they wanted their own country called "Biafra." They did not get their country, and hundreds of thousands of people were killed.

### **Linguistic Context:**

**Grundig** is a brand of German-made radio. Similar to the minibus system in Malawi, the **danfo** in Nigeria are small, dilapidated buses used for public transportation. **Kwashiorkor** is a disease of malnutrition that results from protein deficiency and causes children's stomachs to bloat. **Kobo** is the smallest currency in Nigeria. 100 **kobo** equals 1 naira.

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

1. Then he struggled into the **shabby** coat that he had long outgrown
  - a. in good condition
  - b. in poor condition
  - c. very fashionable
  - d. made of leather
2. The heat was **stupefying**.
  - a. making you feel more healthy
  - b. making you worried
  - c. making you unable to think clearly
  - d. making you feel lonely
3. The three soldiers drank palm wine and played draughts beneath the sun's **oppressive** glare.
  - a. extremely hot
  - b. kind and generous
  - c. cruel and unfair
  - d. very bright
4. He followed her through the **dense** vegetation.
  - a. thick
  - b. dark
  - c. dangerous
  - d. tall

**libation** (n): a drink of alcohol

**briefcase** (n): a rectangular case, used for carrying documents



**(agitated p.) agitate** (v): to make someone feel anxious or angry

**flinch** (v): to make a sudden small movement because of pain  
**(sleepwalking pr. part.) sleep-walker** (n): a person who gets out of bed and walks while sleeping  
**draughts** (n): a game for two people, each with twelve circular pieces which are moved on a board

**(mischievously (adv)) mischievous** (adj): behaving in a way which is slightly bad but not intended to cause harm or damage  
**(crowing pr. part.) crow** (v): When a cock crows, it makes a very long and loud sharp cry  
**(dispiritedly (adv)) dispirited** (adj): not feeling hopeful about a particular situation or problem

**casualties** (n): people injured or killed in a serious accident or war

**stupor** (n): a state in which a person is almost unconscious and their thoughts are not clear

**(yawned p.) yawn** (v): to open the mouth wide and take a lot of air into the lungs and slowly send it out, usually when tired/bored

**(apologized p.) apologize** (v): to tell someone that you are sorry for having done something

**split** (v): to (cause to) divide into two or more parts

**(faded p.) fade** (v): to (cause to) lose colour or strength gradually

**wrappers** (n): pieces of paper or plastic which cover/protect things

**shawl** (n): a large piece of cloth worn especially by women or girls over shoulders and/or head

**(flaking pr. part.) flake** (v): to come off a surface in thin pieces

**ostentatious** (adj): too obviously showing your money, possessions or power, in an attempt to make other people admire you

**skeleton** (n): the frame of bones supporting a body

**(slithered p.) slither** (v): (of bodies) to move easily/quickly across a surface while twisting/curving

**undergrowth** (n): a mass of bushes, small trees and plants growing under trees of a forest

5. Blocks lay **crumbled** in heaps and the workers' sheds were deserted.
- a. abandoned                      c. full  
b. dry                                  d. broken
6. The lights changed over the forest and for the first time Omovo saw that the dead animals on the river were in fact the **corpses** of grown men.
- a. old clothes                      c. canoes  
b. dead bodies                      d. livestock

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- The soldiers outside are giving children money most likely because:
  - they want the children to help them find the woman in the black veil
  - they want to help the children pay for basic needs
  - they want the children to go buy them palm wine
- Omovo follows the soldiers as they pursue the woman wearing a black veil. This shows that he is:
  - intelligent      b. hardworking      c. curious
- The woman with the black veil visits a cave. She most likely goes there to:
  - practice witchcraft with other women
  - hide from the soldiers who are following her
  - provide supplies and food to a group of rebels

### **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- He sees three soldiers come into the village.
- He is waiting to see a woman in a black veil who passes by everyday.
- There will be an eclipse of the moon.
- He turns the radio back on.
- He goes outside and walks past the soldiers.
- They are looking for the woman in the black veil.
- They get up and walk behind her.
- He follows the soldiers and the woman.
- She goes into the forest and then to a camp in the woods.
- They beat her and ask her where the others are and then tear off her veil.
- He sees rotting human bodies.
- He ran from the forest, tripped over roots, hit his head, and blacked out.
- The soldiers brought Omovo back to his father.

### **Analysing the Story: Suspense**

Look back at the explanation of **suspense**. Suspense is created when we are emotionally invested in characters and their situations and actively try to anticipate their fates. Some moments from the plot are listed in the chart below. Fill in how each moment made you feel.

<b>What happens in the story?</b>	<b>How does it make you feel?</b>
Omovo is waiting for the woman to go past his house.	
Omovo wakes up and sees the soldiers following the woman into the woods.	
Omovo sees that the soldiers have captured the woman in the black veil.	

### **Thinking Critically:**

- Why do you think Omovo didn't take the 10 kobo the soldier offered to him?
- How do you think the woman with the veil received the scars on her face?
- Do you think the soldiers were good or bad people? Why or why not?

**cliff** (n): a high area of rock with a very steep side  
**slogans** (n): short easily remembered phrases, especially used to advertise an idea or a product  
**(reappeared p.)** reappear (v): to appear again or return  
**(reluctantly adv)** reluctant (adj): not willing to do something and therefore slow to do it  
**(capsized p.)** capsize (v): to (cause a boat or ship to) turn upside down by accident  
**canoes** (n): small light narrow boats, moved using a paddle



**waterlogged** (adj): full of water  
**outdated** (adj): old-fashioned and therefore not as good or as fashionable as something modern  
**currencies** (n): the money that is used in a particular country  
**(disfigured adj)** disfigure (v): to spoil how something looks  
**livid** (adj): with an unpleasant purple or dark blue colour  
**gash** (n): a long deep cut  
**bare-chested** (adj): shirtless  
**(bloating p.)** bloat (v): to swell up  
**(dementedly adv)** demented (adj): unable to think or act clearly because you are extremely worried, angry or excited  
**(tramped p.)** tramp (v): to walk, especially with heavy steps  
**canopy** (n): the branches and leaves that spread out at the top of a group of trees forming roof  
**(tripped p.)** trip (v): to lose your balance after knocking your foot against something when you are walking or running  
**(thrashed p.)** thrash (v): to move from side to side in a violent or uncontrolled way  
**(crackling pr. part.)** crackle (v): to make a lot of dry/sharp sounds  
**balcony** (n): an area with a wall around it joined to the outside of a building on an upper level  
**sunken** (adj): at a lower level than the surrounding area  
**overcome** (v): to prevent someone from being able to act or think in the usual way  
**delirium** (n): a state of being unable to think/speak clearly

# COUNTRY LOVERS

Nadine Gordimer—South Africa



## PREPARING TO READ

### Story Preview:

Paulus Eysendyck is the son of a white farmer in South Africa. As a child he is good friends with Thebedi, the daughter of one of the black labourers on the farm. This is normal. But, by adolescence the black children are supposed to start treating their former playmates like masters and not friends.

This is a problem for Paulus and Thebedi. Even though Paulus goes away to boarding school and Thebedi stays on the farm, they continue their friendship and even allow it to become physically intimate. As they grow older, they meet in secret and have sex.

They both know that their relationship cannot continue into adulthood and, eventually, Thebedi marries a bricklayer named Njabulo. He loves her very much. He even cares for the child that Thebedi gives birth to that is actually Paulus' child. A rumour about the light-skinned child reaches Paulus and prompts him to go to Thebedi and Njabulo's house to see it.

### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. They hired a \_\_\_\_\_ to build the foundation of the new school block.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ occurs between childhood and adulthood.
3. When she left the village with her family, the girl said goodbye to all of her \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Worries about the President's health have \_\_\_\_\_ some to question if he will run again.
5. I only share \_\_\_\_\_ secrets with my closest friends.

### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Paulus will poison the child so that there is no evidence of his relationship with Thebedi.
- Paulus will tell Thebedi to go away from the farm with the child so that no one will find out.
- Paulus will ask Thebedi to divorce Njabulo so that she can marry him.
- Paulus will take the child away from Thebedi and bring it to live with his parents.

## WHILE READING

### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. The white and black children play together on the farm when they are young, but what happens around adolescence?
2. What is different about Paulus and Thebedi?
3. What does Paulus buy for Thebedi in the shop?

### Idioms & Expressions:

**forms of address:** formal ways of referring to certain people  
**the sister school:** girls' school associated with a school for boys  
**have a crush on:** a strong, temporary feeling of liking someone  
**there was no disgrace in that:** that was not behaviour which causes embarrassment and the loss of other people's respect  
**token movement:** movement which shows that you are doing something, even though the results are limited in their effect  
**here and there:** different places  
**hold up my head:** remain confident and proud



### Key Vocabulary:

**(surpassed p.) surpass (v):** to do or be better than  
**cinema (n):** a theatre where people pay to watch films  
**transition (n):** a change from one form to another, or the process by which this happens  
**woodwork (n):** the activity of making objects from wood  
**spans (n):** set of oxen  
**craze (n):** an activity, object or idea that is extremely popular, usually for a short time

4. What does Thebedi tell her father about the gift? What does she tell the other girls?
5. During the holidays, where do Thebedi and Paulus go?
6. What do they do one summer afternoon?
7. Where does Paulus take the neighbors' daughters during his last year of secondary school?
8. Where do Paulus' parents go sometimes on Saturday afternoons?
9. What does Thebedi do when Paulus' parents leave?
10. Why does she have to leave before dawn?
11. What does Njabulo ask Thebedi's parents?
12. Who is the father of Thebedi's baby? How can you tell?
13. What does Njabulo do when Thebedi gives birth?
14. When Paulus hears that Thebedi had a baby, what does he do?
15. What happens to the baby?
16. While Njabulo is burying the baby, what happens?
17. When the police question Thebedi, what does she tell them?
18. A year later, at trial, what does Thebedi say?
19. Why is Paulus freed (provide two reasons)?

### **Literary term: Alliteration**

**Alliteration** is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words.

**Focus:** Especially during the long descriptive scenes, "Country Lovers" has many instances of alliteration. Can you find one?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **About the Author:**

**Nadine Gordimer** (20 November 1923-13 July 2014) was a South African writer, political activist and recipient of the 1991 Nobel Prize in Literature. Gordimer's writing was influential in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. She was active in the anti-apartheid movement, joining the African National Congress during the days when the organization was banned. She was also very active in HIV/AIDS causes.



### **Wildlife Context:**

The Nile monitor is a large member of the monitor lizard family found throughout Africa. It is also called a **leguaan**. Nile monitors can grow to over 200 cm. They have muscular bodies, strong legs, and powerful jaws. Their teeth are sharp and pointed in juvenile animals and become blunt and peg-like in adults.

**White stinkwood** is a species of tree that is common across large areas of the South and East of Southern Africa, ranging from a tall forest tree to a medium-sized tree in bushveld and open country, to a shrub on rocky soil. And the **Cape willow** is a tall, graceful, evergreen willow tree. It grows along riverbanks in South Africa, and is used for a wide range of traditional medicines.

### **Linguistic Context:**

A number of Afrikaans words are used throughout this story, especially to describe the landscape. A **kraal** is an enclosure for livestock, or a rural village of huts surrounded by a stockade. The word may come from the Dutch "kraal," meaning bead, as in the beads of a necklace – kraals are generally round in shape. **Koppies** are small hills, while **veld** refers to open grassland, from the

**(tramping round pr. part.)** (ph v): to walk, especially long distances or with heavy steps  
**fondle** (v): to touch gently and in a loving way  
**gilt** (adj): covered with a thin layer of gold  
**(giggled p.)** giggle (v): to laugh repeatedly in a quiet but uncontrolled way, often at something silly/rude or when nervous  
**ferocious** (adj): frightening and violent  
**(harmlessness (n))** harmless (adj): not able to cause harm  
**(squatted p.)** squat (v): to position yourself close to the ground balancing on the front part of your feet with your legs bent under your body  
**tales** (n): a story, especially one which might be invented  
**indifference** (n): lack of interest in someone or something  
**mesh** (n): material like a net with spaces, made from wire or plastic  
**(bristly (adj))** bristle (n): a short stiff hair, usually one of many  
**(punctured p.)** puncture (v): to make a small hole in something  
**(tucked p.)** tuck (ph v): to push a loose end of a piece of clothing or material into a particular place  
**dams** (n): walls built across a river which stops the river's flow and collects the water  
**bikinis** (n): a two-piece swimming costume for women  
**dazzling** (adj): extremely attractive or exciting  
**belly** (n): the stomach or the front part of the body between your chest and your legs  
**thigh** (n): the part of a person's leg above the knee  
**detention** (n): a form of punishment in which children stay at school after classes have ended  
**(lowing pr. part.)** low (v): to make deep, long sounds of cows  
**blonde** (adj): with yellow hair  
**boot** (n): a covered space at the back of a car, for storing things in  
**poultry** (n): birds that are bred for their eggs and meat  
**thoroughfare** (n): a main road for public use  
**(crocheted (adj))** crochet (v): to make clothes etc. using wool and a special needle with a hook  
**vase** (n): a container for holding



Dutch for "field." **Plaateland**, meaning farmland or countryside, is literally "flat land" in Afrikaans, it now refers to any rural area in which agriculture takes place.

### Consumer Context:

**Mercedes-Benz** is a German automobile manufacturer. The brand is used for luxury automobiles, buses, coaches, and trucks.



Mercedes-Benz

### Making Inferences:

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- Thebedi lies to her family and friends about who gave her the belt and earrings. She probably does this because:
  - She thinks they will steal them from her
  - She does not want them to discover her relationship with Paulus
  - She does not like to share personal information with others
- The other people living in the kraal are not surprised when Thebedi gives birth so shortly after marrying Njabulo. This is most likely because:
  - They know it is normal for a couple to have sex before getting married
  - They know that she has been sleeping with Paulus
  - They know that the first pregnancy is always short
- Paulus leaves the court with his head hidden underneath his mother's jacket. This is probably because:
  - It is raining hard
  - He does not like being photographed
  - He is ashamed

### Guessing Meaning from Context:

The words in the word bank below are from the story. Find them in the story and try to understand their meaning. Then fill in the spaces in the sentences below with the correct word.

#### WORD BANK

unspoken prosperous ~~ideally~~ exaggerating attentively erode graze  
flirt dominant substitute sweetheart indicates self-pity coincide

- Although ideally each student would have a desk, we are able to share.
- He listened to the instructions \_\_\_\_\_ so that he would not miss any information.
- Although I can write with my left hand, my right hand is much more \_\_\_\_\_.
- I think they were \_\_\_\_\_ when they said the homework was impossible - this isn't so bad!
- At first, her business was not making a lot of money but now it is quite \_\_\_\_\_.
- Research \_\_\_\_\_ that more and more people are moving to cities.
- When cooking, if you do not have one ingredient, you can \_\_\_\_\_ it with another similar ingredient.
- It is inappropriate for teachers to \_\_\_\_\_ with students.
- Feeling \_\_\_\_\_ can lead to a loss of confidence.
- When they became friends, they made an \_\_\_\_\_ agreement to always support each other.
- The banks of the Shire are slowly \_\_\_\_\_ and some villages near the river are in danger.
- Her graduation from high school \_\_\_\_\_ with her eighteenth birthday.
- Every morning the boy had to take the goats out to a field to \_\_\_\_\_.
- The young man brought flowers to his \_\_\_\_\_ every day for a month.

flowers or for decoration  
**irises** (n): plants which grow especially in wet places and which have blue, yellow or white flowers and long narrow leaves  
**(bulging (adj)) bulge** (v): to stick out in a round shape  
**veterinary** (adj): connected with caring for the health of animals  
**prospective** (adj): people expected to buy something/employ someone/become a parent, etc  
**barren** (adj): unable to have babies  
**floss** (n): a mass of soft threads  
**(unfocused (adj)) focused** (adj): giving a lot of attention to one particular thing  
**flecked** (adj): having small marks  
**matt** (adj): describes a surface or colour or paint that is not shiny  
**opaque** (adj): preventing light from travelling through  
**coffee grounds colour** (adj): brown in colour  
**oyster** (n): a large flat sea creature that lives in a shell  
**Cellophane** (n): thin, quite stiff, transparent material used for covering goods  
**napkins** (n): a small square piece of cloth or paper used while you are eating to protect your clothes or to clean your mouth or fingers  
**safety pins** (n): pins used for fastening things, especially cloth,  
**knitted** (adj): made using wool/thick cotton and long needles  
**bob** (v): to move up and down quickly and gently especially on the surface of water  
**acknowledge** (v): to accept, admit or recognize something  
**bedstead** (n): the wooden or metal frame of a bed  
**(blanketed p.) blanket** (v): to cover something completely with a thick layer  
**static electricity** (n): an electrical charge which collects on the surface of objects made from certain materials when rubbed  
**gang** (n): a group of young people, especially young men, who spend time together  
**(trodden p.) tread** (v): to put your foot on something or to press something with your foot  
**(transgressed p.) transgress** (v): to break a law or moral rule  
**intercede** (v): to use your influ-

### **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

1. The white children go to boarding schools and the black children begin to treat them like masters and mistresses instead of friends.
2. They continue to be friends after Paulus goes away to boarding school.
3. He buys her a red plastic belt and gilt hoop earrings.
4. She tells her father it was a gift from the missus (Paulus' mother). She tells the other girls that she has a sweetheart on another farm.
5. They go down to a dried-up river bed.
6. They have sex.
7. He drives them to dances and to the drive-in cinema.
8. They go to visit their daughters who are married and live on different farms.
9. She comes up to the house and stays with Paulus.
10. She leaves before dawn so that the servants who come in the morning don't see her in the house.
11. Njabulo asks to marry Thebedi.
12. Paulus is the father. You can tell he is the father because of the light skin and light coloured eyes of the baby.
13. Njabulo treats the baby like his own, buys her things, and cares for her.
14. He goes over to the kraal to see it.
15. Paulus poisons her and kills her.
16. Before he can finish, the police come to investigate.
17. She tells them that she saw Paulus poison the baby.
18. She says that Paulus did not poison the baby.
19. Paulus is freed because Thebedi tells two different stories making her testimony useless and there is insufficient proof to convict Paulus.

