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Reflections:

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *Cry, the Beloved Country*

*by Alan Paton*

written by Nicole Guertin

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*Cry, the Beloved Country*

## To The Teacher

In order to allow the teacher maximum flexibility in his or her approach, we have grouped the prompts by sections. The teacher may, therefore, assign specific prompts or allow the students to select one or more prompts from each section

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*Cry, the Beloved Country*

**To The Student**

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.



\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Section\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

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## *Cry, the Beloved Country*

All references are taken from the Scribner Edition of *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

### **Notes on the 1987, 1959, 1948 Editions**

1. Some have said that one of the most important characters in the novel is the land of South Africa itself. Write about a place that has figured prominently in your life. It may be someplace you have lived, vacationed, visited, or only read about. Write an article for a travel brochure that describes the area's physical characteristics and the significance it has had in your life. You may choose to begin your description with a sentence similar to Paton's own first sentence of the novel: There is a...
2. Based on the information in the notes, what do you think the prevailing tone and atmosphere of the novel will be—hopeful, fearful, despairing, humorous, etc.? Write as though you are a weather forecaster describing the emotional tone, or “climate,” of the book. Create a five-day forecast in which you predict the overall emotional weather the characters will experience throughout the novel. Include smaller tones you sense as daily variations in the forecast (thunderstorms, drizzle, partial sun, clouds, fog, wind, heat lightning, solar or lunar eclipses, etc.)

You may begin with this sentence: And in your five-day forecast, it's going to be (overall weather, eg. “hot”) in the Beloved Country... Then, write a paragraph explaining your choices of weather to reflect the emotions and atmospheres you expect to see in the novel.

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3. One of the things we often desire to know when we begin reading a story is whether or not it is “true.” Paton confesses that some of the events he describes in the novel are “a compound of truth and fiction. In these respects therefore the story is not true, but considered as a social record it is the plain and simple truth.” What do you think he means? Write a paragraph in which you explain your understanding of what Paton is saying. Write a second paragraph explaining what you think is the line between fiction and nonfiction. In your opinion, can *any* details or events in a work of nonfiction be made up? If so, how much can be fiction for the work as a whole still to be considered non-fiction?
4. Paton dedicates the novel to two “unselfish and determined friends,” Mr. and Mrs. Burns. Even though they barely knew him, the Burns went out of their way to help Paton get the novel published—reading the manuscript, writing letters, making phone calls, typing out the manuscript, hunting it down at the post office, etc. Recall a time when someone did something for you that was extraordinarily helpful. Write a letter to this person thanking him or her for the help. In your letter, describe what he or she did and explain how it has made a difference in your life.



## **Introduction**

5. In the introduction, the author explains that the book took its title from Paton's poetic admonishment for the land to cry out against the social injustices in South Africa. From your own knowledge and experiences, what do you think are the most important or problematic social issues in the United States? Free write about social problems you see that affect large groups of people living in your country. Imagine what the land's response to these and to the people might be. Should it mock the people, weep for them, ignore them, chastise them, warn them, etc? If you were writing a book focusing on one of these issues and its affect on the people of the United States, what would the issue be and what would you title your book?

## **Book I**

### **Chapter 1**

6. In this opening chapter, the author describes two very different scenes, one lush and flourishing, and the other dry and barren. He says that the land is dying and can no longer provide what the people need to live and prosper. Reflect on a place in your own life that you have seen change drastically over time. It may be change for the better or for the worse. It may be natural change or industrial change. Describe it in two paragraphs, the first about its former state and the second about its condition now. You may begin the first paragraph, "There was a...", and the second paragraph, "But now it is..." Do you like the changes? Are you nostalgic for the old place? Which do you think is better? Do not directly express your feelings about the differences, but try to choose words that make clear which state you prefer.

## Chapter 2

7. When Stephen Kumalo and his wife receive the letter from Johannesburg, they take their time in reading it. “How we desire such a letter,” his wife says, “and when it comes, we fear to open it.” Do you understand their mixed feelings? Think about a time when you had strong opposing feelings about something—anticipation and fear, joy and sadness, desire and hatred, etc. Describe the situation and explain why you felt both ways about it.

## Chapter 3

8. As Kumalo waits for the train to arrive that will take him into Johannesburg, he is so lost in his own thoughts, fears, questions and stories of others’ tragedies in the big city that he is not aware of what’s going on around him. He doesn’t even hear the sound of the whistle grow louder as the train approaches Carisbrooke station. Do you remember a time when you were so caught up in your thoughts that you were oblivious to your surroundings? Write about that time as though you are another person watching yourself in the situation. Take on the perspective of a third-person omniscient narrator who can both describe the external setting and events and tell the details of the thoughts, fears, and questions that preoccupy you. One possible way to begin is: (your name) sat in the middle of (what activity or event) lost in his/her own thoughts. It was as if he/she didn’t even see what was going on right in front of his/her face...
9. At the end of the chapter, the narrator says that Kumalo has “shown his little vanity, told his little lie, before these respectful people” on the train. About what has the priest been untruthful? Write a paragraph as though you are explaining this accusation to another classmate who didn’t catch Kumalo in his “lie.” Would you classify Kumalo’s action as a “lie”? If not, how would you describe what he did? How does it affect your opinion of the old priest?

