

Burger's Daughter Study Guide

Burger's Daughter by Nadine Gordimer

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Plot Summary

At the beginning of the story, Rosa Burger is a 14-year-old school girl, whose mother has just been arrested. The story follows the next 15 years or so of Rosa's life. The story begins with her waiting in line to bring her mother some items outside a jail in Pretoria, South Africa. Suddenly, the story moves several years later. Rosa's mother dies and her father Lionel Burger is put on trial and sentenced to life in jail. Rosa visits him and encourages him, but after three years he dies in prison. As a young woman, Rosa attends the trial of her father. At this time she forms a relationship with a young man Conrad, who is not political. They both have other lovers but still live together in a neglected cottage and debate about what is the proper way of life. Conrad argues that Rosa has been brainwashed to care only about the revolution, not about her own life. Rosa is working in a hospital and on the outskirts of political involvement. She sees her parents' old friends the Terblanches, but refuses a request to help make copies of a political leaflet.

Rosa visits an old friend, black activist Marisa Kgosana, despite fear of being followed by the secret police, BOSS. There, Rosa hears debates on whether blacks can depend on radical whites, even those who give their lives to the cause like Lionel Burger. Rosa decides to get out of South Africa and enlists the help of politician Brandt Vermeulen, who has her request reviewed to be issued a passport. Rosa successfully flies to France. After a few days in Paris, she flies to Nice on the Mediterranean Coast to be with Katya, her father's first wife, who lives in a nearby village. There she lives a relaxed and pleasant lifestyle, and becomes involved in an affair with a Bernard Chabaliere, a Paris professor who is writing a book. Rosa and Bernard love each other, but Rosa is clear that she is only the mistress and Bernard will not leave his wife and children. This seems to be acceptable to Rosa, since the people she meets in France are fairly liberal about their social arrangements. Rosa flies to London and agrees to meet her lover there, using a flat from family friend Flora. She meets students and activists and her long-lost adopted black brother Baasie at a political gathering. Baasie calls her on the phone in the middle of the night and says that he is sickened by Rosa's neglect of black martyrs like his father. He is tired of hearing about the great martyr Lionel Burger and makes Rosa very enraged. She vomits and later rethinks her commitments. Rosa decides to abandon her affair and return to South Africa.

In South Africa there is an increase in tension after the recent liberation of the Portuguese colonies. Rosa gets a job working in a hospital and sees more black children that are injured by police bullets than before. Her old black friend Fats meets her and complains that the black children have gone wild, but soon the parents of such children are also jailed by the government. In a wide-ranging crackdown, Rosa is jailed without charges, but it is believed she will be charged with anti-government actions along with her black friend Marisa Kgosana. An older Flora, as she did some 15 years earlier, is waiting at a women's prison to bring goods to Rosa and other women prisoners. So, Rosa completes her destiny of becoming a political prisoner.



Pages 9-39

Pages 9-39 Summary

At the beginning of the story, Rosa Burger is a 14-year-old school girl whose mother has just been arrested. The story then follows the next 15 years or so of Rosa's life. She is waiting in line to bring him some items outside a jail in Pretoria, South Africa. The English-speaking school girls at Rosa's school blame the arrest of Rosa's mother on the Boers, but the Burgers are actually an Afrikaans family. The reader is placed inside Rosa's mind while she is waiting outside the jail. Other people there include Flora Donaldson and Ivy Terblanche, who are long-time family friends. Rosa is in pain because she is menstruating. She conceals a note inside a water bottle cap that indicates that Rosa's father has not yet been arrested.

A few years later, Rosa's mother is dying and her father Lionel is out on bail and in the midst of a trial. Rosa meets a young man, Conrad who has been hanging around the Burger family at their home on summer afternoons. Rosa meets him near the trial courthouse and he invites her to a coffeehouse for an espresso, but soon she must return to her father's trial. A few days later, Rosa bumps into Conrad and they go out for pizza. He is a part-time student and works at the racetrack. Conrad invites Rosa to his cottage in Johannesburg, in an area that is condemned to be demolished. Rosa goes to the cottage where Conrad embraces her and they are soon having sex. Rosa visits Conrad occasionally, while the trial is going badly for Lionel. Conrad complains that Rosa is too polite, like her father. Lionel has just been testified against by a woman who was broken by the State police, or was an agent. The Burger family's non-political relatives show up in court and Lionel Burger makes a long speech on his reasons for fighting against apartheid and racism. Lionel is sentenced to life in prison. In the back of the courtroom, the blacks yell out for freedom, screaming Amandla, Awetha!