### **Analysing the Story: Alliteration**

Look back at the explanation of **alliteration**. Nadine Gordimer is a master of style and has very tight control over the sound of her writing. Some passages that contain alliteration are listed in the table below. Can you identify the alliterative sounds in the passages? The first one is done for you. Can you find one more passage in the story and add it to the table?

Passage	Alliterative sounds
"While he talked he twisted and tugged at the roots of white stinkwood and Cape willow trees that looped out of the eroded earth around them."	w, t, e
"When he has learnt how to tease and flirt and fondle quite intimately these girls who were the daughters of prosperous farmers like his father..."	
"She revealed the closed, pale, plump, tiny face, with a bubble of spit at the corner of the mouth, the spidery pink hands stirring."	

### **Thinking Critically:**

- Thebedi tells two different stories to the authorities about what happened when her baby died. Why do you think she did this? If you were Thebedi what would you have done?

ence to persuade someone to save someone else  
**(tickling pr. part.)** tickle (v): to touch lightly with your fingers  
**hazel** (adj): greenish brown or yellowish brown in colour  
**grimace** (v): to make an expression of pain or strong dislike with the face twisted in an ugly way  
**casual** (adj): not regular or fixed  
**(propped up p.)** prop up (ph v): to lift/give support to something by putting something under it  
**crone** (n): an ugly old woman  
**gait** (n): a way of walking  
**(caresses (n))** caress (v): to touch gently and lovingly  
**weather away** (v): to change over a period of time because of the effects of weather conditions  
**pathological** (adj): relating to or caused by a disease  
**(intestinal (adj))** intestines (n): the two long tubes through which food travels from the stomach  
**consistent with** (adj): in agreement with other facts or with typical or previous behaviour  
**preparatory** (adj): done in order to get ready for something  
**(hysterically (adv))** hysterical (adj): unable to control your behaviour because you are extremely frightened/angry/excited  
**contest** (v): If you contest a decision, you say formally that it is wrong or unfair  
**intercourse** (n): sex  
**perjury** (n): the crime of telling lies in court when you have promised to tell the truth  
**accomplice** (n): a person who helps someone else to commit a crime or to do something wrong  
**proof** (n): a piece of information showing something exists/is true  
**(rejected p.)** reject (v): to refuse to accept/use/believe something  
**slender** (adj): small in amount or degree  
**means** (n): money that allows you to buy things  
**verdict** (n): a decision made after judging the facts given, especially at the end of a trial  
**(shielding pr. part.)** shield (v): to protect someone or something  
**carry on** (ph v): to continue doing something  
**(quoted p.)** quote (v): to repeat the words someone else has said

# THE REFUGEE

## James Appe—Uganda



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Margaret Abiyo has left her home country because of war and is living in a refugee camp. She is unhappy to be living in such a place and, nostalgically, she remembers much happier times. She is not used to such poverty or solitude. While she is remembering the past, three local men enter her hut. They are brothers: Wani, Pitcha, and Duku. They explain that, if she is willing, Duku would like to marry her. Margaret tells them that she needs to think about it. They promise to return in three days.

Duku is in high spirits because he is certain Margaret will marry him. But Margaret thinks it is degrading that these men should even ask her about marriage.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. During the war in Mozambique, many \_\_\_\_\_ came to Malawi.
2. The proud boy thought that digging the latrine was \_\_\_\_\_ work.
3. The priest prefers to pray in \_\_\_\_\_, so there are no distractions.
4. I have been away from home for a long time, so when I see pictures of my parents' home, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.
5. After winning the football match, he was in \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Margaret will leave the refugee camp angrily and return to her home.
- The men will return and Margaret will decide to marry Duku.
- The men will return, but Margaret will say she could never marry Duku.
- Margaret's rich husband will come to the camp and rescue her.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. Is Margaret feeling happy at the beginning of the story?
2. What are her living conditions like?
3. Who comes to visit Margaret?
4. Which brother speaks first?
5. Why is it difficult for the brothers to speak to Margaret?
6. What do the brothers want?
7. How does Margaret respond?
8. Why is Duku happy after leaving Margaret's house?
9. What's Margaret think of the brothers and their plan?
10. When the brothers return, what do they talk about?
11. Is Margaret and educated woman?
12. Do the men speak English?
13. Are the men happy when they leave Margaret?
14. What do they learn about Margaret at the end?



#### Idioms & Expressions:

**relieving himself:** urinating  
**lay in ruins:** to be extremely badly damaged (of a building)  
**at a loss:** uncertain what to say  
**holding themselves admirably well:** acting respectably  
**silence was growing:** tension was building between them because no one was talking  
**nods of their heads:** a movement up and down with the head, to show agreement or approval  
**keep you company:** to stay with you so you are not alone  
**eyes lit up:** if your eyes light up, you are suddenly happy or pleasantly surprised  
**was at great pains:** was making a lot of effort to do something  
**defended his dove:** protected the woman he loved against attack or criticism  
**at no cost:** for free  
**turned his attention:** started to think about or concentrate on a particular thing or person  
**the balloon to shoot up:** If the balloon goes up, a situation suddenly becomes serious/unpleasant



**Literary term: Irony**

In literature, **irony** frequently occurs when there is a difference between what is expected or desired and what actually happens. For example, what a character thinks will happen to him or her may turn out to be the exact opposite of what actually happens.

**Focus:** There are many instances of irony in “The Refugee.” The brothers’ expectations about and desires for Margaret are quickly undermined by Margaret herself. Although, the brothers don’t know this until the end. Pay attention to the ironic things that Margaret says and the that the brothers say and do.

**UNDERSTANDING THE STORY****Linguistic Context:**

The *Kuku* language belongs to the Bari language group, of the Southeastern Nilotic branch of the Nilotic language family of the Southern Sudan and Northern Uganda. There are less than 100,000 native speakers of Kuku.

**Institutional Context:**

At the end of the story, it is revealed that Margaret Abiyo is a recent graduate of *Makerere University*. Makerere University Kampala (MUK) is Uganda’s largest institution of higher learning. MUK became an independent national university in 1970 when the University of East Africa was split into three independent universities: University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Makerere University in Uganda, and *University of Nairobi* in Kenya.

Makerere was home to many post-independence African leaders, including former Ugandan president Milton Obote and Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere. Former Tanzanian president Benjamin Mkapa current president of the DRC Joseph Kabila and recent Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki are also Makerere alumni.

After independence, Makerere was a focal point for literary activity central to African nationalist culture. Writers including Ali Mazrui, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, Paul Theroux, and V. S. Naipaul spent time at Makerere during their careers.

**Biographical Context:**

**Christopher Okigbo** (1930–1967) was a Nigerian poet, who died fighting for the independence of Biafra. He is today widely recognized as an outstanding postcolonial English-language African poet and one of the major modernist writers of the 20th century.



**Alex La Guma** (1925–1985) was a South African novelist whose work helped characterise the movement against the apartheid era in South Africa. La Guma’s vivid style, distinctive dialogue, and realistic, sympathetic portrayal of oppressed groups have made him one of the most notable South African writers of the 20th century. He is the author of the story “Out of Darkness.”

**Ali Al’amin Mazrui** (1933–2014), was an academic and a political writer on African and Islamic studies and North-South relations. He was born in Mombasa, Kenya. He was critical of African socialism and all strains of Marxism. He argued that a revised liberalism could help the continent and described himself as a proponent of a unique ideology of African liberalism. He believed the current capitalist system was deeply exploitative of Africa, and that the West rarely if ever lived up to their liberal ideals and could be described as global apartheid.



**set the storm going:** did something to cause a very angry reaction from a lot of people

**won over his heart:** caused him to love her

**towering giant:** (metaphorical) a very successful and powerful person or organization

**take undue advantage:** treat someone badly in order to get something good from them

**in awe:** a feeling of great respect often mixed with fear/surprise

**closely at his heels:** directly behind him

**bid her ageing mother farewell:** said goodbye to her mother who was old

**trouble broke out:** If something dangerous or unpleasant breaks out, it suddenly starts

**(don’t) judge a book from the cover:** said to show that you cannot know

what something or someone is like by looking only at their appearance

**Key Vocabulary:**

**(vomiting pr. part.) vomit (v):** to empty the contents of the stomach through the mouth

**(smartly (adv)) smart (v):** to cause to feel a stinging pain

**schooldays (n):** the period of your life that you spend at school

**opulent (adj):** expensive and luxurious

**leisure time (n):** the time when you are not working or doing other duties

**(admirably (adv)) admirable (adj):** deserving respect/approval

**(evidently (adv):** in a way that is easy to see

**integrity (n):** the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles you refuse to change

**elementary (n):** a school which provides the first part of a child’s education; primary school

**border (n):** the line that divides one country from another

**make fun of (v):** to make a joke about someone an unkind way

**damned (adj):** used to express anger with someone/something

### Historical Context:

It is unclear from the story which conflict has caused Margaret Abiyo to become a refugee in Sudan. She was most likely fleeing either the Uganda-Tanzania War of 1978-1979 or the Ugandan Bush War that went on from 1981-1986.

Milton Obote was the Ugandan leader following the end of British colonial rule, but Idi Amin seized power in a military *coup* in 1971. The Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere offered sanctuary to Obote and 20,000 refugees fleeing Amin's attempts to wipe out opposition. A year later, a group of exiles based in Tanzania attempted, unsuccessfully, to invade Uganda and remove Amin. Amin blamed Nyerere for backing and arming his enemies and in 1978 Uganda declared war on Tanzania. Nyerere mobilized the Tanzania People's Defence Force and counter-attacked. Despite support from Libya, Tanzania quickly defeated Amin's forces.

Following Amin's defeat, there was intense competition in Uganda for power. Obote's party won the 1980 election, but the leader of a smaller political faction, Yoweri Museveni, alleged election fraud and declared an armed rebellion. The fighting went on for many years and by 1985 forces loyal to Obote had nearly defeated Museveni's forces. However, tribal rivalries and weariness of war led to an internal *coup* against Obote and, in 1986, Museveni became president.

### Ideological Context:

**Communism** is a way of running an economy and a government in which the means of production (factories, equipment, etc.) are commonly owned, and in which there are no social classes. These ideas



were first proposed by German thinkers Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1830-1895) in the *Communist Manifesto*.



In 1917, Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky led a Russian group called the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution. They established the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (**USSR**). By the 1960s, one-third of the countries in the world identified as communist. The other two-thirds

of the world still lived in capitalism, and this led to a world-wide divide between capitalist countries and communist countries. This was called the "Cold War" because it was not fought with weapons or armies, but competing ideas. During the 1980s, the **USA** and the Soviet Union were competing to have the biggest army and having the most dangerous weapons. This was called the "Arms Race."

In 1991, the Soviet Union broke up. However, around a quarter of the world's people still live in states controlled by a communist party. Most of these are in China. The other countries include Cuba, Vietnam, and Laos.

### Making Inferences:

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- On their second visit, Duku, Wani, and Pitcha boast of the number of their cows and the size of their fields. They do this most likely to:
  - try to hire Abiyo to work for them
  - try and sell this property to Abiyo
  - influence Abiyo to marry one of them
- After Abiyo yells at them in English, the three brothers immediately leave. This is most likely because:
  - they think she is casting spells on them
  - they are embarrassed
  - they hate the English language
- Duku says Abiyo has "insulted him beyond what his manhood could endure." This shows that he is:
  - lonely
  - courageous
  - prideful

**villains** (n): bad people who harm others or break the law

**trek** (n): a long walk over land such as hills, mountains or forests

**intake** (n): an act of taking in something, especially breath

**stagnant** (adj): (of water/air) not moving, and smelling unpleasant

**hooligan** (n): a person who acts in a violent way without thinking and causes damage

**(prolongation** (n)) prolong (v): to make last a longer time

**(wasting her time** *pr. part.*) waste time (v): to not make good use of the hours available

**disobedient** (adj): refusing to do what someone in authority tells you to do

**economic** (adj): relating to trade, industry and money

**analyse** (v): to study or examine something in detail, in order to discover more about it

**logistics** (n): the careful organization of a complicated activity so that it happens in a successful and effective way

**(shifted** *p.*) shift (v): to (cause something or someone to) move or change from one position or direction to another

**spell bound** (adj): having your attention completely held by something, so that you cannot think about anything else

**(baffled** (adj)) baffle (v): to cause someone to be completely unable to understand/explain something

**(abruptly** (adv)) abrupt (adj): describes something that is sudden and unexpected

**inaudible** (adj): unable to be heard

**taking honours** (n): If you complete a school or university qualification with honours, you achieve a high standard.

**betrothed** (adj): a person someone has promised to marry or has been promised to as a mar-

riage partner  
**lecturer** (n): someone who teaches at a college or university



**Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the left column are from the story. The right column has definitions for those words. Look back at the story and try to understand the vocabulary. Then put the letter of its definition on the line next to each word.

Vocabulary	Meanings
1. consume <u>h.</u>	a. wrong or false
2. compulsory     ___	b. wise, especially as a result of great experience
3. dignified     ___	c. controlled, serious, and calm, and therefore deserving respect
4. erroneous     ___	d. to compare two things to show the differences between them
5. conceal     ___	e. required by a law or a rule
6. sage     ___	f. to suffer something difficult, unpleasant, or painful
7. exploitation     ___	g. an idea or behaviour that is silly or stupid
8. contrast     ___	<del>h. to use fuel, energy, or time OR to eat</del>
9. nonsense     ___	i. to hide something
10. incoherent     ___	j. unable to be understood
11. endure     ___	k. a situation in which someone treats someone else unfairly

**Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- No, she is angry.
- She is living in a place that is dirty and poorly constructed.
- Three local brothers, Wani, Pitcha, and Duku, come to visit her.
- Wani speaks first.
- They are struggling to speak with her because they do not speak the same language.
- They want Margaret to marry Duku.
- She tells them that she needs to think about it and to give her time to think.
- He is happy because he is certain that Margaret will marry him.
- She is furious that they would ask her such things and would never marry one of those men.
- They sit and list off all of their possessions.
- Yes, she speaks English and seems to know about a lot of different topics.
- No, they do not.
- No, they are embarrassed and angry.
- They find out that she is a graduate from Makerere University and is promised to marry another man.

**Analysing the Story: Irony**

Look back at the explanation of **irony**. Hopefully you understood not only what happened, but how characters in the story felt. Without understanding the expectations and desires of the characters, it is hard to identify irony. Some ironic passages from the story are listed in the table below. Can you explain why they are ironic? Can you find one other instance of irony?

What a character says or does	Why it is ironic...
Margaret says: "You visit me, it is good for me. You want me to live with you, it is also good."	<i>She despises the men, is not happy they visited, and is insulted that one of them wants to marry her.</i>
After leaving Margaret the first time: "Duku was in high spirits. "	
Duku says that: "these women refugees were always ready to pick up any man to look after them."	

**Thinking Critically:**

- This story is written in English, but we are supposed to understand that the **dialogue** for most of the story is in Kuku. At the end of this story, "Abiyo wanted to explain things to them and let reason fight reason, and so end this nonsense. She could not explain things in Kuku, the local language, so instead she shifted to English." Explain this quote in your own words. According to the passage, why does Abiyo shift to English? Do you think there are any other reasons?

# CERTAIN WINDS FROM THE SOUTH

## Ama Ata Aidoo—Ghana



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Hawa, the daughter of M'ma Asana, has recently given birth in rural Ghana. One night, M'ma Asana hears someone coming toward the house and wishes it were her husband. But she knows that is impossible. In fact, it is Hawa's husband, Issa. He tells M'ma Asana that he will go south to find work.

He cannot take Hawa and their child, Fuseni, because Fuseni is very young and his navel could get infected. Issa says he will return next Ramadan. M'ma Asana cannot sleep after Issa leaves. She thinks that the same problems she experienced are repeating for her daughter.