## **Chapter 4**

10. When he arrives in Johannesburg, Stephen Kumalo is robbed by a man who said he would buy the priest's bus ticket so Kumalo wouldn't lose his place in line. Appreciative of the offer of help and not wanting to seem ungrateful or ignorant, Kumalo gives the stranger his money. The man disappears around a corner, and Kumalo never sees him again. Have you ever been in a new place where you were unfamiliar with the rules or procedures or dangers? Have you ever been taken advantage of by someone you thought was trying to help you? Have you struggled with the conflicting desires to be wary, and at the same time, to be polite? Drawing on your own experiences and knowledge, brainstorm a list of rules of thumb for travelers or for people going into unfamiliar situations. What should they look out for? What questions should they be prepared to ask? What should they never, ever do? Then, write two other responses Kumalo could have made to the man when he was uncomfortable. How could he have politely refused the man's offer of help?

## Chapter 5

11. Msimangu says that the broken tribe is the cause of the crime so prevalent in Johannesburg. The “white man” has broken the tribe, he says, and that has also caused the house and family to be broken and the individual men and women to “fall apart.” Do you agree with his assessment of the causes of crime? Consider crime and destructive behavior in your own community and in your school. What do you believe is the most basic reason for it? Write an editorial for your school newspaper in which you agree or disagree with Msimangu’s assertion and explain your own perspective. Give your editorial a creative title.
12. As Kumalo settles into Mrs. Lithebe’s house, he reflects on how far he has come and how much has happened over the last forty-eight hours. Imagine that he is writing to his wife back in Ndotsheni to bring her up-to-date on the events of his travels and the news he has learned so far. What words would he choose to describe his experiences and information so far? Would he share in generalities or in very specific details? Is there anything you think he would hold back and not share with her? What would be his overall tone—hopeful, fearful, disbelieving, angry, confused, etc.? Write a letter to her in Stephen’s voice.

## Chapter 6

13. After finding Gertrude and satisfying himself that she does indeed desire to return to her people, amend her life, and regain her respectability, Kumalo begins in earnest the search for his son. Over the next several chapters, keep a record of each place Kumalo goes and the information he discovers about Absalom. The first one has been done for you.

### Place

Gertrude’s house

### Information

Absalom lives in Sophiatown and works in Johannesburg. He spends time with the son of Kumalo’s brother, John.

## **Chapter 7**

14. In chapter 7, Msimangu talks about different perspectives on power. The “black man,” he says, has a specific reason for desiring power. The “white man” fears this desire. But Msimangu says there is a very different “truth” about power that neither of them understands. Write three detailed paragraphs, one explaining each perspective: the motive behind the “black man’s” desire for power, the reason the “white man” fears the “black man” gaining that power, and the “truth” Msimangu says prevails over both of those.
15. Msimangu says that “there is only one thing that has power completely, and that is love. Because when a man loves, he seeks no power, and therefore he has power.” Do you agree or disagree with the priest’s assertion? Write one detailed page in which you explain what you think he means and whether you agree or disagree. Use specific details from history, literature, or your own experiences to support your argument.
16. At the end of Chapter 7, Kumalo speaks kind words to his new friend, Msimangu: “Things are not happy that brought me to Johannesburg...but I have found much pleasure in your company.” Msimangu replies only, “Huh...huh, we must hurry or we shall be late for our food.” What do you think of Msimangu’s reply? In one paragraph, react to Msimangu’s reply and explain why you think Msimangu spoke as he did. In a second paragraph, take on the persona of Msimangu and write a different response, one that could have encouraged Kumalo.

## Chapter 8

17. The bus boycott is organized to protest the increasing price of the tickets. The bus fare to and from work was approaching twenty percent of an average native worker's weekly wages. To convince the authorities to lower the fare, many people chose to walk twenty or more miles round-trip to work each day so that the busses would have fewer passengers and lose money.

Can you imagine the daily difficulty of this kind of sacrifice? Consider your own life and conveniences. Which of them would you be willing to give up for a time to make a point about the oppressiveness of a law or policy? Shopping at a particular store? Eating at a certain restaurant? Using a mobile phone? Driving a car? Buying a specific product? What kind of situation would move you to deprive yourself of a convenience? How oppressive would it have to be? Is this something you would ever consider doing? Why or why not? Write a journal entry about your thoughts on this type of protest.

18. After Dubula convinces them not to take the bus to Alexandra, Msimangu explains that, like Kumalo's brother John, Dubula no longer has any use for the church because it "has a fine voice but no deeds." It may have good ideas about what needs to happen or how things should happen, and it may even speak loudly and convincingly about the issues, but it actually does nothing to try to solve the problems. Do you know a group or person like this? Write a letter to the person or group with whom you've had a "fine voice but no deeds" experience. Let them know if their lack of action affects your respect for them or desire to be around them?

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19. The three main leaders of the “cause of the black people,” as Dubula calls it, are Tomlinson, Dubula, and Stephen’s own brother, John Kumalo. Msimangu explains that Tomlinson is the brains of the operation. John Kumalo, he says, is the voice, and Dubula, the heart. The government, Msimangu says, fears Dubula the most. Based on the description of the three men’s gifts and actions, do you agree that Dubula is the most dangerous?

In your own experience, is it the person with the idea, the persuasive words, or the personal involvement that is the most influential in getting something done? Write an editorial in which you explain who, in your opinion, would be the most dangerous of the leaders of an organization: the brain, the voice, or the heart. Do not forget to give the editorial a title.