Rosa thinks about her situation, now she is the only one in her family left. Her mother and brother Tony are dead and her father is in jail. She goes to the house of Theo Santorini, her father's lawyer and meets Marisa Kgosana, the wife of a political prisoner. At this time Rosa is working in a hospital. It is decided to sell the family house. Rosa visits her father at first only once every two months. Rosa shares a flat with a daughter of a family friend and later moves in with Flora Donaldson, whose husband is away on business. Rosa has a love affair with a Swedish journalist who is writing a book about her father. After three years, Lionel Burger gets a fatal infection and dies in prison. There is a wake and a celebration of the life of Lionel Burger. By then Rosa has moved in with Conrad in his little condemned cottage. This is spoken of vaguely and it is said that to people around them that Conrad is some sort of member of Rosa's extended family.



Pages 9-39 Analysis

In the beginning Rosa is suffering because she only 14 years old and though she is beginning her menstruation, she must deal with the fact that her mother is in jail. A blonde woman bangs on a door and demands immediate attention from the prison ward, so they can give things to the prisoners. This turns out to be Flora Donaldson, who is the nonpolitical friend of the Communist Party who is the rock of stability in a way in the life of the Burger family. Rosa is in her school uniform and bears some resemblance to her father, Lionel Burger. Rosa is calm and already has arranged to get out of school early. Several older women are also outside the jail including Flora Donaldson, who has an interesting role to play in the book. Although Flora is not a central character, she is someone who is in sympathy with the South African Communist Party, but enough outside of it to avoid being thrown in jail. Flora is standing on line to deliver goods to prisoner's now, and will be outside of a prison waiting 15 years from now when Rosa is in jail.

Rosa is under a lot of pressure because both Lionel Burger and Rosa's mother, Cathy are revolutionary activists and members of the Communist Party. Lionel Burger is the central revolutionary figure and the reader only learns about Rosa's mother later in the book. Lionel is careful when raising Rosa to not limit her to political people. He has many people come to his backyard in summertime to swim. This is where Rosa's brother Tony drowns at the age of 9. The lost brother Tony is a symbol of the tragedies that ordinary people can face, even if they are totally uninvolved in politics. Conrad meets Rosa and other family members at the pool and years later shows up at Lionel Burger's trial. Conrad is mostly apolitical, but has a certain fascination with the Burger family, or perhaps he is only physically attracted to Rosa. Conrad gets Rosa to come to his cottage which is slated for demolition within a finite time. Likewise, Conrad is a temporary chance for Rosa to learn how to give up politics and avoid her family's destiny. Conrad tells Rosa that she is eventually going to jail, and this foreshadows what happens to Rosa at the end of the story. Yet, Rosa cannot except a life that is totally based on individual concerns. She is tempted by such a life and tires to accept it, but this only leads to constant argument with Conrad.

While Rosa has an off and on again relationship with Conrad, her father is on trial. Lionel Burger is given the opportunity to speak after he is found guilty and is to be sentenced. He states that he saw black people being abused and oppressed as a student and could not avoid doing something about it. This is why he joins the Communist Party and seeks the end of racism and the capitalist society that perpetuates that racism. Lionel Burger is sentenced to life in jail, and after serving more than three years of his sentence, dies in jail. Rosa lives in the family house until it is sold after her father is convicted, then lives in a number of other places.