In the morning, she wakes Hawa up and tells her that Issa has gone. Hawa feels miserable when she hears this. M'ma Asana tells Hawa a story about another man who left his wife and newborn child to go south. This was twenty years ago and the man was a soldier.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

- \_\_\_\_\_ is a time of fasting for Muslims.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ calf struggled to stand for the first time.
- All the tomato plants are \_\_\_\_\_ with a virus.
- What a \_\_\_\_\_ existence! How can anyone live in such conditions?
- The \_\_\_\_\_ connects the baby to her mother in the womb.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The man was M'ma Asana's brother and never returned.
- The man was M'ma Asana's cousin and he is back in the village now.
- The man was Hawa's uncle and he returned to collect his wife and child.
- The man was Hawa's father and he died in the war.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

- In the opening of this story, we see M'ma Asana moving around her home and thinking. Is she happy with the situation they are in?
- Who is Fuseni? Why is he special?
- Who comes to talk to M'ma Asana? How is he related to M'ma Asana?
- What is Issa concerned about?
- Where is Issa going? Why?
- Does Issa tell his wife that he is leaving?
- What does M'ma Asana tell Hawa when she wakes up?
- What did Memunat do in the story that M'ma Asana tells to Hawa?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

- chill in the air:** a sudden unpleasant feeling, especially of fear
- craned her neck:** stretched in order to look at something
- caught her attention:** made her notice something and feel interested
- crossed the threshold:** went past the entrance to a room



#### Key Vocabulary:

- (eyed p.) eye (v):** to look at something with interest
- (prowling pr. part.) prowl (v):** to move around quietly in a place trying not to be seen or heard
- grasslands (n):** a large area of land covered with grass
- patchy (adj):** only existing or happening in some parts
- pits (n):** large holes in the ground
- thrill (n):** a feeling of extreme excitement, usually pleasant
- womb (n):** the organ in the body of a woman in which a baby develops before birth
- poachers (n):** people who catch and kill animals illegally

9. Who was the soldier M'ma Asana is telling Hawa about?
10. Where does he go?
11. What happens to him?
12. If M'ma Asana had gone to prove her marriage, what would have happened?

### **Literary term: Dialogue**

When you read a play, you learn about its plot, or story, mainly from the **dialogue** that takes place among the characters—that is, from the character's conversations. In short stories, although authors can also use narration (tell the story directly), dialogue usually remains important. To be effective, dialogue must be natural and must seem appropriate for the particular characters.

**Focus:** As you read "Certain Winds from the South," ask yourself if the dialogue, especially between M'ma Asana and Issa, helped tell the story and if it seemed natural and appropriate for the characters.



**duikers** (n): small antelopes  
**hinds** (n): female deer  
**(projecting pr. part.)**  
**project** (v): to stick out

over an edge

**pillars** (n): strong columns which support part of a building



**rot** (n): decay

**(smartness (n)) smart** (adj): clean, tidy, or stylish appearance

**excellencies** (n): (titles of) people in important official positions

**in abundance** (n): when there is more than enough of something

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY



### **Religious Context:**

**Islam** is an Abrahamic religion and monotheistic religion whose holy book is called the Qur'an. The religion was founded in the Arabian Peninsula and people who follow Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe that there is only one God, who is called **Allah** in the Arabic language.

Muslims believe that **Muhammad** was the last of many **prophets** from God. They believe that the Qur'an is the exact word of God, as revealed to Muhammad. The two largest branches are the Sunnis and the Shi'ites. Other groups include Sufis, Ahmadis, and Ibadis. Islam has rules based on the Qur'an called "Sharia." Muslim lawyers have studied Sharia and written down their ideas about how to judge different cases. These ideas about Sharia are called Fiqh.

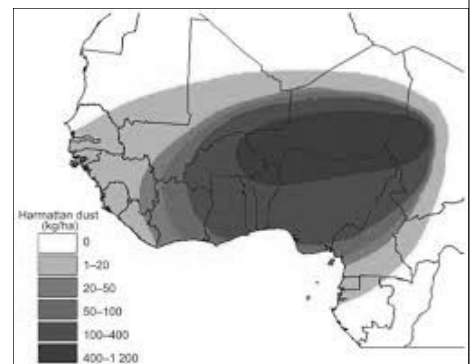
**Ramadan** is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Muslims worldwide observe this as a month of fasting. This annual observance is regarded as one of the Five Pillars of Islam. The month lasts 29–30 days based on the visual sightings of the crescent moon, according to numerous biographical accounts compiled in the hadiths.

### **Cultural Context:**

The **Gonja** were a powerful people in northern Ghana. The **Grunshies** were a smaller tribe of people in the same region. Pre-colonial Gonja society was stratified into castes, with a ruling class, a Muslim trader class, an animist commoner class, and a slave class. Its economy depended largely on trade in slaves and **kola nuts**.

### **Meteorological Context:**

The **Harmattan** is a hot, dry, and dusty wind blowing over West Africa. This northeasterly wind blows from the Sahara Desert into the Gulf of Guinea between the end of November and mid-March. The Harmattan brings desert-like weather conditions: lowers the humidity, dissipates cloud cover, prevents rainfall formation and sometimes creates big clouds of dust or sand which can even result in violent duststorms or sandstorms.



### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

1. M'ma Asana eyed the **wretched** pile of kola-nuts, spat, and picked up the reed-bowl.
  - a. of good quality
  - b. of a small amount
  - c. of poor quality
  - d. of a large amount
2. She **stooped** over the nuts.
  - a. squatted
  - b. leaned forward
  - c. cried
  - d. fell
3. In the old days, there were bucks and you got scolded for serving a woman in **maternity** a duicker.
  - a. the state of being married
  - b. the state of being a child
  - c. the state of being a mother
  - d. the state of being a woman

4. They of the **wilderness**, it is they who go south to cut grass.  
 a. undeveloped land      b. poor towns      c. urban areas      d. foreign lands
5. Oh, the **scandal** she caused herself then!  
 a. an action or event that brings respect to a person  
 b. an action or event that causes a person to be shamed  
 c. an action or event that makes a person happy  
 d. an action or event that makes a person rich
6. And from time to time, some will shoot up, searing my womb, **singeing** my intestines and burning up and up and up until I screamed with madness when it got into my head.  
 a. filling      b. healing      c. emptying      d. burning

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

1. Issa does not tell his wife Hawa that he is leaving for the south. This is likely because:  
 a. Hawa would not care      b. Hawa would tell the neighbors      c. Hawa would not let him go
2. M'ma Asana thinks, "If only it could be my husband," when she sees someone walking through the grass. This is probably because:  
 a. she misses her husband      b. her husband owes her money      c. she wants to kill her husband
3. M'ma Asana says, "It was him I wanted not his body turned into gold." This shows M'ma Asana is:  
 a. greedy      b. loving      c. selfish

### **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- No. She is remembering better times when there were more children and more food.
- Fuseni is M'ma Asana's grandson. He's special because it's been a long time since a baby was born there.
- Issa comes to speak with M'ma Asana. He is her son-in-law.
- He is worried about his newborn son and whether his umbilical cord had become infected.
- He is going south (to the coast) in order to find work.
- No, she is sleeping and he does not wake her. He only tells M'ma Asana.
- That Issa has gone.
- During the war, Memunat had an affair with a soldier after another man had paid a dowry to her father.
- The soldier was Hawa's father.
- He went to fight for the British in WWII.
- He was killed.
- If she had gone south, she could have claimed money from the government as the widow of a soldier.

### **Analysing the Story: Dialogue**

Look back at the explanation of **dialogue**. There is dialogue at the beginning of this story between Issa and M'ma Asana. But when Issa leaves, the story becomes a long monologue (only one person speaking). We understand that M'ma Asana is talking to her daughter, Hawa, though. And there are clues that Hawa is speaking too, even if we don't see what she says. Some passages of M'ma Asana's monologue are listed in the table below. Can you provide Hawa's voice and turn the monologue into a dialogue?

M'ma Asana	Hawa
"But us, we are different. I had not been betrothed."	
"Do you ask me why I say "we"? Because this man was your father. Ah-ah, you open your mouth and eyes wide? Yes, my child, it is of your father I am speaking."	
"No, I was not lying when I told you that he died. But keep quiet and listen. He was going south to get himself a house for married soldiers."	

### **Thinking Critically:**

- WWII took place in the 1940s, ending in 1945. In what decade does this story happen? How do you know?
- If you were M'ma Asana's husband in the 1940s and you were a soldier during colonial rule, would you have gone to fight in WWII in Europe? Why or why not?



# FIREFLY

Adewale Maja-Pearce—Nigeria



## PREPARING TO READ

### Story Preview:

The man and his wife are from a village in Nigeria. But they have come to Lagos with their baby for the man to work. The baby is very ill—wheezing and coughing, but they have no money to get proper medical care for the frail infant. The man's wife thinks they should have stayed in the village because her father could have helped them. In Lagos, they know no one. The man had insisted that they come to Lagos, though, because he didn't want to work for his wife's father. Any other opportunity had been destroyed by soldiers in the war.

The man says he will ask his master (employer) for help and tells his wife it will be all right. She contemptuously dismisses him. She is furious with him. The man feels helpless and leaves the room.

### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. The boy felt \_\_\_\_\_ when he was captured by the enemy.
2. The headteacher watched \_\_\_\_\_ as the latecomers arrived to school.
3. I was \_\_\_\_\_ that the referee counted the goal even though the player was offside.
4. The man was \_\_\_\_\_ from smoking too many cigarettes.
5. The child's arm broke easily because his bones were \_\_\_\_\_.

### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The man will go find a doctor, but when they return to the room his wife and child will be gone.
- The man will go back inside, but the child will have died and his wife will leave him.
- The man will abandon his wife and the child will recover.
- The man will buy medicine for the child, but he will return to the room too late to save his child.

## WHILE READING

### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. Is the child in the story healthy or sick?
2. What do the man and woman need naira for?
3. Where does the man say that he will get money?
4. Does his wife believe him?
5. How does his wife think their child fell ill?
6. Why did they leave the village?
7. Why does the man go out of the room?
8. When he comes back, what has happened?
9. What does the woman do at the end of the story?

### Idioms & Expressions:

**to and fro:** in one direction and then in the opposite direction, a repeated number of times

### Key Vocabulary:

**unscrewed p.** unscrew (v): to take the lid or top off something by twisting it round  
**vaseline (n):** a soft oily substance used especially to protect skin

**firefly (n):** an insect which is active during the night and whose tail shines on and off in the dark



**frogs (n):** small animals with smooth skin, live in water and on land, and have long powerful back legs with which they jump

**gutter (n):** the edge of a road where rain flows away

**limp (adj):** soft; not firm or stiff

**suitcase (n):** a large rectangular case with a handle for carrying clothes and possessions while travelling





**Literary term: Onomatopoeia**

**Onomatopoeia** is the use of words such as *pow*, *buzz*, and *crunch* whose sounds suggest their meanings.

**Focus:** “Firefly” is very short story, but it includes a number of instances of onomatopoeia. How many can you find?

**UNDERSTANDING THE STORY****Monetary Context:**

The *naira* was introduced in 1973 in Nigeria, replacing the British pound at a rate of 2 naira = 1 pound. The Naira is subdivided into 100 kobo.

**Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the word bank below are all from the story. Find them in the story and see if you can understand their meaning. Then fill in the spaces in the sentences below with the correct word.

**WORD BANK**

subsided	vulnerable	contort	presence	withdraw	<del>presently</del>
	uncertainly	acknowledge	hovering		

- Government officials are presently making a plan to address the issue.
- I promised my family that I would not \_\_\_\_\_ from school.
- Yesterday we saw a helicopter \_\_\_\_\_ in the sky.
- They refuse to \_\_\_\_\_ that they were involved in the scandal.
- Today we are honored by the \_\_\_\_\_ of the chief himself.
- We should always try to protect the most \_\_\_\_\_ members of our society.
- After the rain finally \_\_\_\_\_, we were able to play the match.
- Because neither of us knew the answer, we looked at each other \_\_\_\_\_.
- In the talent show, he used to \_\_\_\_\_ his body into strange positions.

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- At the start of the story, the man puts his hand on his wife’s shoulder, but she does not “acknowledge his presence” probably because:
  - she doesn’t feel it
  - she is angry with him
  - she is asleep
- The woman tells the man that “it is finished.” By this she means that:
  - the child is dead
  - dinner is ready
  - there is no more money

- At the end of the story, the woman is preparing to:
  - leave her husband
  - go to bed
  - feed the baby

**Suggested Answers for Comp. Questions:**

- The child is very sick.
- The naira is needed to buy medicine.
- He says he will get the money from his employer.
- She does not believe him.
- She says that he fell ill while they were travelling to Lagos from the village.
- The man wanted to find work.
- He felt like an intruder in the room.
- The baby has died.
- She packs her suitcase as if she is leaving the man.

**Analysing the Story: Onomatopoeia**

Look back at the explanation of **onomatopoeia**. Though this is a very short story, there are at least three clear examples of onomatopoeia. Remember, examples of onomatopoeia are going to be words that suggest *sounds* based on how the words themselves sound. One example from this story is the *wheezing* of the child. Wheezing is the high, rough noise made while breathing because of some difficulty. When someone wheezes they make a sound similar to the sound of the word *wheeze*. At least two other examples of onomatopoeia are in the story. Can you identify them?

<b>Onomatopoeia</b>		
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**Thinking Critically:**

- Who do you sympathise with more in this story: the husband or the wife?

# THE PIG

## Doris Lessing—Zimbabwe



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Jonas is an old labourer on a large farm owned by a white farmer in Botswana. Most of the year, he does odd jobs around the farm. During growing season, however, he guards the fields from wild animals with a rifle.

Every year the yield from the harvest is less than expected because some labourers steal from the field at night. So, this year, the farmer has asked Jonas to shoot at anything he hears in the field at night—even if they are humans!

Jonas is old-fashioned and has recently taken a young second wife. As a result, he is not pleased with his job because he does not want to leave his young wife alone at night. Instead of guarding the fields, Jonas watches his own hut every night. On the night of a party on the farm, Jonas sees a young man go into the hut where his young wife stays.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Preview.

- In addition to his regular duties, the watchman does \_\_\_\_\_ around the school.
- The headteacher was \_\_\_\_\_ with the good performance of students on their exams.
- She is not \_\_\_\_\_. She wears trousers every day.
- The tobacco \_\_\_\_\_ for farmers in Malawi increased last year due to better farming methods.
- It is illegal to carry a \_\_\_\_\_ in town.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Jonas will tell the farmer about the young man and the young man will be asked to leave.
- Jonas will become very sad and shoot himself with the rifle.
- Jonas will go into the hut and find his young wife with the young man.
- Jonas will wait for the young man to come out of the hut and will kill him.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

- What do the labourers normally do on Saturday after being paid?
- What does the farmer have them do on this Saturday?
- What happens to the farmer's crops every year?
- When warning labourers not to steal, who does the farmer call for?
- What is this man's job?
- What is Jonas' problem? Why doesn't he want to guard the fields this year?
- Is the farmer sympathetic with Jonas?
- Why does Jonas not go in to eat that night?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**a matter of form:** as is typically practiced

**docked rations:** to give less food per person than normal

**put on this display:** make it clear to everyone how you feel

**for the tenth time:** (probably exaggerated) again, after ten previous times



**braced himself:** prepared himself mentally

**scoundrel:** a person who treats others badly and has no morals

**occurred to him:** came into his mind

**take the order literally:** actually do what has been ordered

**getting on in years:** getting older

**the last straw:** the last in a series of events which finally makes you feel that you cannot continue to accept a bad situation

**no game left unstartled for miles:** so much noise was made, that any wild animal near would have run away

9. What does Jonas do instead of going to the fields?
10. What event takes place the next Saturday?
11. Who had Jonas seen with his young wife? How does he feel about it?
12. What does the young man remind Jonas of?
13. Who does Jonas see go into his house?
14. When the young man comes out, what does Jonas do?
15. How do Jonas' feelings about the young man change? Why?
16. What does Jonas do to the young man?

### **Literary term: Symbolism**

A **symbol** is a thing (most often some type of concrete object) that represents an idea or group of ideas. For example, some common symbols are a dove (as a sign of peace), a lion (as a symbol of courage), or a flag (as an emblem of a country).

**Focus:** As you read "The Pig," pay attention to the things Jonas thinks about. Are any of them symbols in Jonas' mind?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **About the Author:**

**Doris Lessing** (1919–2013) was born in Iran to British parents. When she was 6 years old, her family moved to the British colony of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to farm maize on about 1,000 acres of bush. She remained in Africa until she was thirty years old when she moved to England.



This story comes from a collection of short stories she wrote entitled *African Stories*. In 2007 she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

### **Wildlife Context:**

**Waterbuck** are large antelopes found in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Gender Context:**

**Polygamy** is a practice in which more than two people are joined in marriage. A majority of the world's countries and nearly all of the world's developed nations do not permit polygamy, and there have been growing calls for the abolition of the practice in developing countries. While polygamy refers to either a man with many wives or a woman with many husbands, in practice polygamy refers exclusively to polygyny (a man has more than one wife). Polygyny has been described as a form of human rights abuse. International human rights organizations, as well as women's rights groups in many countries, have called for its abolition.

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the left column are from the story. The right column has definitions for those words. Look back at the story and try to understand the vocabulary. Then put the letter of its definition on the line next to each word.