## **Chapter 9**

20. The erection of Shanty Town is told from the perspectives of several different people who are in need of houses. They are living with other families, waiting for their turn to get a house, and struggling to provide safety and happiness for their own families. They share their conflicts, fears, losses, and questions before, during, and after Shanty Town is formed. Choose one of the following people and write about the erection of Shanty Town from his or her perspective:
- Dubula, in his personal diary
  - A newspaper reporter who is there at night as it is being built
  - A police man
  - The owner of an overcrowded house from which one or more families are moving to live in Shanty Town
  - A heavy machinery operator who is helping to build the new houses ordered in response to Shanty Town
  - A young child moving to Shanty Town with his or her family
  - The sanitation director who will be responsible for the garbage collection and sewage development that Dubula has promised
  - A business owner from whom people have “carried away” planks, corrugated iron, or sacks in the night to make their houses

Try to capture this person’s unique perspective and reaction (thoughts, fears, questions, etc.) in your story.



## **Chapter 10**

21. Before Kumalo can even voice his request to go back and see the young girl again, Msimangu, looking intently into his face, says, "It is agreed." He knew what Kumalo desired without the old priest having to say it. Have you ever known exactly what someone was thinking or getting ready to say? Retell the story of your own experience, describing the situation and explaining how you knew what had not yet been spoken.
  
22. When he inquires at the house of the Hlatshwayos in Shanty Town, Kumalo receives the bad news that his son had lived there for a time but was taken away and sent to the boys' reformatory. At the reformatory, the report is encouraging: Absalom was released early because of good behavior and his desire to marry the mother of his child. When they arrive at Absalom's home, however, the young girl who is pregnant with his child says that she's not seen Absalom in several days. And when they ask his employer, they discover that he has not been at work, either. The range of news from bad to good to the worst yet in one day's search takes its toll on Kumalo.

Have you ever had a day like that? Write a journal entry about a day or short period of time in which you had to cope with news that moved you back and forth through a wide range of conflicting emotions.

## **Chapter 11**

23. After Msimangu reads him the article about the murder of Arthur Jarvis, Stephen Kumalo is gripped with fear. Msimangu understands the nature of the old priest's fear without Kumalo needing to explain a thing. He tells Kumalo that what he fears is very unlikely and that it is foolish to dwell on it, but Kumalo says that he has no other words.

Imagine that after Kumalo reaches his room, he finds the words to express what he is feeling. Write a diary entry in which Kumalo pours out his fear and worry. Try to put yourself in Kumalo's place. Do not worry about structure or organization; just free write as though you are a father who believes it could be your son who has committed this horrible crime.

24. In his oppressive fear, Kumalo tells Msimangu that he is "dumb here inside" and has "no words at all." Have you ever found yourself so overcome by an emotion that no words could express how you felt or that you didn't want to talk about it at all?

Write a letter to Stephen Kumalo in which you express to him that you know how he feels. Share your own story about a time when you had no words. If appropriate, also tell him how you moved through the emotion and were finally able to or desired to use words again.

## Chapter 12

25. In chapter 12, many suggestions are offered to solve the problems in Johannesburg, but it seems that for each solution presented, another objection is raised or new potential problem highlighted. Make a chart of suggested solutions and any objections that follow each one. The first one has been done for you.

Solutions Presented

More police

Objections Raised

This is only a temporary solution; we must inspire natives with purpose and goals for long-term peace.

## Chapter 13

26. At the end of the sermon in Ezenzeleni, the narrator reflects on the variety of reactions people have to Msimangu's voice. Some sigh and are comforted, some marvel, and others despise him because of it. Write a paragraph for the benefit of another student who doesn't understand why this last group reacts as it does.

In your writing, try to answer the following questions. How is it that such a beautiful and powerful voice can elicit such a negative reaction? What does Msimangu do that they don't want him to do? What does he not do that they desire for him to do? What is it that angers them?

## **Chapter 14**

27. When Stephen Kumalo discovers that it was his son Absalom who killed Arthur Jarvis, he goes to his brother, John, to tell him the news that John's own son was also involved in the crime. Stephen does not have to say the words, though, for his brother to know the meaning of the visit. John can see it in Stephen's eyes.

Have you ever had to deliver bad news to someone? How did you do it? How did you bring up the subject? What words did you choose? Did you have to use many words at all before the person knew that something was wrong? Was it very difficult? Write about the news you had to deliver and how you did it. Finally, reflect on whether there is a "good" way to deliver very bad news. Based on your own experiences, what suggestions would you offer to someone in that unenviable position?

## **Chapter 15**

28. With whom do you identify most at this point in the story? Consider the following characters, their roles and experiences in the story so far, and what the foreseeable future holds for them, and write a paragraph explaining which one you relate to the most and why:
- Stephen Kumalo
  - Stephen Kumalo's wife
  - Msimangu
  - John Kumalo
  - Absalom
  - John Kumalo's son
  - Father Vincent
  - Mrs. Lithebe
  - Gertrude
  - Absalom's "wife"
  - Absalom's unborn child
  - Another character of your choosing
29. At the end of chapter 15, Father Vincent expresses his concern to Kumalo about the old priest's worry and fatigue. He tells Kumalo to pray and rest and leave the work to him and to Msimangu for the night. He even gives Kumalo very specific instructions about what not to pray about and what to pray about.

What do you think of Father Vincent's advice? Imagine that you are a close friend of Kumalo's. What would you recommend that he do? Would it be different from what Father Vincent admonished him? Write Kumalo an email agreeing with Father Vincent or offering your own perspective on how the old priest should spend the evening.