Pages 40- 70

Pages 40- 70 Summary

New Section, P. 40- Rosa thinks about her time with Conrad. She goes back to Conrad's cottage to escape her sadness over the jailing of her father. Conrad lies on the same bed as she does, but sometimes goes to the girl giving him Spanish lessons, and brings the girl home with him. One Sunday morning, Conrad asks Rosa why she is singing. He makes fun of her, because she grew up always worrying and thinking about politics. Conrad uses Rosa's car and sometimes takes her to the movies. One night Rosa and Conrad take a long walk, and walk past Rosa's former house. They talk about the Sharpsville massacre and Lionel Burger's reaction to it.

Conrad compares his life at age 12, when he was totally unaware of politics. His main obsession was that his mother is sleeping with another man, not his father. Later in his youth, Conrad becomes fascinated with electrical power. Sometimes he thinks of electrocuting himself or someone else. Conrad sees his personal independence in the ability to, as Jung said, to commit a blasphemy and to defy the rules. In another discussion, the black watchman over the area comes over to make a bet on the racetrack, with Rosa suspecting that Conrad cheats the watchman. Conrad tries to interest Rosa in sailing off on a yacht and other pleasures, but is convinced that she will end up in jail like her parents. Rosa defends her childhood and family as normal, while Conrad insists that she was brainwashed to fight the revolution, no matter what. Conrad says he is free and independent to be enraged and chaotic and his feelings are his sole possessions, and not formed by others. He puts on a tape of Scott Joplin music and he and Rosa dance.

New Section, P. 54- Rosa thinks back to when she and her brother Tony stayed with her aunt's family, the Nels. The children stayed at the Nel's farm and hotel during the "Treason Trial" when both their mother and father were on trial. Rosa is upset at the time, because her adopted black brother Baasie is not allowed to go with the other two children to the farm. Rosa spends much of her time in two storage rooms that had many fun things to play with inside. The black waiter Daniel that Rosa meets in the hotel bar has never been to Johannesburg. He makes jokes, but warns Rosa that he has to avoid being beaten by the white bartender. Finally, after about 5 weeks, Rosa is told by Aunt Velma that her mother is being let out of jail. Soon, Rosa's father is also let out and there is a big celebration at the Burger family house.

New Section P. 62- Again, Rosa thinks back to her life and thoughts when she was in Conrad's cottage. Rosa insists that she is not a prisoner of Communist ideology, but of her family's past. Her father, mother and brother Tony are all dead. As long as her father is still alive, her life revolves around her visits to him in jail. Rosa suspects that Conrad is ripping off the black watchman on the man's racetrack bets. She recalls her trips with the Swedish man Marcus, who is making a film about her father. Rosa and the Swede have sex that is very satisfying for Rosa on a beach in Capetown. For the Swedish man,



she is his chance to get close to the daughter of a revolutionary. Years before, Rosa was told by her family to pretend to be the fiancé of a political prisoner, Noel de Witt, which she does very convincingly. However, when Noel's sentence is over, he quickly grabs a phony Australian passport that the underground gets him, and escapes to England. This is another of her stories that she tells Conrad. Rosa finally becomes sick of her hospital job and her life in the cottage with Conrad. She tires of their mutual confessions of wrongdoing.

Pages 40- 70 Analysis

Conrad and Rosa have deep discussions about the differences in their reactions to the massacre of blacks at Sharpesville. The thing that outraged Lionel Burger at the time was that the blacks were shot in the back. That meant that the police had shot people as they ran away. There is a long meeting of the ANC at Lionel's house, where Rosa and her brother Tony got to meet survivors of the massacre. This is used as more evidence by Conrad that other people and the revolutionary movement control Rosa's life. At the same age, Conrad remembers a problem because his mother slept with other men, and he becomes sexually stimulated by this. Conrad says he felt guilty about lusting after his mother, but learned not to kill others or kill himself.

Conrad's part-time job is at the racetrack. The watchman waits for Conrad and refuses Rosa's offer to wait inside the house. Rosa can see that this black watchman finds it unthinkable to have equal relations between blacks and whites, or fears being caught by authorities in such behavior. Rosa fears that Conrad is exploiting the watchman as a typical white oppressor. Conrad could cheat the watchman without thinking, as part of his white racial privilege, at least to a small degree. Sometimes Conrad and Rosa visit Conrad's friends. One young man is building a yacht and planning to visit islands and end up in Australia. This represents the free life of people who have no politics and no worries for others but themselves. They live their life to experience and to seek thrills, even if they are fairly wholesome ones. Or in other examples they could be more degraded, as Rosa and Conrad sleep with others, while sharing the same bed. Rosa has her Swede and perhaps others, while Conrad has the girl who teaches him Spanish.