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Meanings</b>
1. reverberate <u>  f  </u>	a. as a group
2. cynical <u>      </u>	b. unfriendly and not liking or agreeing with something
3. collectively <u>      </u>	c. to make a big mistake
4. infuriated <u>      </u>	d. not willing to do something and therefore slow in doing it
5. reluctant <u>      </u>	e. believing people are only interested in themselves and not sincere
6. mock <u>      </u>	f. <del>to be repeated many times (usually a sound)</del>
7. submissive <u>      </u>	g. describes a person who allows other people to control them
8. hostile <u>      </u>	h. to spread across or move away over a large area
9. gradually <u>      </u>	i. to shine by reflecting light from a wet, oily, or smooth surface
10. blunder <u>      </u>	j. slowly over a period of time or over a distance
11. disperse <u>      </u>	k. to laugh at someone, often in a funny but unkind way
12. glisten <u>      </u>	l. very angry

### **Vocabulary:**

**foliage** (n): the leaves of a plant or tree  
**(bunched p.) bunch** (v): If material bunches up, it moves into tight folds  
**copper** (n): reddish-brown metal used for making wire and coins  
**sacks** (n): large bags made of strong cloth, paper or plastic, used to store large amounts  
**(fined p.) fine** (v): to charge someone an amount of money as a punishment  
**(condescension n)** condescend (v): If you condescend to do something, you agree to do something which you do not consider to be good enough for you  
**(stilled p.) still** (v): to make something stop moving  
**sombre** (adj): serious, sad and without humour/entertainment  
**fond** (adj): having a great liking for someone or something  
**cured** (adj): to treat food, tobacco, etc. with smoke or salt, etc. in order to stop it decaying  
**buck** (n): male of some animals  
**nevertheless** (adv): despite what has just been said or referred to  
**(bluff n)** bluff (v): to deceive someone by making them think that you are going to do something when you have no intention of doing it, or that you know something you do not know  
**waggish** (adj): saying humorous things  
**good humour** (n): friendly or in a good mood  
**heartache** (n): great sadness  
**pathless** (n): without any roads, so that it is easy to get lost  
**(drifting adj)** drift (v): to move slowly, especially as a result of outside forces  
**(betrayal n)** betray (v): to not be loyal to your country or a person, by helping their enemies  
**(gnawing pr. part.) gnaw** (v): to bite something repeatedly, usually gradually destroying it  
**stilts** (n): a set of long pieces of wood or metal used to support a building so it is above the ground  
**platforms** (n): a flat raised area  
**vigil** (n): (an act of) staying awake, especially at night, in order to be with an ill person, or to express political disagreement

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- When the farmer says "human pig," he most likely means:
  - someone who has no manners
  - someone who looks like a pig
  - someone stealing crops
- The young man and Jonas' young wife are most likely:
  - lovers
  - siblings
  - good friends
- Over the course of the story, Jonas is jealous of the young man. But, in addition to jealousy he has other feelings about him that change from:
  - awe to disgust
  - hatred to respect
  - fear to friendship

**Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- Normally, they disperse (go back to their homes).
- He has them wait for an announcement and call the women and children.
- Every year, the labourers steal from the fields at night.
- He calls Jonas.
- Jonas does odd jobs most of the year, but during the rainy season he guards the field at night with a rifle.
- Jonas has a new young wife that he does not want to leave alone every night.
- No.
- He's unhappy and doesn't want to see his wives (who he thinks mock him).
- He stands next to a tree near his house all night.
- A beer drink, or party, takes place on the farm on Saturday.
- He saw a young man chatting with his wife and he is very upset about it.
- The young man makes Jonas think of a waterbuck that he had shot last year.
- He sees the young man go into his house.
- Jonas follows him.
- He loses respect for the young man who is walking clumsily and loudly.
- He shoots him.

**Analysing the Story: Symbolism**

Look back at the explanation of **symbolism**. Jonas compares the young man in the story to a waterbuck and to a pig at different points in the story. Both are used to represent different ideas or feelings that Jonas is having about the young man. In the table below, fill in what the waterbuck and the pig are meant to symbolise.

Symbol	What it represents...
The waterbuck	
A pig	

**Thinking Critically:**

- Doris Lessing was a white woman. In fact, her father was a farmer in Zimbabwe (then called Rhodesia) and, perhaps, provided some of the inspiration for the farmer in this story. Do you think she sympathises with the farmer in the story? What do you think it means that the farmer is never given a name, but referred to simply as 'the farmer'?

**cauterise** (v): to burn an injury to stop bleeding/prevent infection  
**(raiding pr. part.) raid** (v): to attack a place suddenly



**beer drink** (n): a party at which you have alcoholic drinks

**lengthwise** (adv):

in the direction of the longest side

**blank** (v): empty or clear

**(tautening pr. part.) tauten** (v): to become tight

**purposeless** (adj): done without a clear intention

**vigilant** (adj): always being careful to notice things, especially possible danger

**spine** (n): the line of bones down the centre of the back that provides support for the body

**(pulsing pr. part.) pulse** (v): a short period of energy which is repeated regularly

**undergrowth** (n): a mass of bushes and plants growing under the trees of a wood or forest

**sparks** (n): tiny bits of fire which fly out of something burning

**jaunty** (adj): showing that you are happy and confident

**firelight** (n): light from a fire

**trigger** (n): a part of a gun which causes it to fire when pressed

**(lurched p.) lurch** (v): to move in a way that is not regular, making sudden movements backwards or forwards or from side to side

**dew** (n): drops of water that form on the ground and other surfaces outside during the night

**pearly** (adj): white and shiny

**(dissolving pr. part.) dissolve** (v): (of a solid) to be absorbed by a liquid, especially when mixed

**slim** (adj): attractively thin

**ungainly** (adj): awkward and without grace

**(threshing pr. part.) thresh** (v): to remove the seeds of crop plants by hitting them

**(scything pr.**

**part.) scythe** (v):

to cut using a scythe

**(gaped p.) gape**

(v): to look in great surprise at something, especially with an open mouth



# OUT OF DARKNESS

## Alex La Guma—South Africa



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

The narrator is in prison in South Africa with many other prisoners. One of the convicts, called Old Cockroach by the others, is insane. He is in prison for culpable homicide, or killing someone by accident. The narrator tries to talk to him sometimes, but Old Cockroach doesn't make sense, even though he seems to be very intelligent.

Old Cockroach often mentions 'Cora' and 'Joey', but the narrator has no idea who these people are. One time, Old Cockroach thinks that he sees 'Joey', but it is really Smiley Abrams, a large and primitive murderer in the prison.

It is very hot and dirty inside the narrator's prison cell and it is hard to sleep. During one of these moments, the narrator asks about 'Cora' and Old Cockroach begins to tell him about how he ended up in prison.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

- \_\_\_\_\_ live in the crack in the wall and only come out at night.
- The cave painting was just a few \_\_\_\_\_ lines on the wall.
- Some students feel that sitting in a classroom all day is as bad as a prison \_\_\_\_\_.
- When the man left his infant daughter by the river and she drowned, he was charged with \_\_\_\_\_.
- The guards were watching over a row of \_\_\_\_\_ digging a ditch as punishment.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Old Cockroach will tell him that Cora was his wife, Joey killed her, but he was blamed.
- Old Cockroach will tell him that Cora and Joey were his children and he hit them with his car.
- Old Cockroach will tell him that Cora was his ex-girlfriend and he killed his friend, Joey, in a fight.
- Old Cockroach will tell him that Cora and Joey were his friends and died when he crashed a car while drunk.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. Where is the narrator?
2. What is wrong with 'Old Cockroach'?
3. Why is Old Cockroach in prison?
4. Does the narrator know who Cora is?
5. Who is Smiley Abrams?
6. What does the narrator want to know more about?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**unhinged him:** made him crazy or act crazy

**clamped up tight:** won't speak

**butt of their depraved humour:** to be a person who is joked about or laughed at

**wolfing his food:**

eating his food very quickly

**confirming my old suspicion:**

proving that a belief or an opinion which was previously not completely certain is true

**lose my head:** to lose control and not act in a calm way

**cracked his skull:** hit and broke the bones of his head



7. After the guard yells at the prisoners, what does Smiley Abrams do?
8. What was Old Cockroach's profession before he was sent to prison?
9. Why is it difficult to sleep where they are? (Give 3 reasons)
10. That night, Old Cockroach tells a story about his past. Who was Cora?
11. What was different about Cora?
12. Who was Joey? What happened to him?

### **Literary term: Allusion**

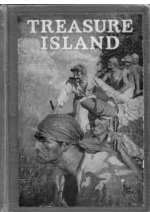
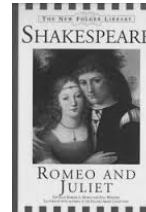
An **allusion** is an indirect reference to another literary work or to a famous person, place, or event.

**Focus:** “Out of Darkness” refers to many famous works of literature, people, and events. Sometimes they are referred to directly and sometimes they are alluded to. How many allusions do you recognize?

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

### **Literary Context:**

*Romeo and Juliet* is a play written by William Shakespeare. It is set in Italy and is about the love between two young people from noble families that are enemies.



*Treasure Island* is a book by Robert Louis Stevenson. It was published in 1883. It is about pirates and a treasure hunt on a tropical isle. Traditionally considered a coming-of-age story, *Treasure Island* is a tale noted for its atmosphere, characters, and action, and also as a wry commentary on the ambiguity of morality – as seen in Long John Silver – unusual for children's literature.

### **Linguistic Context:**

This story takes place during apartheid. All of the prisoners are black, but the jailers are probably white. The jailers are quoted using Afrikaans and English when they speak with the prisoners. *Spring bliksems* means “jump, bastards” and *Hou julle bekke* means “keep your mouths shut.” However, Old Cockroach also uses an Afrikaans word, *pikkie*, meaning “child.”

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

1. In the dark the other bodies turned, cursed, and tried to settle back into **perspiring** sleep.
  - a. dreaming
  - b. lacking
  - c. sweating
  - d. starting
2. He had entered the seventh year of his ten-year sentence for culpable homicide, and being shut up so long had **unhinged** him somewhat.
  - a. to make a person lazy
  - b. to make a person lonely
  - c. to make a person very sad
  - d. to make a person mentally ill
3. His insanity was of a gentle quality that came in **spells**.
  - a. short periods of time
  - b. short periods of drought
  - c. long periods of time
  - d. long periods of drought
4. Old Cockroach sat near me, smiling his gentle smile and **wolfing** his food.
  - a. vomiting up
  - b. throwing away
  - c. eating quickly
  - d. ignoring totally
5. The cloying heat and the **stench** of the latrine seemed to take advantage of the darkness.
  - a. a big hole
  - b. a surrounding area
  - c. an entrance
  - d. a very bad smell

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**(soothingly (adv))** soothing (adj): making you feel calm

**snail (n):** a small creature with a soft wet body and a round shell, that moves very slowly

**(friendliness (n))** friendly (adj): behaving in a pleasant, kind way

**peephole (n):** a small hole through which you can look

**inmates (n):** people in a prison

**(probing pr. part.)** probe (v): to try to discover information that other people do not want you to know, by asking questions

**(clanging pr. part.)** clang (v): to make a loud deep ringing sound like that of metal being hit

**(lashing out pr. part.)** lash out (ph v): to suddenly attack someone or something physically or criticise them in an angry way

**bastards (n):** unpleasant people

**vacant (n):** not filled

**flint (n):** (a piece of) stone or metal to produce a flame

**contraptions (n):** machines that look awkward or old-fashioned

**(cupped p.)** cup (v): to hold your hands in the shape of a cup

**canvas (n):** strong, rough cloth

**wreckage (n):** the separated parts of a badly damaged object

**imperfections (n):** faults or weaknesses

**shins (n):** the front parts of your legs between knee and foot

**ragged (adj):** (of clothes) not in good condition; torn

**negroid (adj):** having the physical features of a black person

**kinky (adj):** unusual or strange

**skull (n):** the bones of the head,

**gratings (n):** structures made of metal bars which cover a hole

**finality (n):** the quality of being finished and unable to be changed

**(retreated p.)** retreat (v): to go away from a place or person to escape from fighting or danger

**(trumpeted p.)** trumpet (v): to announce something proudly

**filthy (adj):** extremely dirty

**(receded p.)** recede (v): to move further away into the distance

**(hunched p.)** hunch (v): to lean forward with shoulders raised

**(hawked p.)** hawk (v): to prepare to spit

**(stalked p.)** stalk (v): to follow something as closely as possible

6. From all around us grunts, curses, and tiny cries came like **suppressed** voices out of hell.

- a. joyful  
b. restrained  
c. pleasant  
d. celebratory

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- While the prisoners are Africans, we are supposed to understand that the guards are probably white because they:
  - are described that way
  - speak Afrikaans
  - wear boots
- The narrator thinks 'Old Cockroach' is an educated man mainly because of:
  - the clothes he wears
  - his visitors
  - what he says
- Old Cockroach says that Cora started going to places that he couldn't take her. This is most likely because he was:
  - too poor
  - too black
  - too uneducated

### **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- The narrator is in prison.
- Old Cockroach is crazy.
- He was convicted of culpable homicide and sentenced to 10 years in prison.
- No. Old Cockroach mentions her name often, but the narrator does not know who she is.
- Smiley Abrams is a murderer who is in prison with the narrator and Old Cockroach. He is big and dangerous.
- The narrator wants to know more about Old Cockroach's past.
- He walks over to the door and spits on it.
- He was a teacher.
- It is very hot, they are all covered in lice, and it smells very bad.
- Cora was a girl that he was in love with and had planned to marry.
- She was very light-skinned and could pass for white and go to places that Old Cockroach could not go to.
- Joey was Old Cockroach's friend. When Joey called Old Cockroach a fool for being upset about Cora, Old Cockroach hit him and accidentally killed him.

### **Analysing the Story: Allusion**

Look back at the explanation of **allusion**. The story that Old Cockroach tells alludes to the period of apartheid in South Africa (and, in fact, we are supposed to understand that the story is set in apartheid). Old Cockroach makes a few other allusions throughout the course of the story. What are they? What do they tell us about Old Cockroach?

Allusions	What do they tell us about Old Cockroach?
• •	

### **Thinking Critically:**

- The black people in this story are living under the oppressive apartheid system in South Africa. Cora is able to 'pass' as white because of her light skin. As a result, she is able to go to all of the places reserved for whites only. Old Cockroach cannot and, therefore, is left behind by the woman he loves. Do you agree with Cora's actions? Why or why not?
- Can you understand Old Cockroach's violent reaction to Cora's rejection? Or do you think Old Cockroach should have forgotten about Cora? Defend your answer.

**hardcase** (n): someone who is difficult to deal with and possibly angry and violent  
**ammonia** (n): a gas with a strong unpleasant smell  
**bulb** (n): a rounded glass container which produces light  
**armour** (n): strong protective covering, especially for the body  
**riveted** (adj): to not be able to stop looking at something  
**overpowering** (adj): too strong  
**(clawed p.) claw** (v): to tear something or someone  
**jackals** (n): wild animals like dogs  
**carrion** (n): dead/decaying flesh  
**turmoil** (n): a state of confusion  
**(cringing pr. part.) cringe** (v): to suddenly move away from something because you are frightened  
**fist** (n): a hand with the fingers and thumb held tightly in  
**pick** (n): a tool for breaking hard surfaces  
**(trampled p.) trample** (v): to step heavily on something causing damage or injury  
**(revolted p.) revolt** (v): refuse to be controlled or ruled; take often violent action against authority  
**series** (n): a number of similar or related events or things  
**brawl** (n): a noisy, rough fight  
**(subsided p.) subside** (v): to become less strong or extreme  
**stark** (adj): empty, simple or obvious, without decoration  
**lice** (n): very small insects that live on the bodies of people  
**vermin** (n): small animals and insects that can be harmful  
**twigs** (n): small thin branches  
**slippery** (adj): wet, smooth or oily so that it slides easily  
**cloying** (adj): too sweet and therefore unpleasant  
**spare time** (n): time when you are not working  
**cafés** (n): a restaurant where simple/cheap meals are served  
**(drifted p.) drift** (v): to move slowly  
**(raved p.) rave** (v): to speak in an uncontrolled way, usually because you are upset or angry  
**(grovelled p.) grovel** (v): to behave with too much respect towards someone to show them that you are eager to please them  
**bitch** (n): an unkind or unpleasant woman



# ASEMKA

## Aya Kwei Armah—Ghana



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

The narrator of this story, Asemka, lives in a house where many different families live together. One of these residents is Mr Ainoo. At first, Mr Ainoo lives alone and Asemka tries to assist him with household chores. But this is in vain. Mr Ainoo will not allow her to help and tells her to mind her own business.

Later, Mr Ainoo marries. Soon after, his daughter from a first marriage, Essie, comes to live with them. Asemka tries not to bother him, but eventually tells him that he will regret having his daughter live with his second wife—Asemka says the daughter needs to be with an older woman whom she respects. But Mr Ainoo won't listen. He says it's natural for a daughter to turn against her mother.

One day, another man, Mr Mensah comes to live in the house. He is quiet and lives alone. Asemka cooks him food and asks him when he will marry. Mr Mensah says he wants to live alone. Essie, meanwhile, is constantly quarrelling with her stepmother. That is when Asemka begins to see Essie going over to talk to Mr Mensah everyday.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. Though she always defended her son, she \_\_\_\_\_ him when he was caught stealing.
2. My \_\_\_\_\_ married my father when I was ten years old.
3. It is natural that brothers and sister \_\_\_\_\_ with each other.
4. The efforts to find the thief were \_\_\_\_\_. He could not be found.
5. I left school at 16, but now that I can't find a job I really \_\_\_\_\_ it.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Mr Mensah will ask Mr Ainoo to marry his daughter.
- Mr Ainoo will become angry with Mr Mensah and threaten him.
- Mr Mensah will leave and Essie will have become pregnant.
- Mr Ainoo will force Essie to go live with her grandmother.