## Chapter 16

30. When Stephen Kumalo invites the girl to come and live with his family and become his daughter, she seems very willing to go and expresses a desire to live a quiet life such as he lives in Ndotsheni. He tells her that he will return for her soon. We have seen and heard only the way the young girl speaks to the priest.

Imagine a conversation between the girl and the woman from whom she rents a room. Do you think she would speak differently or similarly to someone who is more of a peer? What would be the substance of their conversation? Would the woman mock her, express envy or perhaps try to talk her out of it? Finish this conversation or write one of your own:

**Young Girl:** I will be leaving you very soon. I am to go and live with an Umfundisi—the grand-father of my child. He has gone just now to make preparations.

**Woman:** I have seen him. What kind of an Umfundisi is it who comes to a place like this alone?

**Young Girl:** It is not as you imagine! He is a man as any other man, but he is good. He lives quietly in Ndotsheni. He says that he and his wife will take care of me.

**Woman:** And you believe this? You are more foolish than I thought! How many more men have to draw you in with their sweet words before you will open your eyes? They are all...

## **Chapter 17**

31. Mrs. Lithebe generously allows the young girl to come and live in her house, also. Gertrude is glad to have a young female companion and they spend much time together. Compare the two young women. How are they similar? How different? Write a paragraph for each young woman predicting, based on what you know of her so far, what her future life will be like.
32. After Stephen goes to see Absalom, he tells the boy that the young girl is willing to marry him. He also tells Absalom that he can now write to his mother. Absalom replies that he will write to her. Put yourself in Absalom's shoes: if you had to tell your parents about something bad you had done, which would be the hardest parent for you to tell? Why? How would you do it? What would you say? Imagine that you are about to speak to this parent and you are very nervous.

Write out what you will say in the form of a speech. You may begin in this way:

(Mom/Dad), I have something I need to talk to you about...

## **Book II**

### **Chapter 18**

33. Although Mr. Jarvis tries to make small talk with the captain, he quickly realizes that the reason for the man's visit is much more serious. The captain delivers the news that his son, Arthur, was murdered in his home only two hours earlier. The news devastates Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis; Arthur was their only son.

What is the worst news your family has ever received? How did it come? What were the reactions of the different family members? Write a diary entry in your voice or in the voice of one of your family members as though it is the day the news was delivered. Try to restrict the details in the entry to those your family initially received on the first day of the ordeal.



## **Chapter 19**

34. During their drive to the mortuary to make the official identification of Arthur's body, John Harrison shares with Mr. Jarvis the details of Arthur's last hours. When he hears that Arthur had been writing a paper entitled, "The Truth About Native Crime," Mr. Jarvis comments aloud that he and Arthur didn't see eye to eye on issues related to the natives and had argued about them on more than one occasion. John Harrison confesses that he and his father also do not agree on such things.

Do you identify with the conflict they describe within their families? Are there issues on which you and your parents don't agree? Write a letter to an advice columnist about one of those issues. Explain the topic and situation. Explain what happened when you tried to discuss it with your parents? Were you able to talk civilly, or did it get ugly? Have you had any resolution on the subject? Do you expect any?

## **Chapter 20**

35. There are four pictures on the walls in Arthur's library: Christ crucified, Abraham Lincoln, the white gabled house of Vergelegen, and a painting of leafless willows by a river in a wintry veld. What do you think you can learn about Arthur's personality and the things that are important to him based only on these pictures? If necessary, do some light research on the images.

Write a letter to an author explaining what you think the pictures reveal about him.

## Chapter 21

36. After the funeral, Mr. Harrison and Mr. Jarvis sit in the study and talk about Arthur. Mr. Jarvis comments that he wished he could have heard his son argue with Mr. Harrison. Harrison replies that he didn't agree with Arthur but that he had great respect for anything the young man said. Is it an easy thing to respect someone with whom you so strongly disagree?

Write a dialogue between two people who disagree on a subject. First, write the dialogue in a way that demonstrates disrespect between the parties. Then, re-write the dialogue so that it is respectful. Keep the central arguments and details the same, changing only the tone from disrespectful to respectful. Finish this dialogue or write one of your own:

**Friend #2:** Where have you been all morning?

**Friend #1:** At the student council meeting. We finally settled on the gift the senior class is going to present to the school this year.

**Friend #2:** It's not some stupid flowers or something like that, is it?

**Friend #1:** Yeah, actually it is—new plants for the landscaping in the front of the school.

**Friend #2:** That is the dumbest thing I've ever heard of in my life. The reason they need new flowers in the first place is because the pansies the last class of morons decided to give died. That's what flowers do, you know, they die. Some great gift for posterity's sake. Flowers—whose idiotic idea was that, anyway?

**Friend #1:** Well, mine, actually...

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37. As James Jarvis reads the writings of his son and the many letters requesting that Arthur speak to diverse people at a wide variety of places, he realizes that Arthur was a stranger to him.

Have you ever heard a story about one of your parents or another relative that was so radically different from your understanding and experience with him or her that it felt like a story about a stranger? Recall this story and write about it. What in the tale made this person so strikingly different from who you knew him or her to be? Why do you think your personal perspective and the perspective in the story are so different?

Another possibility is to reflect on yourself: Do you think your parents' perspective of you is very different from whom you consider yourself to be? What one thing would you want them to know about you and what is important to you that you think they may have a faulty or insufficient understanding of at present? Write a paragraph in which you explain this one important thing.