At home, Conrad cuts Rosa's hair and mentions that he expects Rosa to end up eventually in prison. To someone like Conrad it is obvious that Rosa will end up in jail unless she totally abandons her family's legacy. Rosa plays with doing this but can never fully do it. She rationalizes that people suffered for politics in her family, but ordinary people also suffer life's disasters. Tony died by drowning in the Burger family pool, not fighting the government oppressors. Conrad attacks the idea of immortality through belief in a cause. He favors irrationality and chaos rather than reason that forces him to abandon his sense of being free from restraint.

Rosa has had other opportunities to see how life is outside of the revolution. She remembers being with the Nel family and wandering around the surrounding town and fields. She goes to church on Sunday and meets country people. She sees her cousin



Marie Nel, who is also named after their deceased grandmother Rose-Marie. The irony is that at the end of the story, Marie ends up as a terrorist sympathizer in France, in a case with far less rational justification than anything Lionel or Rosa ever do.

Rosa has a torrid affair with a married Swedish journalist who is making a movie about Lionel Burger. This relationship is based on a sort of trade. Rosa enjoys the handsome and sensual Swede, Marcus and his love. Yet this love is based on the fact that she is Lionel Burger's daughter and Marcus can get information about Lionel by having this affair. Marcus showers Rosa with affection as his way of showing his positive regard for the revolutionary movement in South Africa and for Lionel Burger. This reminds Rosa of her role years ago as the so-called girlfriend of political prisoner Noel de Witt. She plays her part well, and makes herself sexually alluring. Rosa brings books and information to the prisoner, Noel de Witt. She gets her driver's license and drives to visit Noel de Witt, pretending she will be his wife, and in a sense prostituting herself to the cause. Rosa's relationships with men have a temporary nature. The same is true about Rosa's relationship with Conrad. Rosa leaves the cottage and Conrad, feeling that their relationship has degenerated to that of an incestuous one. She feels mostly pity for Conrad, who can never look beyond himself, and tires of the brother and sister like debates with him in their little bed in the cottage.



Pages 71- 108

Pages 71- 108 Summary

New Section, P. 71- Rosa thinks of the Nel family that tried to ignore the political situation and the judicial witch-hunt against Lionel Burger. At the farm there are no white girls with a black adopted brother like Baasie. Of course he cannot come there too. Rosa's full name is Rosemarie. Half of it comes from the communist revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, but the other half is from Rosa's Afrikaner grandmother, Marie Burger. Rosa's cousin's name is Marie Nel, and her destiny seems to be totally different than Rosa's.

New Section, P. 74- One day Rosa is out in a public square eating lunch near her new financial job. A homeless black man is lying in the grass and it is suddenly realized that he has died. The picture of the man who died in the square is in the daily newspaper the next day. No one at the square realized that he was dying until it was too late. Rosa thinks of her brother who drowned in the family swimming pool. She imagines saying to Conrad that death is a mystery. After the revolution is over there will still be death.

New Section, P. 81- Rosa thinks of her dead brother Tony and her disappeared adopted black brother Baasie. The cottage that she and Conrad lived in is finally bulldozed too. She thinks of old pictures she has seen of her parents years ago. Rosa's mother is pretty in old pictures from her trips to Soviet Russia. Later when Tony is found at the bottom of the swimming pool, Rosa's mother drags him out and tries to revive him unsuccessfully, but life goes on. Some of Rosa's mother's friends are people that the mother tries to help, and are strange. One woman brought into the household this way later becomes a witness for the prosecution and against Rosa's father. This female witness is not a close family friend, but one of the people who hung around the Burger house, like Conrad. For money or for fame the woman becomes a spy for BOSS.