### WHILE READING

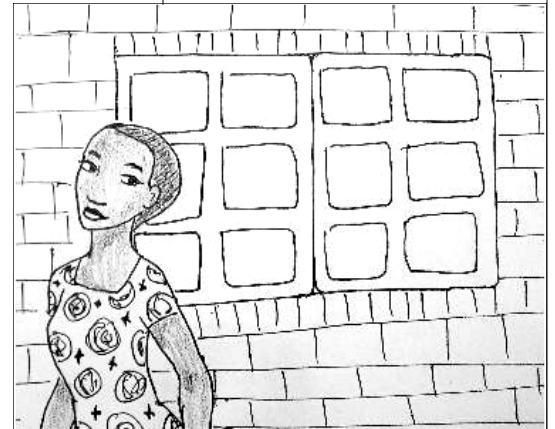
#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. Are Asemka and Mr Ainoo good friends?
2. Why does Asemka try to help Mr Ainoo?
3. What does Mr Ainoo tell the narrator when she tries to help him?
4. Who comes to live with Mr Ainoo?
5. What does Asemka think is bad about the new situation in Mr Ainoo's home?
6. Does Mr Ainoo agree with Asemka?
7. What does Asemka think is natural for a girl to feel towards her mother as she reaches adulthood?
8. Who is Mr Mensah?
9. What does Asemka do for him one day?
10. What does Asemka notice about Essie?
11. When Essie is away at night, where does she tell her stepmother she has gone?
12. Asemka worries about the relationship between Mr Mensah and Essie. Why doesn't she tell anyone?
13. What happens to Mr Mensah? What about Essie?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**sunning herself:** sitting somewhere where there is a lot of sun



#### Key Vocabulary:

**pod (n):** a long, narrow, flat part of some plants, such as beans and peas, which contains the seeds



**pepper (n):** a greyish black or creamy coloured powder produced by crushing dry peppercorns, used to give a spicy hot taste to food

**wristlet (n):** a piece of jewelry worn around the wrist



**Literary term: Euphemism**

**Euphemism** is the use of mild or indirect words or expressions to substitute for others that are considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing (especially sexual).

**Focus:** While you read, pay attention to the language choices made by the narrator. She is middle-aged and conservative and therefore relies on euphemism to avoid feelings of embarrassment.

**UNDERSTANDING THE STORY****Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the word bank below are from the story. Find them in the story and try to understand their meaning. Then fill in the spaces in the sentences below with the correct word.

WORD BANK				
skills	suckle	maiden	ripen	hasty
	<del>downward</del>	disobey	noontime	

- The downward trend in dropouts was encouraging.
- Let's not make any \_\_\_\_\_ decisions before we know all of the facts.
- They always eat lunch promptly at \_\_\_\_\_.
- She likes to let fruit \_\_\_\_\_ before she eats it because it tastes sweeter.
- The kid was \_\_\_\_\_ from the mother goat.
- You have all the \_\_\_\_\_ needed for this job.
- He was afraid to \_\_\_\_\_ his strict parents.
- Girls are referred to as \_\_\_\_\_ in many old English stories.

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- Mr Ainoo is probably living alone at the start of the story because:
  - he divorced his wife
  - he was not yet married
  - his wife died
- Kojo is probably the narrator's:
  - husband
  - son
  - neighbour

**Analysing the Story: Euphemism**

Look back at the explanation of **euphemism**. The expression "mind your own business", for example, is a euphemism because it shifts focus from the speaker to the listener—unlike "don't trouble my peace." Asemka uses euphemistic phrases to avoid mentioning unpleasant things directly throughout the story. Find the expressions in the table below in the story and see if you can interpret their true meaning (pay particular attention to the *italicized* words). The first one is done for you.

Euphemism	Meaning
"lost his wife"	<i>His wife died.</i>
"before the young man can regret his love"	
"the <i>lazy time</i> "	

**Thinking Critically:**

- Mr Ainoo claims that "it is natural for a girl to turn against her stepmother for a time, and even if her own mother were alive, she would turn against her, because it is the way human beings grow." BUT the narrator says "What foolishness to think a girl must turn against her mother!" Who do you agree with? Why?

**Suggested Answers for Comp. Questions:**

- No, in fact they don't like each other very much.
- The narrator tries to help Mr Ainoo because she thinks men should not do housework.
- He tells her to leave him alone.
- He takes a new wife and then his daughter also comes to stay with him.
- She thinks it is not good that the new wife is not much older than the daughter. The daughter, Essie, does not respect her new stepmother.
- Mr Ainoo thinks it is natural for an adolescent girl to dislike her mother (or stepmother).
- The narrator thinks that adolescent girls are closest to their mothers at that time and become more like friends with them than like children.
- Mr Mensah is another man who comes to stay where the narrator and Mr Ainoo live.
- She prepares him some food and takes it over to him.
- She notices that Essie is always going over to where Mr Mensah stays and talking with him.
- She says she is at her grandmother's house.
- She wants to tell Mr Ainoo, but she doesn't tell him because he has asked her not to disturb him.
- He goes away one day and no one knows where. She has become pregnant.

# NOORJEHAN

## Ahmed Essop—South Africa



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

The narrator of this story is a teacher in South Africa. Noorjehan is a gifted student in his English class. One day, Noorjehan stops coming to school. A fortnight later, the narrator receives a letter from her explaining that her parents have forced her to leave school so that she can get married.

Noorjehan explains that the relatives of the man she is supposed to marry have come to scrutinise her. She is very unhappy. She asks the narrator to come to speak with her father and dissuade him from forcing her to marry because she wants to continue her studies.

The narrator does as she asks, but Noorjehan's father will not listen. Noorjehan continues to write letters to the narrator about her marriage. Just before the date of the wedding, Noorjehan sends an urgent message to the narrator, asking him to meet her at the train station.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. I tried to \_\_\_\_\_ my friend from leaving school, but he left anyway.
2. I am going away for two weeks. I will return in a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Chimwemwe is the best footballer in the school. He is a \_\_\_\_\_ athlete.
4. After the accident, it was \_\_\_\_\_ that we go to the hospital.
5. He \_\_\_\_\_ the boys closely, trying to figure out who was lying.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Noorjehan will meet her future husband and introduce him to the narrator.
- Noorjehan will say goodbye to the narrator and leave in a train.
- Noorjehan and the narrator will leave on a train.
- Noorjehan will try to leave on a train but the narrator will stop her.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. How does the narrator know Noorjehan?
2. Why does Noorjehan leave school?
3. How does she communicate with the narrator?
4. What does Noorjehan ask the narrator to do?
5. Does Noorjehan's father take the narrator's advice about his daughter?
6. What is one reason Noorjehan doesn't want to marry?
7. Where does Noorjehan ask the narrator to meet her?



#### Idioms & Expressions:

**mother of pearl:** a substance forming inside shells of some sea animals. It is white but seems to shine with many different colours

**constant companion:** a person you spend all of your time with

**literary sensibility:** an understanding of or ability to decide about what is good in literature

**subtle accord:** an unspoken agreement

**the go betweens:** people who take messages between people

**hawk nosed:** having a nose that is curved like a hawk's beak

**life long devotion:** loyalty and love for someone or something that lasts for your whole life

**self-obliteration:** destroying yourself of your own will

**sapling days:** when a child (a sapling is a very young tree)

8. What is Noorjehan planning to do?
9. Who knows about her plan?
10. What does Noorjehan ask the narrator about himself?
11. What does the narrator find strange about the last thing that Noorjehan says before the train leaves?
12. What does the narrator realize after the train has gone?

### **Literary term: Epiphany**

Epiphany is an experience of sudden and striking realization. Generally the term is used to describe scientific breakthrough, religious or philosophical discoveries, but it can apply in any situation in which an enlightening realization allows a problem or situation to be understood from a new and deeper perspective. In literature, characters typically experience an epiphany at the end of the story.

**Focus:** The narrator of this story has an epiphany. Pay attention to what happens and see if you can anticipate the realization he will have at the end of the story. There are clues given throughout the story.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Literary Context:**

A fairy tale or *fairy story* is a type of short story that typically features European folkloric fantasy characters, such as dwarves, elves, fairies, giants, gnomes, goblins, mermaids, trolls, or witches, and usually magic or enchantments.

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the left column are from the story. The right column has definitions for those words. Look back at the story and try to understand the vocabulary. Then put the letter of its definition on the line next to each word.

<b>Vocabulary</b>		<b>Meanings</b>
1. impeccable	<u>h</u>	a. plain and without decoration
2. complexion	___	b. relating to love or a close loving relationship
3. lounge	___	c. connected with your feelings rather than with reason
4. romantic	___	d. feeling unhappy because of not seeing or talking to others
5. idle	___	e. people who are walking, especially in a place where cars go
6. isolated	___	f. a room in a house used for relaxing and entertaining guests
7. significance	___	g. importance
8. sentimental	___	<del>h. perfect, having no problems or bad parts</del>
9. predicament	___	i. confusion
10. austere	___	j. an unpleasant situation that is difficult to get out of
11. pedestrians	___	k. the natural appearance of a person's skin, especially colour
12. bewilderment	___	l. not working or being used

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

1. When the narrator visits Noorjehan's house, her father reacts with:
  - a. furious anger
  - b. courteous indifference
  - c. excited interest
2. Noorjehan probably asks the narrator to come to the train station because:
  - a. she has no one else that she can tell about her decision
  - b. they have been best friends for many years
  - c. he will carry an important message for her to her parents
3. Noorjehan probably asks the narrator when he intends to marry because:
  - a. she thinks he is getting very old
  - b. she needs the advice of an unmarried man
  - c. she wants him to marry her

**wedding trappings and its props:** all the things that are part of or typical of a wedding  
**conventions of society:** usual or accepted ways of behaving  
**mere slips:** still small and thin, usually because of being young  
**hardly ready:** not ready  
**coital demands:** societal duties of married women to have sex with their husbands

### **Key Vocabulary:**

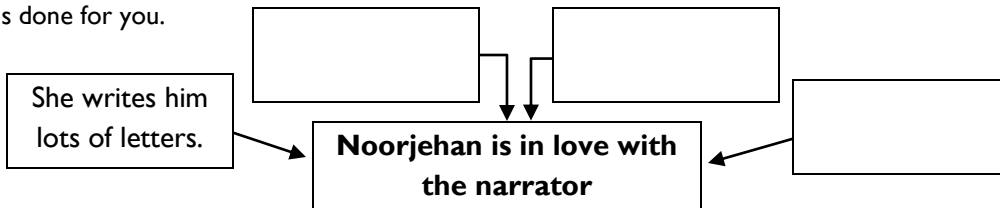
**career** (n): the job that you do during your working life  
**(matriculation** (n)) matriculate (v): to be formally admitted to study at a university or college  
**auburn** (adj): reddish brown  
**plaits** (n): lengths of hair divided into three parts which are then crossed a special pattern  
**clasps** (n): a small metal device used to fasten a belt/bag/jewelry  
**set off** (ph v): to make something look attractive by providing a contrast to it  
**definition** (n): description of the features of something  
**(blooming** *pr. part.*) bloom (v): When a flower blooms, it opens  
**wraith** (n): something which is pale/weak/without a clear shape  
**tutor** (n): a teacher who works with one student or a small group  
**semi-detached** (adj): A semi-detached house is joined to another similar house on one side  
**identity** (n): who a person is, or qualities of a person which make them different from others  
**(impassively** (adv)) impassive (adj): describes a person's face when it expresses no emotion  
**froth** (n): small white bubbles on the surface of a liquid  
**lace** (n): a decorative cloth which is made by weaving thin thread in delicate patterns  
**(tepidly** (adv)) tepid (adj): describes an unenthusiastic reaction  
**engaged** (adj): having formally agreed to marry  
**welfare** (n): physical and mental health and happiness of a person  
**transaction** (n): when money is exchanged  
**longing** (n): a feeling of wanting something very much  
**(generated** *p.*) generate (v): to cause something to exist

### Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:

1. He is her English teacher.
2. Her parents decided to keep her at home so she can prepare to be married.
3. She writes him letters.
4. She asks him to come speak to her father and try to dissuade him from forcing her into marriage.
5. No.
6. She doesn't know the man she is supposed to marry, so she neither loves nor hates him.
7. She asks him to meet her at Park Station (the train station).
8. She is planning to run away from home and go to Cape Town.
9. Only the narrator knows of her plan.
10. She asks him when he will marry.
11. He thinks that she is being overly formal with him.
12. He realizes that Noorjehan had romantic feelings (loved) him.

### Analysing the Story: Epiphany

Look back at the explanation of **epiphany**. If you look back at the story, you will find lots of clues that should have made the situation clear to the narrator earlier. But, for the sake of *suspense* and as is so often true of real life, he doesn't realize that Noorjehan loves him until she is gone. Put the clues from the story about Noorjehan's feelings in the boxes below. One is done for you.



### Thinking Critically:

- Do you think that a parent should have the right to pull a child out of school? Should there be laws ensuring that children stay in school until they reach a certain age/educational level? Defend your answer.

**trousseau** (n): a collection of possessions that a woman takes when she is married  
**seamstress** (n): a woman whose job is sewing and making clothes  
**indefinable** (adj): impossible to clearly describe or explain  
**oblique** (adj): describes remarks which are not direct, so that the meaning is not immediately clear  
**precocious** (adj): (especially of children) showing mental development much earlier than usual  
**(trailed off p.) trail off** (ph v): becomes quieter and less confident and then stops completely  
**halt** (n): when something stops moving or happening  
**(alighted p.) alight** (v): to get out of a vehicle  
**(undergone p.) undergo** (v): to experience something which involves a change  
**bangles** (n): rings of stiff plastic, metal, worn around the wrist  
**callous** (adj): unkind or cruel; without sympathy or feeling  
**sprightly** (adv): (especially of old people) energetic; in good health  
**varicoloured** (adj): having many different colours  
**conspiratorial** (adj): relating to a secret plan to do something  
**(musing pr. part.) muse** (v): to think about something carefully

**acutely** (adv): extremely  
**(sustaining pr. part.) sustain** (v): to cause or allow something to continue for a period of time  
**refashion** (n): to make in a different way  
**medley** (n): a mixture  
**gems** (n): precious stones  
**(adorning pr. part.) adorn** (v): to add something decorative to a person or thing  
**terraces** (n): a row of often small houses joined together along their side walls  
**hysteria** (n): extreme fear, excitement, anger, etc. which cannot be controlled  
**(strained adj.) strain** (v): to become stretched or to experience pressure, or to make something do or experience this  
**irrelevant** (adj): not related  
**(detected p.) detect** (v): to notice something that is partly hidden or not clear  
**tremor** (n): a slight shaking, especially because of nervousness  
**ignited p.) ignite** (v): to cause a dangerous situation to begin  
**fervent** (adj): describes beliefs that are strongly and sincerely felt

**(implicated p.) implicate** (v): to show that someone is involved in a crime or partly responsible  
**(withholding pr. part.) withhold** (v): to refuse to give something or to keep back something  
**restore** (v): to return something or someone to an earlier good condition or position  
**dutiful** (adj): doing everything that you should do  
**(hissing pr. part.) hiss** (v): to make a noise which is like the first sound in the word 'sing' but which lasts a lot longer  
**furnaces** (n): containers which are heated to a very high temperature  
**compartment** (n): one of the separate areas inside a vehicle, especially a train  
**(jotting down pr. part.) jot down** (ph v): to write something quickly on a piece of paper so that you remember it  
**cramped** (adj): not having enough space or time  
**washstand** (n): a small table with a container of water for washing

**(incarcerated p.) incarcerate** (v): to keep in a closed place and prevent from leaving  
**unfeeling** (adj): not feeling sympathy for other people's suffering  
**initial** (adj): at the beginning  
**strident** (adj): describes a sound which is loud/unpleasant/rough  
**formality** (n): when something or someone is serious/correct  
**atmosphere** (n): the character or mood of a place or situation  
**register** (v): If something registers, someone realises it  
**implicit** (adj): suggested  
**trenchant** (adj): severe, expressing strong criticism  
**(conceived p.) conceive** (v): to imagine something  
**(cathartic adj.) catharsis** (n): the process of releasing strong emotions through a particular activity or experience  
**rejection** (n): when someone refuses to accept or believe someone or something  
**innermost** (adj): most secret and hidden, or nearest to the centre

# THE GIRL WITH THE TWISTED FUTURE

## Mia Couto—Mozambique



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Joseldo Bastante is a mechanic in a village in Mozambique. One day, he hears that a young man has been earning a lot of money as a contortionist working for an impresario in the city. Joseldo has 12 children and decides that one of them should become a contortionist to earn more money for the family. He chooses his daughter, Filomeninha.

Joseldo makes Filomeninha practise stretching and twisting and bending her body. He even ties her to a petrol drum at night to make her more flexible. Filomeninha grows increasingly ill from the extreme practice and even begins vomiting.

There is no news of the impresario for some time until, one day, Joseldo hears that he is back in the city preparing for a show. Joseldo puts a new dress on his daughter and they take a train into the city. At this point, Filomeninha is very ill. She is trembling and feels cold even though the weather is hot.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. When he came out of the water, he was \_\_\_\_\_ with cold.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ could move her body in ways that seemed impossible.
3. I cannot touch my toes without bending my knees. I am not very \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The brothers filled a large \_\_\_\_\_ with water at the borehole and took it home in an oxcart.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ organized a drama production and a music festival in the trading center.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- The impresario will not want a contortionist and Filomeninha will die.
- The impresario will hire Filomeninha and she will become very famous.
- The impresario will not be in the city and Filomeninha will start her own show.
- The impresario will refuse to meet with Filomeninha and they will return home.

### WHILE READING

#### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. Joseldo hears stories about a boy who makes money doing what?
2. What does he decide his eldest daughter, Filomeninha, should do?