## Chapter 22

38. Although Kumalo speaks of writing his wife several letters while he is in Johannesburg, we do not know the specific information he sends her, how she responds to it, or how she continues to live and work in her husband's absence. It is common in stories and television dramas to switch back and forth between descriptions of events going on simultaneously in different places.

Write such a chapter in which you describe life for Mrs. Kumalo in Ndotsheni at the time that her son's trial is taking place. In your chapter, have Mrs. Kumalo reveal what she knows about the goings on in Johannesburg, what her questions and fears are, and what her daily life alone is like. Also include at least one encounter and dialogue with another person in the village.

## Chapter 23

39. When gold is discovered at Odendaalsrust, many people have different ideas about the effects it will have on the country and the people. Some say the money will bring new life to South Africa. Others say that the money can mean better social services, higher wages, more hospitals, or a better economy. Still others look at the potential for new money in a more individual way. To them it means food, clothing, entertainment, and some security for their own families.

What is your perspective on the value of the discovery and the money that will result from it? Write a poem based on the discovery of gold in Odendaalsrust. Use words and phrases from the chapter, but also make sure your point of view comes out clearly.

## **Chapter 24**

40. When Mr. Jarvis goes again to his son's house, he finds tucked away in a desk drawer and essay entitled "A Private Essay on the Evolution of a South African." It traces Arthur's life and growing awareness of his place in and response to his society. He says in closing that he can no longer do things because they are useful, better than something else, safe, or approved of by others. He must do what is right for the sake of his own peace.

At this point in your life, there are many things you must do because others say they are valuable; you are not yet an adult. Consider, however, the things over which you do have choices. Why do you choose the activities, relationships, attitudes, hobbies, etc. that you do? How much do you consider their usefulness, their value as compared to other things, their safety, the approval of others, or your own peace and enjoyment? Write a letter to your parents explaining your main motivations for choosing the voluntary activities and relationships in your life. Do you understand Arthur's frustration? His need to change the way he makes decisions? Do you identify with him at all?

41. After reading the private essay, Mr. Jarvis finishes his pipe and leaves the house, but this time, he chooses not to walk down the passage and through the kitchen where the blood stain is. He is not afraid, but he simply chooses to go another way and exits through the front door. Hearing the door lock behind Jarvis, the policeman believes that the bereaved father can no longer face the stain.

Have you ever done something that was completely misunderstood? Think about a time when you did something that someone interpreted very differently from how you meant it or a time when someone believed your motivations behind an action were very different from what they actually were. Write a letter to this person in which you point out the error in his or her interpretation and explain your real motives or intentions behind what you did.

## **Chapter 25**

42. Stephen Kumalo goes to the house of the uSmiths where he desires to receive information about Sibeko's daughter. He is completely shocked when James Jarvis answers the door, and it takes him quite a while to recover enough composure even to tell Mr. Jarvis why he has come. In the course of their conversation, he also confesses to Mr. Jarvis that his son is the one who killed Arthur.

Why do you think he does this? What is your reaction when you encounter unexpectedly someone you would rather avoid? Do you try to run away or hide? Do you talk too little or too much? Are you composed or flustered? Write a diary entry about a time in which you ran into someone you would rather have avoided. Describe the situation, how you reacted, and how the encounter played out.

## **Chapter 26**

43. At the end of the chapter, the strike is over. It was not as bad as some feared, and it did not even reach the mines. The official report says, "All is quiet," but Paton inserts several images of things that continue even when you can't hear them: water lapping against the dock, leaves falling in the forest, and ants eating away at a house. "Nothing," he says, "is ever quiet, except for fools." Progress, he suggests, can be subtle and small. What other things can you think of that progress so quietly or slowly that they may go unnoticed? Make a list of at least five more things that happen quietly, but can have a significant or damaging effect.

## **Chapter 27**

44. Although she initially bristles, Gertrude listens to Mrs. Lithebe's concerns about her behavior and says that she is willing to work to change it. She does, however, try to blame her actions on the negative influences in her surroundings. To this defense, Mrs. Lithebe responds that there will be temptations like that even in Ndotsheni. Gertrude's contemplation of becoming a nun seems to be related to this idea that if her surroundings were different, she too would be different.

When someone confronts you with something negative they see in your words or actions, how do you respond? Do you try to listen? Are you able to hear criticism well? Do you take responsibility for your actions or try to blame them on something else? Write a journal entry about a time when someone confronted you about something you did or said. How did you respond to the criticism? What was the result of the encounter?

## Chapter 28

45. After the verdict and sentencing, Kumalo is so distraught that he is unable to walk out of the courtroom by himself. Although they have separate exits for black and white people, the young white man from the reformatory and Msimangu exit through the same door, one on each side of Kumalo, helping to hold him up. The narrator says that a custom like this is not broken often and that even in this kind of situation, “such a thing is not lightly done.”

Think about our society. What social rules and customs do we have? Is there one that is not easily broken? If so, what is it? In what kind of situations would it be ok to break it? Or, if you cannot think of one, reflect on the differences in social customs between our society and Kumalo's. Is the difference primarily one of integration vs. segregation between races, or is there a deeper difference in the societies that makes one have stricter social customs and rules? Write a paragraph about your thoughts.