New Section, P. 88- Some people want Rosa's help to write books about Lionel Burger. In one case, Rosa gives a man some basic information, telling him that Lionel's first wife is named Collette Swan, and they have one son before divorcing. In 1946, Lionel marries Rosa's mother, Cathy Jansen who is a General Secretary of a textile trade union. Soon after, the newly married couple is charged with helping to organize an illegal strike. The couple is later indicted in 1957 in the so-called Treason Trial. Their married life is filled with raids and arrests, and after 1950 the Communist Party is declared illegal. The biographer is interested since he has studied the court records involved. These charges are eventually dropped, and Rosa's family has a few years of peace.

New Section, P. 95- Rosa stays away from her father's old associates except for Flora Donaldson, who is not a Communist Party member. Later, Rosa visits the more involved Terblanches. Rosa sneaks into the back of the Terblanche house in the hope of not being seen by a police agent. Rosa's cover story is that she is visiting Ivy's daughter,



Clare. Dick Terblanche, Ivy's husband works in a machine shop and is hard of hearing. In 1930, Dick and Ivy were in Moscow with Lionel Burger. Then Lionel is with Collette, also known as Katya, his first wife. Katya now lives in France and has written to Rosa concerning Lionel's imprisonment. Rosa asks if the Communist party had to consent with member marriages. Rosa's mother was clearly much more political than Katya, the first wife.

Clare Terblanche comes downstairs and talks about getting an apartment for someone. Ivy and Clare work helping blacks get better nutrition. Dick and Ivy reminisce about Lionel Burger's first wife, who was in a theater group and acted out Communist themed shows. Ivy concentrates on getting out good lunches to her customers. Ivy and Rosa talk about things going on in the controlled Black homelands in South Africa. Rosa announces that despite protests she must go. As soon as Rosa gets in her car, Dick whispers to her that he hears that the Portuguese Army is in revolt, and will leave Mozambique and Angola soon.

Pages 71- 108 Analysis

Rosa thinks on the subject of death in general. The death of a homeless man in the park symbolized how someone can die from general conditions, without any personal heroism. The black ex-miner is poor and neglected. He cannot work anymore and he is allowed to die without any assistance. Business people eat, young people kiss and poor people rummage through the garbage bin nearby. Black men are sleeping on the grass and a bird sits on one of them. The onlookers suddenly realize that this black man is dead. Rosa has quit her hospital job and is working as an administrative assistant for a finance man, Barry Eckhard. No one in the public square knows she is Lionel Burger's daughter. The other people do not connect Rosa with the public and political way that Lionel Burger died.

Rosa explains to an imaginary Conrad that her family was really committed to the revolution. It meant something to her, even if she did not have that level of commitment. People suffered because they were reacting as concerned human beings and wanted to see justice. Yet, the Burger family also gets to experience senseless death, with Rosa's brother's death by drowning. Lily the maid says that the swimming pool should be filled up, but it is not. Life goes on, and people including blacks come to swim in the Burger house's backyard pool. This is the swimming pool and backyard where Conrad comes around and eats food off of Lionel's barbecue. Maybe Lionel Burger thinks that he can recruit Conrad to the revolutionary cause. This is also the place where the female witness against Lionel comes around. The female witness does little errands for Lionel that involves sheltering fugitives from the police. The woman later could claim that she had been unknowingly used by Lionel and the Communists. She can claim that she was deceived when she needed food and a friend and she enjoyed both in the Burger's house and backyard.

Rosa is born in January 1947 at a time when both Lionel and his wife are under judicial attack. Lionel Burger is charged with organizing an illegal strike of black miners as part



of his role as a leader of the Communist Party. He has already visited Moscow with his first wife, and made the transition to when the Communists first call for an integrated and unified South African Democratic Republic. The trial fails to show Lionel's guilt and the indictment is abandoned. However, soon after the Communist party is declared illegal and in Rosa's youth her parents are in and out of jail. Usually, one is kept out, so the secret police can keep them under surveillance and see who comes to meet them. Of Lionel's old friends, the most accessible to Rosa now is Flora Donaldson, who is not a party member. Flora invites Rosa to dinner and Rosa again meets some of her father's friends. Many have been in prison or have been banned from public coverage or communication. Being banned is a way to isolate a person. Ivy Terblanche cannot be a trade unionist, so instead she runs a factory lunch counter.