#### Idioms & Expressions:

**highways and byways:** the roads and paths of a place

**vice versa:** used to state that what you have just said is also true in the opposite order  
**rekindle the fire:** to make someone have a feeling that they had in the past

**none of your business:** If something is none of your business, you do not need to know about it, although you want to, because it does not affect you  
**twinkle of an eye:** If something happens in the twinkle of an eye, it happens very quickly

**beat about the bush:** to avoid talking about what is important  
**an iron constitution:** very healthy



3. What does Joseldo do with the petrol drums?
4. How is Filomeninha progressing with her stretching? How is she feeling?
5. After some time, what news of the impresario reaches Joseldo?
6. Where do Filomeninha and Joseldo go? How do they travel?
7. How does Filomeninha feel while traveling?
8. When they find the impresario, does he hire Filomeninha?
9. What does the impresario say is the new sensation?
10. What happens to Filomeninha?

### **Literary term: Hyperbole**

**Hyperbole** is a figure of speech in which the truth is exaggerated for emphasis or for humorous effect. The expression "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse" is an example of hyperbole.

**Focus:** As you read the story, pay attention to the language that is used. Are any descriptions too exaggerated to be true?

## **UNDERSTANDING THE STORY**

### **Athletic Context:**

Contortion (sometimes contortionism) is an unusual form of physical display which involves the dramatic bending and flexing of the human body. Contortion is often part of acrobatics and circus acts. In general, "**contortionists**" have unusual natural flexibility, which is then enhanced through acrobatic training, or they put themselves through intense, repetitive and consistent training to gain this flexibility. However, even those with genetic, sex, or age disadvantages can attain the same level of flexibility albeit with slower progress.

In some countries like Mongolia and Russia many people (mainly girls) learn contortion and it is considered a nationally respected art form that holds cultural importance. For hundreds of years contortionists have entertained crowds all over Mongolia. Contortionists usually start practicing from a very early age.

**Gymnastics** is a sport involving the performance of exercises requiring physical strength, flexibility, power, agility, coordination, grace, balance and control. Gymnastics evolved from exercises used by the ancient Greeks that included skills for mounting and dismounting a horse, and from circus performance skills.

### **Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The sentences below are from the story. Try to understand the meaning of the **bolded** words and circle the letter of the answer that gives the correct meaning for each word.

1. It was in this way that he managed to hear of some **prospects** for his eldest daughter, Filomeninha.
 

a. potential husbands	c. bad news
b. chances for success	d. excellent schools
2. In order to hasten his preparations, Joseldo Bastante brought from the workshop one of those **enormous** petrol drums.
 

a. very old	c. very big
b. very shiny	d. very intelligent
3. When they unbound her, the girl was bent over backwards, her blood flow irregular, and her joints **disjointed**.
 

a. not connected	c. not strong
b. not painful	d. not flexible



### **Key Vocabulary:**

**twisted** (adj): bent so that the original shape is changed or destroyed  
**(engaged p.) engage** (v): to employ someone  
**rear** (n): a person's bottom  
**front** (n): the part of a building, object or person's body which faces forward or which is most often seen or used  
**rotate** (v): to (cause to) turn in a circle, around a fixed point  
**twist** (n): a change in the way in which something happens  
**elastic** (adj): describes material that is able to stretch and be returned to its original shape/size  
**talent** (n): a natural ability to be good at something, especially without being taught  
**(belted p.) belt** (v): to hit someone or something hard, especially with violence  
**(displayed p.) display** (v): to arrange something or a collection of things so that they can be seen by the public  
**recipient** (n): a person who receives something  
**(courting pr. part.) court** (v): to have a romantic relationship with someone that you hope to marry  
**(unbound** (adj) **unbind** (v)): to release someone or something from a rope, string, etc. that has been tying them up  
**reaction** (n): behaviour, a feeling or an action that is a direct result of something else  
**(crumpling pr. part.) crumple** (v): to become, or cause something to become, full of folds that are not equal in size  
**(abandoned** (adj)) **abandon** (v): to stop doing an activity before you have finished it



**bats** (adj): small animals like mice with wings that fly at night  
**clues** (n): signs or some information which help you to find the answer to a problem, question or mystery  
**whereabouts** (n): the place where a person or thing is



4. On the train the mechanic **gloated** over his thoughts: a fruit is not harvested in a hurry.
- felt humbled by his good luck
  - felt worried about the consequences of his actions
  - felt guilt at harming someone else
  - felt pleased with his success in a prideful way
5. Nor did the oversized dress hide her **shuddering**.
- shaking
  - crying
  - thinking
  - bleeding
6. On the way back, Joseldo **bemoaned** his fate.
- felt unhappy about
  - felt excited about
  - felt afraid of
  - felt grateful for

### **Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

- Joseldo tells Filomeninha to take off her scarf. She was probably wearing a scarf because:
  - she was cold
  - she is Muslim
  - she was covering burns
- Even though it is hot on the train, Filomeninha complains of being cold. This is probably because she:
  - is ill
  - is pregnant
  - is not wearing enough clothing
- At the end of the story, Filomeninha is most likely:
  - sleeping
  - practicing
  - dead

### **Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- Twisting and bending his body in incredible ways for an audience (as a contortionist).
- He decides that she should become a famous contortionist.
- He ties Filomeninha to it at night so that her back would start to curve.
- She is making little progress and feeling very ill.
- He hears that the impresario is back in the city.
- They go to the city and they travel by train.
- She feels very ill and cold even though it is hot.
- No.
- He says he is looking for people who can chew metal with their teeth.
- She dies.

### **Analysing the Story: Hyperbole**

Look back at the explanation of **hyperbole**. The premise of this story is based on the hyperbole of the lorry drivers who Joseldo talks to, each adding "a twist to the elastic talents of the boy." Can you figure out the meaning of some other hyperbolic statements from this story? Put the meaning for each in the right column in the table below. The first one is done for you.

Hyperbole	Meaning
"The young man earned enough money to fill boxes, suitcases and cooking pots."	He earned a lot of money.
"The girl's shivers were even stronger than the rocking of the train."	
"Her body fell, twisted and weightless onto her father's lap."	

### **Thinking Critically:**

- How realistic do you think this story is? Are there parents who force their children to do things that are harmful even though they want good things for them? What motivates Joseldo in the story?

**(amassing pr. part.)** amass (v): to get a large amount of something, especially money or information, by collecting it over a long period

**bouts** (n): short periods of illness or involvement in an activity

**(vomiting pr. part.)** vomit (v): to empty the contents of the stomach through the mouth

**cast** (v): to throw something

**weaknesses** (n): particular parts or qualities of people or things that are not good or effective

**vomitist** (n): [not a real word] someone who vomits for a living

**(heightened (adj))** heighten (v): to increase, especially an emotion

**(inflames 3<sup>rd</sup> person sing.)** inflame (v): to cause or increase very strong feelings such as anger or excitement

**embers** (n): pieces of wood or coal, etc. which continues to burn after a fire has no more flames

**residents** (n): a person who lives or has their home in a place

**nothingness** (n): a state where nothing is present, or where nothing exists that is important or gives meaning to life

**plaits** (n): three or more pieces of hair or string-like material joined by putting them over each other in a special pattern

**fare** (n): the money that you pay for a journey on a vehicle such as a bus or train

**(lulled p.)** lull (v): to cause someone to feel calm or to feel as if they want to sleep

**immortal** (adj): living or lasting forever

**stitches** (n): pieces of thread sewn in cloth

**fiddle about with** (ph v): to touch or move things with your fingers because you are nervous or bored

**(shuffling pr. part.)** shuffle (v): to walk by pulling your feet slowly along the ground rather than lifting them

**bustle** (v): to do things in a hurried and busy way

**murky** (adj): dark and dirty or difficult to see through

**lap** (n): the top surface of the upper part of the legs of a person who is sitting down



# THE MUSIC OF THE VIOLIN

## Njabulo S. Ndebele—South Africa



### PREPARING TO READ

#### Story Preview:

Vukani is a secondary student in South Africa from a wealthy black family. He is sitting in his room doing his homework, but he can hear his parents laughing and chatting about politics and culture with two guests in the sitting room. He knows that they will eventually come to ask him to play the violin. When he hears his mother suggest that to the guests, Vukani shuts his bedroom door.

Vukani thinks about all the times he has been ridiculed and humiliated because of the violin. Once, in school, someone had taken the violin while he was in the toilet and only returned it the next morning. Another time a gang of boys harassed him in the street. He told his mother that the violin was causing him problems but she would not listen.

Just as Vukani suspects, his mother leads the guests into his room and his father hands him the violin. They ask him to play, even though he is obviously upset. As Vukani tries to tell his parents he does not want to play the violin any more, there is an explosion in the kitchen—Vukani's older sister, Teboho, had dropped something in the kitchen. Their mother screams at Teboho and slaps her. Then she returns to Vukani's room so he can play. Vukani sympathizes with his sister and doesn't want to let her down.

#### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Preview.

1. I have to go to the party. It's for my best friend and I can't \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He rarely answered questions in class for fear of being \_\_\_\_\_ by his classmates.
3. There was an \_\_\_\_\_ when the two mini-buses hit each other. Luckily, no one was killed.
4. The teacher was \_\_\_\_\_ when the head-teacher yelled at him in front of the students.
5. The drunken man shouted at the woman in the street, \_\_\_\_\_ her.

#### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Vukani will tell his parents that he no longer wishes to play the violin and his mother will slap him.
- Vukani will tell his parents that he no longer wishes to play the violin and his mother will understand.
- Vukani will play the violin for the guests because he doesn't want to disappoint his parents.
- Vukani will play the violin for the guests because he wants to impress them with his talent.

#### Idioms & Expressions:

- what bosh!:** what nonsense!
- jolly good:** used to express approval of something that someone has said or done
- filling him with dread:** giving him a strong sense of fear
- peal of laughter:** a long, loud laugh, or series of laughs
- clapping her hands:** making a short loud noise by hitting your hands together
- pursue the matter further:** continue trying to discover information about a subject
- raptures of delight:** an expression of extreme pleasure and happiness or excitement



## WHILE READING

### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. What is Vukani doing at the beginning of the story?
2. What can he hear in the living room?
3. What is Vukani's father's profession?
4. Who is Teboho? How does Vukani feel about her?
5. When Vukani opens his door again, what are his mother and the other woman talking about?
6. Where is Teboho returning to in 6 weeks?
7. What does Vukani's mother suggest to the guests?
8. Does Vukani want that to happen?
9. Who is Doksi?
10. Vukani feels ambivalent about his violin (It brings him both pleasure and pain). What else makes him feel that way?
11. If Vukani refuses to play the violin for the guests, what will his mother say?
12. What happened to teacher Maseko? Why?
13. What happened to Vukani's violin one day while he was in the toilet?
14. Who is Gwendoline?
15. What does Doksi suggest they do to find Vukani's violin?
16. The next morning the violin has been returned to the steps of Vukani's house. When Vukani tells his parents that he didn't put it there, do they believe him?
17. What do the gang of boys shout at Vukani while he is walking home?
18. What do they do to him?
19. What does Bhuko say about Vukani's sister?
20. Is Vukani's mother sympathetic of the difficulties he faces with his violin?
21. Is Vukani's violin expensive?
22. While Vukani is trying to get the courage to tell his parents that he doesn't want to play the violin, what happens?
23. What does Vukani think about when his mother tries to get him to play the violin?
24. What happens at the end of the story?

### Literary term: Flashback

A **flashback** is an account of a conversation, an episode, or an event that happened before the beginning of the story. By revealing significant thoughts, experiences, or events in a character's life, a flashback can help readers understand a character's present situation. Flashbacks may take the form of reminiscences, dream sequences, or descriptions by third-person narrators; they usually interrupt the chronological flow of a story. Flashbacks may contain foreshadowing or other clues to the outcome of the story.

**Focus:** Pay attention to the various flashbacks that happen in the story. How can you tell when a flashback happens? What does the flashback help you to understand?

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

### South African Context:

This story takes place in **Soweto**, a poor part of **Johannesburg**, South Africa, the largest city in the country. The name comes from **SO**uth **WE**stern **TO**wnships. During Colonialism, slowly the black people living in Johannesburg were concentrated in townships outside the city. After World War II, when the Afri-

**gave the impression:** to cause others to understand something  
**encyclopaedia britannica:** a set of books containing many articles arranged in alphabetical order which deal either with the whole of human knowledge  
**monopoly and chess:** two different games played on a board  
**ganged up on me:** united as a group against me  
**in the mood:** to feel like doing or having something  
**soothe your heart:** make it possible for you to stop worrying about whether someone loves you or not  
**corner of his eye:** If you see something out of/from the corner of your eye, you see it but not clearly because it is to your side  
**tail tucked between legs:** feeling ashamed/embarrassed because you failed/made a mistake  
**made to specifications:** following a detailed description of how something should be done/made  
**a note of defiance:** indicating that you may refuse to obey  
**exchanged glances:** when two people look at each other briefly, often communicating a feeling with the look  
**nuclear family:** a family consisting of two parents and their children, but not including aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc

### Key Vocabulary:

**(punctuated p.)** punctuate (v): to happen repeatedly while something else is happening  
**establishment** (n): the process of starting or creating something  
**prosperity** (n): the state of being successful/having a lot of money  
**violin** (n): a wooden musical instrument with four strings which is held against the neck and played by moving a bow across the strings  
**thunderous** (adj): very loud  
**clink** (n): a short ringing sound like pieces of glass or metal knocking lightly together  
**cushioned** (adj): filled with soft material  
**ensure** (v): to make something certain to happen  
**kleenex** (n): a brand of tissue

kaner National Party took control of the government of South Africa, apartheid was implemented and Soweto became much larger. Under apartheid, whites in South Africa enjoyed the highest standard of living in Africa, on par with Europe, while Blacks remained relatively impoverished.

Soweto is most widely known for the Soweto Uprising in 1976 when mass protests broke out over a government policy to use Afrikaans as the language of instruction in schools. Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu both spent time living in Soweto during their struggles against apartheid.

**Afrikaans** is a language that is based on Dutch (the language spoken in the Netherlands in Europe). Dutch was the common language among early European settlers in South Africa. Afrikaans was considered a Dutch *dialect* until the early 20th century, when it began to be widely known as a different language. The name *Afrikaans* is simply the Dutch word for *African*, and the language is the African form of Dutch. **Boer** is the Afrikaans word for farmer. In the early days of colonialism, the Dutch settlers were called Boers. Later, they became referred to more frequently as Afrikaners.

The word **kaffir** was used in the former South Africa to refer to a black person. Now an offensive ethnic slur, it was formerly a neutral term for South African blacks. The term acquired a distinctly derogatory meaning in the context of South African history, especially during the Apartheid era.

### **Biblical Context:**

**Moses parted the sea** is a reference to Moses, a religious leader, lawgiver, and prophet according to the Hebrew Bible. According to the Book of Exodus, Moses was born in a time when his people were increasing in number and the Egyptian Pharaoh was worried that they might help Egypt's enemies. Moses' Hebrew mother, Jochebed, hid him when the Pharaoh ordered all newborn Hebrew boys to be killed, and he ended up being adopted into the Egyptian royal family. After killing an Egyptian slave-master, Moses fled across the Red Sea to Midian where he tended the flocks of Jethro. After the Ten Plagues were unleashed on Egypt, Moses led the Hebrew people out of Egypt, parting the Red Sea so that they could escape. It was at this time that Moses received the Ten Commandments. Despite living to the age of 120, Moses died before reaching the Land of Israel.

While in the New Testament, the God of Christianity is portrayed as forgiving and loving, the Jewish God of the Old Testament is characterized as having many of the flaws of humanity such as jealousy, anger, and pettiness. The **God of the Old Testament** was fully capable of exacting vengeance on humanity (the Great Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Tower of Babel, etc.).

In the Gospel of Mathew, 4:19, Jesus sees Simon (Peter) and his brother, Andrew, fishing in the Sea of Galilee. He tells them to throw away their nets for he will make them **fishers of men**. This expression is often used when Christians are trying to convince other people to believe what they believe.

### **Literary Context:**

Thomas Gray (1716–1771) was an English poet, letter-writer, classical scholar and professor at Cambridge University. He is widely known for his Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard, published in 1751.

*Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

**leeward** (prep): facing away from the wind

**uplift** (v): improve a person's moral or spiritual condition

**self reliance** (n): the state of not needing help/support from others

**bait** (n): a small amount of food used to attract and catch a fish

**emphatic** (adj): done/said in a strong way/without any doubt

**pinch** (n): a small amount

**suburb** (n): an area on the edge of a large town/city where people who work in the town/city live

**recipes** (n): a set of instructions telling you how to prepare and cook food

**burst out** (v): to suddenly say something loudly

**tray** (n): a flat object, usually with raised edges, for carrying food

**denim jeans** (n): trousers made from a thick, strong cotton cloth, often blue in colour

**blouse** (n): a shirt for a woman

**enthusiasm** (n): a feeling of energetic interest in a particular subject or activity and an eagerness to be involved in it

**intensity** (n): the quality of being felt strongly

**bonfire** (n): a large fire that is made outside to burn unwanted things, or for pleasure

**sacrilege** (n): (an act of) treating something holy without respect

**afame** (adj): burning

**sheen** (n): bright/smooth surface

**fragrance** (n): a pleasant smell

**repulsiveness** (n): unpleasantness or unacceptability

**agonizing** (adj): causing extreme physical or mental pain

**nuisance** (n): something that annoys you or troubles you

**ungrateful** (adj): not showing or expressing any thanks

**(chained p.) chain** (v): to fasten something using a chain

**eject** (v): to come out of

**dung** (n): solid animal waste

**pestilence** (n): any very serious infectious disease that spreads quickly and kills many people

**pelt** (v): to throw a number of things quickly at something

**constant** (adj): happening a lot or all the time

**smirk** (n): a smile that expresses satisfaction or pleasure about having done something



**Musicological Context:**

**Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897) was a famous German composer. **Franz Liszt** (1811-1886) was a Hungarian composer, virtuoso pianist, conductor, and teacher. **Antonin Dvorak** (1841-1904) was a Czech composer.