46. How do you think the media would cover Absalom's conviction? Write headlines for two of the following publications. Your headlines should reflect the paper's position.
- A. A large Johannesburg city paper
  - B. A circular for supporters of the native cause published by Dubula, Tomlinson, and John Kumalo
  - C. An internal newsletter in the Anglican diocese of Johannesburg whose main audience is priests and clergy
  - D. A professional journal for lawyers
  - E. A notice posted by the police in the worst Johannesburg neighborhoods
  - F. A small gazette for reformatories and boys' schools throughout South Africa



## **Chapter 29**

47. Chapter 29 shows parting words and last interactions between several different individuals: Absalom and his new wife, Absalom and his father, John and Stephen Kumalo, Jarvis and Harrison, Msimangu and Stephen Kumalo. Some of them are virtually silent, some include fond words and gifts, one is angry, and one is mutually pain-filled. Gertrude says no goodbye at all—disappearing silently the night before they are to return to Ndotsheni. Do any of these goodbyes remind you of one you have experienced personally? Write a poem about the memory of a goodbye you have experienced.

## **Book III**

### **Chapter 30**

48. The day of his return to Ndotsheni, Stephen Kumalo sees many old and familiar faces. He tells many stories of his travels and prays for the people. After all of this activity and talking, he and his wife sit down alone to talk. He says that he will tell her of Msimangu whom he describes as the best man he has ever known. Kumalo's relationship with the other priest was far from perfect. Msimangu made many mistakes, but he also did many good things, too.

What do you think Kumalo would want to communicate about this friend? Write a character sketch of Msimangu that accounts for both his strengths and his weaknesses. What is it that you think makes Msimangu the best man Kumalo has ever known?

## **Chapter 31**

49. When he returns to Ndotsheni, Kumalo begins to pray fervently for the town to be restored. He believes he also must do something to try to make a difference, though, and so he goes to the chief and the headmaster to get their help. Consider your own school or community:

What is a serious problem that you think needs to be addressed? Write a letter to someone who has the influence or ability to do something to correct the problem—a county commissioner, mayor, teacher, principal, superintendent, etc. In your letter, describe the problem in detail, giving specific examples of its negative affects on the people, and ask the individual for his or her help in finding a solution.

50. Although Kumalo goes to the people in authority, the most obvious and sympathetic sources of help, it is through his unexpected encounter with Jarvis' grandson—the child of the man Kumalo's own son murdered—that the children of Ndotsheni get the milk they need to survive. Immediate help and healing comes from the most unlikely of sources. Sometimes the obvious people are not the sources of help or relief.

Write a thank you note about a personal situation or story you've heard about when you have been surprised by the source of help or mercy, perhaps a story like this one in which someone who was wronged has acted in a completely unnatural way and shown unexpected mercy or generosity. The person you write to should be the one who was a source of assistance.

## Chapter 32

51. At the beginning of chapter 32, the Kumalos receive four letters from Johannesburg: one from Msimangu with news of Johannesburg, one from Mr. Carmichael saying that there would be no mercy, one from Absalom to his parents about the verdict and conditions in the prison, and one from Absalom to his wife.

We know the general contents of all the letters except the one to his wife. What do you think he would say to her? Would he repeat information he had put in the letter to his parents? Would he reveal anything new or different about their relationship than what we've seen already in the story? Would the tone be affectionate, matter-of-fact, familiar, strained, etc.? Would he include any message or words of advice for his son to read when he was old enough?

Take on Absalom's voice and write the letter you think he might have written to his wife. Since the young girl is not given a name in the story, choose a name for her that you think fits her personality.

## Chapter 33

52. In chapter 33, Jarvis' grandson comes again to speak Zulu with Kumalo. They both seem to enjoy the conversations and time together, and the old priest tells the boy that when he returns to Johannesburg "something bright will go out of Ndotsheni."

Have you ever formed a relationship over a short period of time that had a very definite beginning and ending point, such as a week of camp or a vacation or a retreat? What were your feelings as the time drew to a close? Did you continue to communicate with your friend after your time together was over? Write a diary entry about the meaning of that relationship in your life and your feelings on its ending or changing.

## **Chapter 34**

53. The villagers receive the news of the death of Jarvis' wife as they gather for the confirmation. Kumalo desires to send a personal message to the grieving family, but he knows that there is no way to deliver it verbally. He struggles to put his feelings into writing and composes several drafts of the message before he is satisfied. Do you identify with Kumalo's struggle? Almost everyone has written different drafts of a note or email before it was sent. Write about the situation and why it was so hard for you to communicate your message. Did you finally have success or did you give up?
54. When Kumalo sends a child to Jarvis' house with the sympathy note, he cautions the child strongly against using idle words and laughter. This type of warning is repeated throughout the book.

What do you think of the high value many in the novel place on words and using them wisely? Do you understand why they feel so strongly about the power of words? How seriously do you think our society takes words? Write a comparison or contrast of the attitudes toward words in Kumalo's society and ours. Do you think we are more similar or different in this area? Give specific examples to support your thoughts.

## **Chapter 35**

55. At the very moment that the Bishop is telling Kumalo that it would be best for him to leave Ndotsheni, a note comes from Jarvis thanking Kumalo for his expression of sympathy and telling him that it was Mrs. Jarvis' dying wish that her husband build a new church for the village of Ndotsheni. The timing of this letter and Kumalo's explanation of Jarvis' generosity speak deeply both to Kumalo and to the Bishop. They decide that it is a sign that Kumalo should not leave Ndotsheni.

Have you ever had a similar experience in which the timing of something or the way in which it happened was as significant as or even more meaningful than the event itself? Write about what happened, how it happened, and what about the timing or order of events was so significant to you.