**Guessing Meaning from Context:**

The words in the word bank below are all from the story. Find them in the story and see if you can understand their meaning. Then fill in the spaces in the sentences below with the correct word.

**WORD BANK**

focus	<del>apprehensive</del>	normally	genius	hypocrites
futile	dread	mischievous	boast	ordeal

1. He was apprehensive about going to the city because he heard it was dangerous.
2. I \_\_\_\_\_ do not accept late homework, but because you were ill, I will make an exception.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ children cause their parents a lot of anxiety.
4. Her family was very proud of her for having survived the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Many consider \_\_\_\_\_ about your accomplishments to be bad manners.
6. Because she found the correct solution to the difficult equation, the teacher called her a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. He did not like \_\_\_\_\_ who said that they believed something but then did something else.
8. Since I am afraid of being trapped in small spaces, I \_\_\_\_\_ having to travel on a minibus.
9. After studying for an hour straight, he found it difficult to \_\_\_\_\_ and decided to take a break.
10. It was \_\_\_\_\_ to try to convince them because they never changed their minds.

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

1. When his violin is stolen, Vukani wants to go tell the principal, but then changes his mind. He probably decides not to tell the principal because:
  - a. the principal would not help
  - b. the other children would think poorly of him
  - c. the violin was surely already destroyed
2. The boys harass Vukani in the street about his violin. They probably do this because the violin is:
  - a. famous
  - b. strange
  - c. common
3. Vukani's mother is heard crying from her bedroom at the end of the story. She is most likely crying because she is:
  - a. ashamed and angry
  - b. sad and lonely
  - c. injured and in pain

**Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

1. He is in his room doing his homework.
2. He hears his parents and their guests chatting loudly.
3. He is a school inspector.
4. Teboho is Vukani's sister and they are very close, especially recently.
5. They are discussing recipes.
6. She is returning to university (varsity).
7. She suggests that they go to Vukani's room and ask him to play the violin.
8. No!

**cowboy** (n): a person whose job is to take care of cattle

**purposefully** (adv): done in a way that shows that you know what you want to do

**punch** (v): a forceful hit with fist  
**(desecration** (n)) desecrate (v): to damage or show no respect towards something holy

**(recoiled** p.) recoil (v): to move back because of fear or disgust  
**jigsaw puzzle** (n): a picture stuck onto wood or cardboard and cut into pieces of different shapes which must be joined together correctly to form a picture again

**rowdy** (adj): noisily and possibly violent

**detach** (v): to separate/remove something from something else  
**imperceptibly** (adv) imperceptible (adj): unable to be noticed  
**topple** (v): to lose balance and fall down

**puffed up** (adj): larger/full of air  
**bloodshot eyes** (adj): red or pink on the white parts

**scum** (n): very bad or immoral person or group of people

**rogues** (n): people who behaves badly but you still like

**street urchins** (n): small children, especially who behave badly  
**unsettled** (adj): not clam or having a regular pattern

**prey** (n): an animal hunted and killed for food by another animal  
**(tightened** p.) tighten (v): to become tighter

**(encircled** p.) encircle (v): to surround something

**(glowered** p.) glower (v):

**acknowledgment** (n): to look very angry/annoyed/threatening  
**unbelievable** (adj): extremely surprising

**(slunk away** p.) slink (away) (v): to walk away from somewhere quietly so that you are not noticed

**(butted in** p.) butt in (v): to interrupt a conversation or discussion or someone who is talking

**(spoiling** pr. p.) spoil (v): to destroy or reduce the pleasure, interest, or beauty of something

**indigenous** (adj): naturally existing in a place or country rather than arriving from another place

**irksome** (adj): annoying

9. Doksi is Vukani's best friend.
10. He says that it is like Miss Yende's red dress.
11. She will call him ungrateful.
12. He was fired from his job for being critical of the apartheid system.
13. Someone in his school took it and he couldn't find it.
14. Gwendoline is a girl in Vukani's class that he thinks he loves.
15. He thinks they should challenge someone to fight.
16. No, they accuse him of lying and putting the violin there himself.
17. They shout "music man" at him.
18. They surround him and harass him in the street.
19. He says that he wants her.
20. No.
21. Yes, it is very expensive.
22. His sister breaks a dish in the other room and his mother gets very angry.
23. He thinks about his sister and how he wants to support her.
24. Vukani says he won't play, his mother hits him, and Teboho runs in to help Vukani.

### **Analysing the Story: Flashback**

Look back at the explanation of **flashback**. This story uses flashback repeatedly to help establish the conflict and tell us more about the characters. Were you able to notice when the narration was flashing back and when it was returning to the present? Fill in the gaps in the chart below indicating how the flashback begins in the narrative and how it is ended and the narrative returned to the present. Then think about what you learned from the flashback and fill in the central column. Can you find one more instance of flashback to add to the chart?

<b>How is the flashback opened?</b>	<b>What do we learn?</b>	<b>How are we brought back to the present?</b>
"Then he thought of Doksi, his friend."		"Now, Vukani was suddenly fascinated by a desire to see the books on the desk aflame."
"Vukani remembered what teacher Maseko had said at assembly one morning."		
"That Friday, as on all Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, he had carried his violin to school."		"But that was last year."
	We see a frightening and humiliating experience that Vukani suffered because of his violin and his mother's indifference.	"Then the door opened."

### **Thinking Critically:**

- 

**concerto** (n): a long piece of music for one or more solo instruments and an orchestra

**composer** (n): a person who writes classical music

**orchestra** (n): a large group of musicians who play many different instruments together

**swallow** (v): to cause food, drink, pills, etc. to move from your mouth into your stomach by using the muscles of your throat

**(dissipated p.) dissipate** (v): to (cause to) gradually disappear

**amiss** (adj): wrong; not suitable or as expected

**hitherto** (adv): until now

**massive** (adj): very large in size, amount, or number

**(disintegrating pr. p.) disintegrate** (v): to become weaker or to be destroyed by breaking into small pieces

**dash** (v): to hit with great force, especially causing damage

**(restrained p.) restrain** (v): to control the actions or behaviour of someone by force

**slut** (n): a woman who is unusually untidy and lazy

**scuffle** (n): a short and sudden fight, involving few people

**(rattling pr. p.) rattle** (v): to (cause to) make a noise like a series of knocks

**cutlery** (n): knives, forks, and spoons, used for eating food

**diversion** (n): something that takes your attention away from something else

**(mimicked p.) mimic** (v): to copy the way in which a particular person usually speaks and moves, usually in order to make other people laugh

**prize** (v): to think that something or someone is valuable/important

**(disapproved p.) disapprove** (v): to feel that something or someone is bad, wrong, etc.

**envious** (adj): wishing you had what another person has

**cheeky** (adj): slightly rude or showing no respect, but often in a funny way

**brute** (n): a rough and sometimes violent man

**justify** (v): to give or to be a good reason for

**bereaved** (adj): having a close relation/friend who recently died

# GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM

Steve Chimombo—Malawi



## PREPARING TO READ

### Story Preview:

Ndazona is a secondary school student in a village in Malawi. His grandfather, Akunjila, visits one Saturday afternoon. While Akunjila waits for his son, Ndazona's father, to come home he drinks *kachasu*, a locally distilled alcohol. Ndazona is trying to concentrate on his homework, but his grandfather is getting inebriated and wants to chat. Ndazona's father is out drinking and may not return until late. So, Ndazona eats supper with his grandfather. Akunjila tells Ndazona stories about Ndazona's father—about how he was a hard worker and a good fighter. Ndazona is a little surprised by these stories because the only time he saw his father fight, he was very drunk and lost the fight. He has also seen his father beat up his mother and he doesn't have the same respect for his father's actions that his grandfather seems to have.

Then, Akunjila tries to convince Ndazona to drink with him. He says that both he and Ndazona's father started to drink alcohol at Ndazona's age and that it would make him a man. This makes Ndazona think about the bullies at school. He knows that they would be impressed if he brags to them that he got very drunk over the weekend.

### Words to Know:

Fill in the blanks with the underlined vocabulary from the Story Preview.

1. It is important to \_\_\_\_\_ when driving an oxcart so that there is no accident.
2. The woman \_\_\_\_\_ her own alcohol and sold it for a profit.
3. Two students came to the disco \_\_\_\_\_ and were suspended from school.
4. The girl \_\_\_\_\_ to all her friends about the gift she received from her aunt.
5. Though he was nice to adults, the student was a \_\_\_\_\_ to younger children.

### Making Predictions:

From the Story Preview, try to predict what will happen next in the story. Which of the following predictions do you think is most *probable*?

- Ndazona drinks with his grandfather, but when his father arrives home he beats Ndazona.
- Ndazona drinks with his grandfather, and when his father arrives home he joins them.
- Ndazona doesn't drink with his grandfather because he dislikes how his father and grandfather act when drinking.
- Ndazona doesn't drink with his grandfather because his grandfather finishes the bottle and it's too late to buy more.

### Idioms & Expressions:

**under extreme pressure:** when someone tries to make someone else do something by arguing, persuading, etc  
**pop singers:** someone who sings modern popular music, usually with a strong beat, and easy to listen to and remember  
**pen pals:** people who you exchange letters with as a hobby, but usually have not met  
**-cum-:** used to join two nouns, showing that a person or thing does two things or has two purposes; combined with



### Key Vocabulary:

**gesture** (n): a movement of the hands to express an idea/feeling  
**fumes** (n): strong, unpleasant, sometimes dangerous gas/smoke  
**(intoned p.) intone** (v): to say something slowly and seriously  
**octogenarian** (n): 80-89 years  
**(resorted p.) resort** (v): to do something you do not want to do because you cannot find any other way of achieving something



### Comprehension Questions:

As you read the story, try to answer the following questions.

1. At the beginning of the story, what is Ndazona doing?
2. Who comes to visit Ndazona's house?
3. Why is Akunjila unhappy?
4. Was Ndazona happy when he saw his grandfather coming?
5. How far away is the township?
6. How does Ndazona travel there?
7. What happened the last time Ndazona went to get kachasu for Akunjila?
8. What does Ndazona do when his Grandfather gets close to the door?
9. According to Ndazona, what is good about Akunjila's visits?
10. What do Akunjila and Ndazona do together?
11. Who is Ndilekeni?
12. Why doesn't Akunjila want drinking water?
13. What did Ndazona's father think about Ndakulapa and Ndazona's mother?
14. At what age did Ndazona's father start drinking alcohol?
15. What happened when Ndazona's mother was pregnant the second time?
16. After dinner what does Akunjila want?
17. Who is Nkhutukumve?
18. What does Ndazona think will happen at school if he drinks with Akunjila?
19. What does he think will happen when his father returns if he drinks?
20. What does Ndazona do?

### Literary term: Conflict

**Conflict** is a struggle between opposing forces and is the basis of plot in dramatic and narrative literature. The conflict provides the interest or suspense in a short story, novel, narrative poem, or nonfiction narrative. **External conflict** occurs when a character is pitted against an outside force, such as another character, a physical obstacle, or an aspect of nature or society. **Internal conflict** occurs when the struggle takes place within the character's mind.

**Focus:** There is both external and internal conflict in this story. But the major conflict is internal. Pay attention to Ndazona's thoughts, as well as his actions and words, and try to decide what the internal conflict is.

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

### Guessing Meaning from Context:

The words in the left column are from the story. The right column has definitions for those words. Look back at the story and try to understand the vocabulary. Then put the letter of its definition on the line next to each word.

Vocabulary		Meanings
1. periodic	<u>h</u>	a. showing you are sorry for doing something wrong
2. hospitality	—	b. to develop quickly and be successful or common
3. apologetic	—	c. small pieces or parts of something
4. accumulate	—	d. to officially tell people about something important
5. alleviated	—	e. a special right or advantage that a somebody has
6. fragments	—	f. friendly and generous behaviour towards guests
7. privilege	—	g. bad-tempered and not speaking
8. proclaim	—	<del>h. happening often and at regular times</del>
9. flourish	—	i. to repeat something you already said, often to emphasize it
10. squinting	—	j. to gradually get more and more of something over time
11. reiterate	—	k. looking at something with your eyes partly shut in order to keep out bright light or see better
12. sullen	—	l. to make something less severe or less painful

(**snorted p.**) snort (v): to make an explosive sound by forcing air quickly up or down the nose

**replacements** (n): things which you use in place of other things

**thugs** (n): men who act violently

(**molesting pr. part**) molest (v): to touch or attack someone in a sexual way, against their wishes

**hieroglyphs** (n): pictures or symbols which represent words, used in some writing systems

**slab** (n): a thick, flat piece of a solid substance

**knickknacks** (n): small, decorative objects, especially in a house

**pebbles** (n): small stones


(**corresponded with p.**) correspond (with) (v): to communicate by writing a letter

**gloom** (n): when it is dark and difficult to see well

(**overlooked p.**) overlook (v): to fail to notice/consider something

**dismay** (n): a feeling of unhappiness and disappointment

(**harboured p.**) harbour (v): to think about or feel something, usually for a long period of time

**saddle** (n): the seat of a bicycle 

**embankment** (n): an artificial slope made of earth or stones

**twigs** (n): small, thin branches of a tree or bush

(**churned p.**) churn (v): to mix something with great force

(**admonished p.**) admonish (v): to tell someone that they have done something wrong

**floppy** (adj): soft and not able to keep a firm shape or position

**frayed** (adj): with the threads at the edge coming loose

**khaki** (n): a dark, yellowish-green cloth, often worn by soldiers

(**galvanized p.**) galvanize (v): to cause someone to take action suddenly

(**proffered p.**) proffer (v): to offer advice or an opinion

**binges** (n): occasions when an activity is done in an extreme way, especially eating or drinking

**bruises** (n): injuries or marks as a result of being hit by something

(**impertinence** (n)) impertinent (adj): rude and not respectful,

**pantry** (n): a small room in a house where food is kept

**Making Inferences:**

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements.

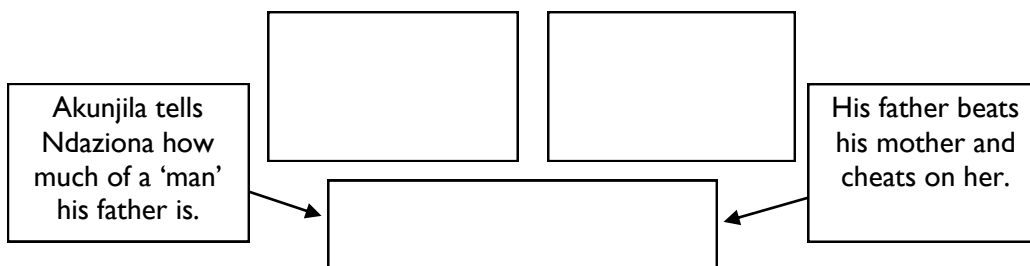
- Ndazona is probably:
  - 10-12 years old
  - 13-15 years old
  - 16-18 years old
- What had most likely happened to Ndazona's father when he came home with "bruises, cuts, and wounds"?
  - he was in a bike accident
  - he was in a fight
  - he was in a work accident
- Ndazona's mother gets a deep cut on her forehead probably because:
  - she slipped and hit it by accident
  - her husband was beating her
  - she cut herself on purpose

**Suggested Answers for Comprehension Questions:**

- He is in his room working on homework
- Akunjila, Ndazona's grandfather, the father of his father.
- He is unhappy because his son is not at home to drink kachasu with him.
- No. He remembers the unhappy events that happen when Akunjila visits.
- The township is 3 kilometers away.
- He travels on his father's bike, which is much too big for him.
- He fell off the bike and hurt himself when returning with the kachasu.
- He runs outside to greet Akunjila and help him with his things.
- Akunjila always brings something fresh from the gardens in the village.
- They eat dinner.
- Ndilekeni is Ndazona's uncle.
- Akunjila doesn't want water because he wants to keep drinking his kachasu.
- He thought that they were having an affair.
- He started drinking alcohol when he was very young—maybe 13 years old.
- His father had hit her because he thought the baby wasn't his and the baby was miscarried (died before being born).
- He wants Ndazona to drink with him.
- He is a bully at Ndazona's school.
- He will be able to tell everyone that he got drunk and they will be impressed.
- His father will beat him.
- He runs away to his room.

**Analysing the Story: Conflict**

Look back at the explanation of **conflict**. There are moments of external conflict, but the main conflict for Ndazona is internal. His male role models act a certain way and he has to decide if he wants to be like them or not. In the diagram below two details are given that represent either side of the conflict for Ndazona. Can you provide two more? What's the ultimate decision that Ndazona makes to resolve this conflict?

**Thinking Critically:**

- Akunjila says to Ndazona that his father is a real man. As a teenager "he was already drinking and fighting for his women." Do you think Ndazona agrees with Akunjila? Why or why not?
- Do you agree with Akunjila? Why or why not?

**preambles** (n): introductions  
**chunk** (n): a roughly cut piece  
**chomped** *p.* **chomp** (v): to chew food noisily  
**channel** (n): a passage for water to flow along  
**encompass** (v): to include, especially different types of things  
**revelries** (n): when people are drinking, dancing, singing, etc., especially in a noisy way  
**(stupefied** *p.*) **stupefy** (v): to shock/surprise someone a lot  
**(draining** *pr. part.*) **drain** (v): to make someone very tired  
**(spurting** *pr. part.*) **spurt** (v): to flow out suddenly and with force



**knuckles** (n): the joints in the hand where your fingers bend

**(whimpered** *p.*) **whimper** (v): to make a series of small, sounds, expressing pain/unhappiness  
**(cowering** *pr. part.*) **cower** (v): to lower your head/body in fear  
**sip** (v): to drink, taking only a small amount at a time  
**(peered** *p.*) **peer** (v): to look carefully or with difficulty  
**mute** (adj): unable to speak  
**fury** (n): extreme anger  
**sociable** (adj): describes someone who likes to meet and spend time with other people  
**(slurred** *p.*) **slur** (v): when you pronounce the sounds of a word in a way which is not clear  
**(complied** *p.*) **comply** (v): to act according to an order  
**sprees** (n): short periods doing particular, enjoyable things  
**delightful** (adj): very pleasant, attractive, or enjoyable  
**logic** (n): a particular way of thinking which is reasonable and based on good judgement  
**stifle** (v): to prevent something from happening/being expressed  
**jeer** (n): to laugh or shout insults at someone to show that you have no respect for them  
**(groped** *p.*) **grope** (v): to feel with your hands, especially in order to find or move towards something that you cannot see  
**kaleidoscopic** (adj): quickly changing one thing to another  
**(swirl** (n)) **swirl** (v): to move quickly with circular movement

## **Glossary of Literary Terms**

### **Theme**

A **theme** is a central idea or message in a work of literature. Sometimes a story has several themes.

### **Point of view (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

A **first-person narrator** is often also the main character. The first-person narrator refers to him- or herself as "I." We see what happens through the character's eyes. We get a clear sense, not just of what the character says and does, but also how he or she thinks, feels, and wants.

Many stories, however, have a **third-person narrator**. A third-person narrator describes events and characters from outside. This narrator tells the story, but does not enter the story or say who he or she is.

### **Setting**

The **setting** is the time and place of the action of the story. Often, the setting of a story has a casual relationship with the events of the story. Other times, the setting is central to the plot of a story.

### **Plot**

The **plot** is the sequence of actions and events in a story. Often, a plot has four parts:

- The **exposition**, or introduction, is usually the beginning of the story where the main character(s) and situation are introduced
- In the **rising action**, complications, or events, happen and cause difficulties for the main character(s)
- The **climax** of the story, or the most important event, usually occurs near the end of the story and affects the final outcome.
- The **falling action**, or conclusion, of a story is where the situation is resolved in some way and the story comes to an end.

### **Poetic Justice**

In real life, people don't necessarily get what they deserve. Sometimes, good people have bad things happen to them, and bad people have good things happen. However, in fiction, authors can reward or punish characters for their actions. This is called **poetic justice**.

### **Characters and Characterization**

**Characters** are the people who participate in the action of a story. The most important characters are the **main characters**. Less important characters are **minor characters**. The author creates characters through physical descriptions, speech, thoughts, actions, and observations from other characters. This is called **characterization**.

### **Dialect**

A **dialect** is the form of a language spoken in a particular place by a distinct group of people. Dialects vary in pronunciation, vocabulary, expressions, and grammatical constructions. Writers use dialect to establish the setting and to describe the characters.

### **Personification**

**Personification** is a figure of speech in which human qualities are attributed to an object, animal, or idea. Writers use personification to make feelings or images understood by the reader.

### **Mood and Tone**

**Mood** is the feeling, or atmosphere, that a writer creates for the reader. Descriptive words, the setting, and figurative language contribute to the mood of a work, as do the sound and rhythm of the language used.

**Tone** is the attitude the writer takes toward a subject. Unlike mood, which is intended to shape the reader's emotional response, tone reflects the feelings of the writer. To identify tone, you might find it helpful to read the story aloud. Try to decide what emotions you feel as you read.

### **Paradox**

A **paradox** is a statement that appears to contradict itself but, in fact, reveals some element of truth. Religious and spiritual writings often contain paradoxes. Such paradoxes are intended to shake readers out of their normal ways of thinking and point them toward a higher level of understanding.

### **Imagery**

**Imagery** consists of descriptive words and phrases that re-create sensory experiences for the reader. The majority of images are visual, but imagery may also appeal to the other senses.

### **Protagonist**

The **protagonist** is the central character or hero of a story. The protagonist is always involved in the central conflict of the plot and often changes during the course of the story. When a story is told from the 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view, the narrator is often, but not always, the protagonist.

### **Metaphor**

A **metaphor** is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two things that are basically not alike but that have something in common. Unlike similes, metaphors do not use the words *like* or *as*.

**Antagonist**

The **antagonist** in a story is the character in opposition to the protagonist. Sometimes the antagonist is not a character, but something else—a force of nature, an aspect of society, or an internal force within the protagonist.

**Simile**

A **simile** is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two things using the word *like* or *as*.

**Foreshadowing**

**Foreshadowing** is a writer's use of hints or clues to indicate events and situations that will occur later in the plot. The use of this technique creates suspense while preparing the reader for what is to come.

**Frame Story**

A **frame story** exists when a story is told within a narrative setting or frame—hence creating a story within a story.

**Epithet**

An **epithet** is a brief descriptive phrase that points out traits associated with a particular person or thing. An epithet is often used for characterization.

**Suspense**

**Suspense** is the excitement or tension that readers feel as they become involved in a story and eager to know the outcome of the plot.

**Alliteration**

**Alliteration** is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words.

**Irony**

In literature, **irony** frequently occurs when there is a difference between what is expected or desired and what actually happens. For example, what a character thinks will happen to him or her may turn out to be the exact opposite of what actually happens.

**Dialogue**

When you read a play, you learn about its plot, or story, mainly from the **dialogue** that takes place among the characters—that is, from the character's conversations. In short stories, although authors can also use narration (tell the story directly), dialogue usually remains important. To be effective, dialogue must be natural and must seem appropriate for the particular characters.

**Onomatopoeia**

Onomatopoeia is the use of words such as *pow*, *buzz*, and *crunch* whose sounds suggest their meanings.

**Symbolism**

A **symbol** is a thing (most often a concrete object of some type) that represents an idea or a group of ideas. For example, some common symbols are a dove (as a sign of peace), a lion (as a symbol of courage), or a flag (as an emblem of a country).

**Allusion**

An **allusion** is an indirect reference to another literary work or to a famous person, place, or event.

**Euphemism**

A **euphemism** is a word or phrase used to avoid something unpleasant or offensive.

**Epiphany**

**Epiphany** is an experience of sudden and striking realization. Generally the term is used to describe scientific breakthrough, religious or philosophical discoveries, but it can apply in any situation in which an enlightening realization allows a problem or situation to be understood from a new and deeper perspective. In literature, characters typically experience an epiphany at the end of the story.

**Hyperbole**

**Hyperbole** is a figure of speech in which the truth is exaggerated for emphasis or for humorous effect. The expression "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse" is an example of hyperbole.

**Flashback**

A **flashback** is an account of a conversation, an episode, or an event that happened before the beginning of the story. By revealing significant thoughts, experiences, or events in a character's life, a flashback can help readers understand a character's present situation. Flashbacks may take the form of reminiscences, dream sequences, or descriptions by third-person narrators; they usually interrupt the chronological flow of a story. Flashbacks may contain foreshadowing or other clues to the outcome of the story.

**Conflict**

**Conflict** is a struggle between opposing forces and is the basis of plot in dramatic and narrative literature. The conflict provides the interest or suspense in a short story, novel, narrative poem, or nonfiction narrative. **External conflict** occurs when a character is pitted against an outside force, such as another character, a physical obstacle, or an aspect of nature or society. **Internal conflict** occurs when the struggle takes place within the character's mind.

## **Answer Key**

### • **LOOKING FOR A RAIN GOD**

#### **Words to Know**

sacrifices, plough, desperate, wail, drought

#### **Making Predictions**

Mokgobja will sacrifice the two girls but no rain will come.

#### **Guessing Meaning from Context**

a, c, b, c, c, b

#### **Making Inferences**

b, a, c

### • **UNCLE BEN'S CHOICE**

#### **Words to Know**

naked, careful, eve, clerk, suspects

#### **Making Predictions**

A spirit has come to trade Ben for his soul.

#### **Guessing Meaning from Context**

Belly, surplus, converted, desirous, vexed, hollered, naked, eve

#### **Making Inferences**

b, c, a

### • **THE DUBE TRAIN**

#### **Words to Know**

insult, shameless, congested, tease, hulk

#### **Making Predictions**

The *tsotsi* attacks the man and the man kills him.

#### **Guessing Meaning from Context**

g, f, e, j, h, c, a, b, l, d, k

#### **Making Inferences**

b, c, b

### • **THE WINNER**

#### **Words to Know**

clamour, telegram, football pool, worn out, interviews

#### **Making Predictions**

Cousin Sarah will stay and marry Pius because she doesn't care about the money.

#### **Guessing Meaning from Context**

a, b, a, b, c, d, b, c

#### **Making Inferences**

a, b, c

### • **THE TORN VEIL**

#### **Words to Know**

achieve his ambition, dozing off, verandah, indignantly, scholar

#### **Making Predictions**

Kwame will regret what he has done to Akosua, but she is not really there and he is dreaming.

#### **Guessing Meaning from Context**

strutted, notorious, mound, safeguard, rash, coax, decent, mentality, zeal

#### **Making Inferences**

b, b, a

### • **WORKDAY**

#### **Words to Know**

interfere, upstairs, slammed, back yard, roused

#### **Making Predictions**

Elizabeth will leave Mary outside all night as punishment.

#### **Guessing Meaning from Context**

g, e, b, c, h, a, f, d

#### **Making Inferences**

c, a, c

### • **MISTA COURIFER**

#### **Words to Know**

resents, resign, preacher, confide, ire

#### **Making Predictions**

Mr Buckmaster will grant Tomas a holiday and Tomas will stop wearing European clothes.

#### **Guessing Meaning from Context**

d, c, a, b, d

#### **Making Inferences**

a, c, a

### • **THE EMPTY BASKET**

#### **Words to Know**

misfortune, crowd, courageously, inspired, coward

#### **Making Predictions**

Obwalo will escape through a window and kill the snake.

#### **Guessing Meaning from Context**

Thoroughly, retreat, permanently, abandon, dazed, supposedly, heap, amid, malicious

#### **Making Inferences**

b, b, a

### • **JUSTICE**

#### **Words to Know**

coincidence, struck, deaf, near-sighted, gratitude

#### **Making Predictions**

The judge will believe that they are a married couple arguing.

#### **Guessing Meaning from Context**

h, a, g, f, e, c, d,

#### **Making Inferences**

a, b

### • **THE CASE OF THE PRISON-MONGER**

#### **Words to Know**

anomaly, servility, prosecutor, executed, philosophy

#### **Making Predictions**

The judge will release Matteos, but Matteos will insult the judge and be sent back to prison.

#### **Guessing Meaning from Context**

b, d, c, a, b, d

#### **Making Inferences**

c, a, b

- **FLIGHT**

- Words to Know

- eluded, captured, commotion, pursuers, scurried

- Making Predictions

- The woman will escape over the mountain and the narrator will feel excited for her.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- glimpse, capture, bony, distress, rearranged, earnest, flitting, jumbled

- **THE OLIVE TREE**

- Words to Know

- demons, caught red-handed, fooled, errand, marks

- Making Predictions

- Nyangusi will not be sent to the olive tree until much later when he has forgotten about it.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- l, k, f, j, c, d, e, g, b, h, i, a

- Making Inferences

- b, c, a

- **DIFFERENT VALUES**

- Words to Know

- prostitution, complained, beastly, miserly, contend with

- Making Predictions

- The woman will tell Tommy to play with Popi and he will be angry that he must do Liza's work.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- c, b, a, b, d, a

- Making Inferences

- b, a, b

- **THEY SOLD MY SISTER**

- Words to Know

- dowry, wept, escorted, accompany, defiantly

- Making Predictions

- Naliki will return home and her father will try to marry her off as well.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- wad, embraced, politely, fond, tremulous, offensive, bitterly, insolent, resolutely

- Making Inferences

- b, c, c

- **THE INTRUDER**

- Words to Know

- harsh, turn it up, aeroplane, uneasy, cultivators

- Making Predictions

- Mungo will say goodbye to the Maasai and go to Dar-es-Salaam in the car.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- g, d, b, e, a, l, k, j, c, h, f

- Making Inferences

- a, c, c

- **THE TOILET**

- Words to Know

- daydream, respectable, nursing, longing, sneak

- Making Predictions

- The narrator will go to the toilet the next morning and begin writing a story.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- b, c, a, d, c

- Making Inferences

- b, b, c

- **BINDEH'S GIFT**

- Words to Know

- heir, drown, assembled, mercy, scaled

- Making Predictions

- The basket contains deadly snakes and Bindeh will throw it at Kai Borie before leaping over the falls.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- relentlessly, retreat, hideous, sham, numberless, accusation, seething, demonstrates, keen, grief,

- Making Inferences

- a, c, c

- **THE VILLAGE PASTOR**

- Words to Know

- took shelter, perturbed, hymns, pastor, protested

- Making Predictions

- The pastor will yell at the soldier for being rude and tell him to look for the terrorists in Muriuki's.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- h, l, j, a, k, b, i, c, e, g, d, f

- Making Inferences

- b, a, b

- **IN THE SHADOW OF WAR**

- Words to Know

- interior, shadow, eclipse, stumbled, succumbed

- Making Predictions

- Omovo will see the soldiers murder the woman in the black veil and run away.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- b, c, c, a, d, b

- Making Inferences

- a, c, c

- **COUNTRY LOVERS**

- Words to Know

- bricklayer, adolescence, playmates, prompted, intimate

- Making Predictions

- Paulus will poison the child so that there is no evidence of his relationship with Thebedi.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- ideally, attentively, dominant, exaggerating, prosperous, indicates, substitute, flirt, self-pity, unspoken, eroding, coincided, graze, sweetheart

- Making Inferences

- a, b, c

- **THE REFUGEE**

- Words to Know

- refugees, degrading, solitude, nostalgia/nostalgic, high spirits

- Making Predictions

- The men will return, but Margaret will say she could never marry Duku.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- h, e, c, a, i, b, k, d, g, j, f

- Making Inferences

- c, b, c

- **CERTAIN WINDS FROM THE SOUTH**

- Words to Know

- Ramadan, infected, newborn, miserable, navel

- Making Predictions

- The man was Hawa's father and he died in the war.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- c, b, c, a, b, d

- Making Inferences

- c, a, b

- **FIREFLY**

- Words to Know

- helpless, contemptuously, furious, wheezing, frail

- Making Predictions

- The man will go back inside, but the child will have died and his wife will leave him.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- presently, withdraw, hovering, acknowledge, presence, vulnerable, subsided, uncertainty, contort

- Making Inferences

- b, a, a

- **THE PIG**

- Words to Know

- odd jobs, pleased, old-fashioned, yield, rifle

- Making Predictions

- Jonas will wait for the young man to come out of the hut and will kill him.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- f, e, a, l, d, k, g, b, j, c, h, i

- Making Inferences

- c, a, a

- **OUT OF DARKNESS**

- Words to Know

- cockroaches, primitive, cell, culpable homicide, convicts

- Making Predictions

- Old Cockroach will tell him that Cora was his ex-girlfriend and he killed his friend, Joey, in a fight.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- c, d, a, c, d, b

- Making Inferences

- b, c, b

- **ASEMKA**

- Words to Know

- turned against, stepmother, quarrel, in vain, regret

- Making Predictions

- Mr Mensah will leave and Essie will have become pregnant.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- downward, hasty, noontime, ripen, suckling, skills, disobey, maiden

- Making Inferences

- c, b

- **NOORJEHAN**

- Words to Know

- dissuade, fortnight, gifted, urgent, scrutinised

- Making Predictions

- Noorjehan will say goodbye to the narrator and leave in a train.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- h, k, f, b, l, d, g, c, j, a, e, i

- Making Inferences

- b, a, c

- **THE GIRL WITH THE TWISTED FUTURE**

- Words to Know

- trembling, contortionist, flexible, drum, impresario

- Making Predictions

- The impresario will not want a contortionist and Filomemninha will die.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- a, c, a, d, a, a

- Making Inferences

- b, a, c

- **THE MUSIC OF THE VIOLIN**

- Words to Know

- let her down, ridiculed, explosion, humiliated, harassed

- Making Predictions

- Vukani will tell his parents that he no longer wishes to play the violin and his mother will slap him.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- apprehensive, normally, mischievous, boast, genius, hypocrites, dread, focus, futile

- Making Inferences

- b, b, a

- **GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM**

- Words to Know

- concentrate, distilled, inebriated, bragged, bully

- Making Predictions

- Ndazona doesn't drink with his grandfather because he dislikes how his father and grandfather act when drinking.

- Guessing Meaning from Context

- h, f, a, j, l, c, e, d, b, k, i, g

- Making Inferences

- b, b, b