## Chapter 36

56. As he begins his vigil on the mountain, Stephen Kumalo confesses his sins. He lists lies, but he does not specifically mention the lie he has just told Mr. Jarvis—that he did remember Arthur’s brightness as a little boy when he really did not remember. Earlier in the narrative, he calls it a lie, so why do you think he does not list it here? Is it possible that he does not think it was a sin in this situation? Do you understand why he lied? Would you have done the same thing? Do you think it is ever okay to lie? Now turn the focus around and think only of yourself: Are there situations when you could understand or even appreciate someone lying to you? Or do you find comfort or greater value in knowing that no matter how painful someone would always be completely honest with you?

Write an email to a friend explaining your preferences and expectations for your friends’ or acquaintances’ honesty toward you.

57. After his confession and prayer for absolution, Kumalo’s prayer turns to thanksgiving. He makes quite a long list of things for which he is thankful. Are any of the items on his list surprising to you? Are there other things you think he has left off? It can be very hard to be grateful for what you *do* have when what you *do not* have seems to be so much or so large or very important or even devastating. Thankfulness in these times can be a very difficult personal discipline. Consider your own life, and make two lists for yourself. First, list the things that are hard or cause a lot of pain or trouble in your life. Then, list the good things—the ones to be thankful for.
58. As an aide to his readers, Paton includes a glossary of unfamiliar words complete with pronunciation directions and definitions. If you wrote a book about your life so far, what words or phrases that you or your friends use daily might be unfamiliar to your readers? Make a list of at least five words or phrases you would need to gloss. For each word, explain how to pronounce it, what it means, and use it in a sentence. If it has multiple meanings, provide a definition and an example for each of the different ways in which it may be used.

## **W r a p - U p**

59. When you read the last page of the novel, what were your thoughts and feelings? Make a list of your feelings.
60. Paton's choice of the name Absalom for Stephen Kumalo's rebellious son is an allusion to the biblical story of Absalom, the son of David, one of the kings of Israel. Research the biblical character Absalom and the story of his relationship with his father, and write about the parallels you see between the two stories.
61. What is the most memorable quote from the novel for you? Copy it down and explain in several sentences what it means to you and why you appreciate it.
62. Write a chapter that takes place in Ndotsheni several years after the end of the novel. What has happened to the village and the characters? How have they changed? How have they remained the same?
63. If you were to tell a friend what you think the main message of this novel is, what would it be?



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*Cry, the Beloved Country*

## **Test**

1. Stephen Kumalo is summoned to Johannesburg because who is sick?
  - A. Absalom
  - B. Gertrude
  - C. Gertrude's son
  - D. Absalom's wife
  
2. After the meeting with Stephen's brother, John, Msimangu tells Stephen that he sees only one hope for South Africa: Black and white men need to
  - A. live and work and develop separately.
  - B. agree that both must have some measure of power over their own destiny.
  - C. work together, desiring neither money nor power.
  - D. focus on protecting their families and children from corruption.
  
3. Father Vincent repeatedly reminds Stephen Kumalo that
  - A. when people go to Johannesburg, they do not come back.
  - B. he is a selfish and sinful man but God put his hands on him.
  - C. he will do anything Stephen asks.
  - D. he would like to help Stephen pay for his expenses while in Johannesburg.
  
4. Which of the following descriptions best characterizes the young white man from the reformatory who goes with Stephen Kumalo to see Absalom in the prison?
  - A. Angry and vengeful
  - B. Passionate and teachable
  - C. Proud and unyielding
  - D. Simple and humble
  
5. Mr. Carmichael says that he is taking the case "pro deo," or "for God," which basically means that
  - A. Stephen will have to pay very little, if anything, for the lawyer's services.
  - B. it is a hopeless case; only God could do anything about it.
  - C. he believes Absalom is innocent, and he will defend the boy as God himself would.
  - D. he believes God will use him to set Absalom free.

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*Cry, the Beloved Country*

6. One of the four pictures on the wall in Arthur Jarvis' library is of
  - A. Mahatma Gandhi.
  - B. Ernest Oppenheimer.
  - C. Martin Luther King, Jr.
  - D. Abraham Lincoln.
  
7. When he leaves his son's house for the last time, James Jarvis exits through the front door instead of walking through the kitchen over the blood stain because
  - A. he is afraid of the stain.
  - B. he cannot face the image of the stain anymore.
  - C. he is superstitious about entering and leaving a house through the same door.
  - D. he is choosing to go a new way.
  
8. When Stephen Kumalo goes to the house of the uSmiths to inquire about Sibeko's daughter, he is shocked to discover that
  - A. Sibeko's daughter is the young girl pregnant by Absalom.
  - B. James Jarvis and his wife are visiting the uSmiths.
  - C. Mrs. uSmith is Arthur Jarvis' sister.
  - D. Sibeko's daughter ran away from Mrs. uSmith.
  
9. Which one of the following comparisons is **not** used to describe John Kumalo's voice?
  - A. a bell
  - B. a bull
  - C. a lion
  - D. thunder
  
10. Mrs. Lithebe chastises Gertrude for
  - A. lying about whom she is spending time with.
  - B. dressing immodestly.
  - C. speaking and laughing carelessly.
  - D. neglecting her work.

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*Cry, the Beloved Country*

11. Absalom's conviction of murder finally rests on the "intention to kill" which the judge says is proven by
  - A. the testimonies of Matthew Kumalo and Johannes Pafuri.
  - B. the confession of Absalom Kumalo.
  - C. the testimony of the injured servant, Mpiring.
  - D. the presence of the loaded gun and Absalom's use of it.
12. When Stephen returns to Ndotsheni, the villagers
  - A. eagerly greet and welcome him home.
  - B. observe him, the young girl, and the small boy with quiet interest.
  - C. talk and gossip among each other so much that he must ask them to stop.
  - D. regret that their new young priest must now leave them.
13. The Bishop believes that the best thing for the parish of Ndotsheni would be for
  - A. the villagers to begin work on a new church building very soon.
  - B. Stephen and his family to move to another town.
  - C. Stephen to send the agricultural demonstrator away and for everything to remain as it has been.
  - D. Stephen to confess his sins in front of the villagers and be absolved by the Bishop.
14. Which of the following is **not** one of James Jarvis' gifts to Ndotsheni?
  - A. a wreath of flowers from the funeral of his wife
  - B. milk for the young children not yet in school
  - C. an agricultural demonstrator to teach farming and soil preservation
  - D. a new church building for St. Mark's
15. Which of the following is **not** one of Stephen Kumalo's lies in the novel?
  - A. He suggests to the people on the train that he has been to Johannesburg before.
  - B. He tells his brother that he has heard about a man who was sent to the shop to deceive John.
  - C. He tells Gertrude's young son that his mother is dead.
  - D. He tells Mr. Jarvis that he remembers the brightness in Arthur as a boy.

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*Cry, the Beloved Country*

16. A Bantu word that is a title of respect is
- A. kloof.
  - B. umfúndisi.
  - C. titihóya.
  - D. siyáfa.
17. Many of the characters in the book are referred to by epithets such as “the man who carried the bags” rather than by their names. Which character has both a name and an epithet?
- A. “the rosy-cheeked priest”
  - B. “the chief”
  - C. “the young white man”
  - D. “the pregnant girl”
18. Shanty Town springs up almost overnight because
- A. there is a serious lack of affordable housing for blacks in the city.
  - B. Dubula encourages the natives to boycott white housing projects because the rent is too high.
  - C. the native criminal element takes over the other native housing areas and the decent families have no place to live.
  - D. the conditions in the mining communities are terrible so the families must make their own houses out of scrap materials.
19. The moral lesson taught by the parable of the man lying in the grass whom no one warns about the impending storm is that
- A. we must help each other to see the dangers around us.
  - B. it is not wise to remain outside in a thunderstorm.
  - C. storms in life often come on us suddenly.
  - D. only God can control nature.
20. The author named Absalom Kumalo after
- A. his own son.
  - B. a character from Greek mythology.
  - C. a Biblical character.
  - D. a fallen Zulu chief.

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*Cry, the Beloved Country*

Test  
Student Answer Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Cry, the Beloved Country*

Test  
Answer Key

1. \_\_B\_\_

11. \_\_D\_\_

2. \_\_C\_\_

12. \_\_A\_\_

3. \_\_C\_\_

13. \_\_B\_\_

4. \_\_B\_\_

14. \_\_A\_\_

5. \_\_A\_\_

15. \_\_C\_\_

6. \_\_D\_\_

16. \_\_B\_\_

7. \_\_D\_\_

17. \_\_A\_\_

8. \_\_B\_\_

18. \_\_A\_\_

9. \_\_A\_\_

19. \_\_A\_\_

10. \_\_C\_\_

20. \_\_C\_\_

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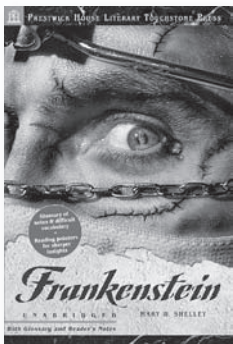
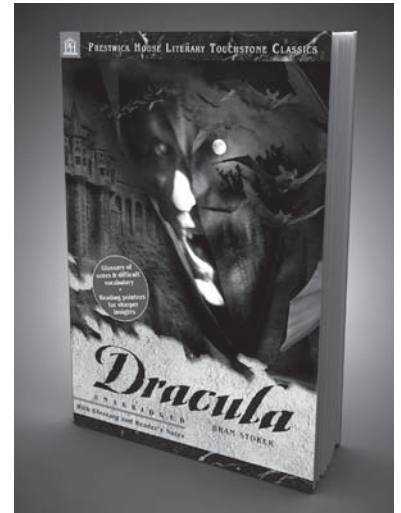
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Phone: _____ Email: _____

ITEM NO	TITLE	QUANTITY	X	PRICE	=	TOTAL

### Method of Payment (Choose one)

☐ Check or Money Order Enclosed

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover Card ☐ American Express

☐ Purchase Order Enclosed

We accept purchase orders and authorized orders charged to institutions. Personal orders not on a credit card must be accompanied by a check.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Because charges for air delivery are based on weight and distance, heavy packages can be expensive to ship air freight. Typographic and photographic errors are subject to revision. Prestwick House is the sole source of all proprietary materials listed in this catalogue. Please be sure to include a street address. FedEx ground/UPS will not deliver to a P.O. Box.

Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping 12% S&H (\$6.00 minimum) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Shipping & Handling

For orders of \$50.00 or less, please add \$6.00 for shipping and handling charges. For orders from \$50.01 to \$799.99 add 12%. For orders of \$800.00 and more, add 10%.

### Delivery Service

Most orders are shipped FedEx and you can expect delivery within 7-10 working days. Items in stock are usually shipped within one working day of receiving your order.

### Expedited Delivery

for expedited delivery ask about the following options:

- Overnight Air
- 2nd day air
- 3 Day Select