Pages 109- 143

Pages 109- 143 Summary

New Section, P. 109- Rosa thinks of Noel De Witt and his Portuguese mother with connections to the Frelimo Rebels in Mozambique. She thinks of Katya, Lionel's first wife who lives in the south of France. Rosa thinks of all the protests and rallies for black rights of the past 50 years. Even the Communist Party has heavily shifted towards trade union organizing. Rosa knows that there must be police agents that are waiting to see if she gets back into political organizing. Dick, Ivy, and others in the movement are waiting to see what she will do. Her father became radicalized when he was young and in the military after Hitler attacks Russia. Servicemen, both black and white try to work together in service organizations after the war, but this is stopped. Later, when Rosa is 12, there is the Sharpville massacre which demands to be avenged. New Section, P. 119- Rosa wonders what Conrad is doing. She knows that Conrad lives totally in the present, and ignores the future. She is attracted to his life, but cannot accept it for her.

New Section, P. 123- Rosa is confused by Clare Terblanche, and wonders if Clare has had a man yet. Clare asks if Rosa will help the movement copy leaflets on the finance company's machine where Rosa works. Rosa does not want to help copy leaflets because she is afraid of getting caught. She asks Clare, why does she conform to the expectations of her parents? Clare answers that any sensible person has to have a sense of decency and want justice for the black majority. Clare thinks she is breaking through but Rosa is still aloof. Clare admits that her lover is one of the fugitives, which is against what Rosa had believed about her.

New Section, P. 130- Rosa wonders if Conrad is sailing with his friends in a yacht from port to port. Rosa's Swedish lover writes that the film about Lionel Burger has been put on hold for now. The Swede requests that Rosa get him a native handicraft belt. Rosa goes downtown to a native handicraft shop, but finds that the way is blocked by a police barricade. She avoids the area, goes to a large store and runs into Marisa Kgosana. Rosa and Marisa talk about who is in prison and who is out. Marisa tries different facial creams as she talks of getting seasick on her trip to see her husband. Marisa gives Rosa instructions on how to get to a place where the two of them can meet, at Fat's Place. They have to be careful because Marisa is a banned person and Rosa is a so-called named person.

Rosa remembers crawling into bed with Conrad, like she did as a child with her adopted black brother Baasie. Years later, Rosa is with her Swedish lover Marcus and stops at a gas station on a trip near Botswana. There Rosa drops off a passbook for Baasie's father, Isaac Vulindlela, using the gas station as a pre-arranged drop-off point. Isaac gets the passbook, but this time is stopped at the border and jailed. Eight months later Isaac is found hanging from a belt in his jail cell. Rosa forces herself to not tell Conrad this story, because there is still the possibility that he is a police agent. The real revolution is not theory, but people and families that act and conspire together, including



Rosa. This is the class struggle in the life of the late Lionel Burger, Rosa and Marisa, to overthrow the racist regime.

Pages 109- 143 Analysis

Rosa thinks back to the time that she played the part of the fiancée to the political prisoner Noel de Witt. This allowed her to have visiting privileges and get information both to de Witt and from him. Rosa plays the part well, and reflects that prostitution in her house was viewed as a job created by economic and political conditions. Deep down Rosa is still for the movement but wonders if all the sacrifice of 50 years of effort has won any concrete achievements. There are trips to the Soviet Union in the 1920s, and organizing during World War II. Military servicemen try to use the common experience of fighting against tyranny as a basis to unite against apartheid, but these efforts are defeated by the entrenched Afrikaaner establishment. Rosa compares herself to the girl Clare, who is loyal to her family the Terblanches, and actively serves in the revolutionary resistance. At first Rosa mistakes Clare's obedience to her parents as a total lack of character or personal sexual activity, but this is false. Clare assures Rosa that despite the death of Lionel and the suffering of Dick and Ivy, things will get better.

Rosa compares her political life and stories even when she was young to Conrad's fantasies about his mother and electricity. Rosa wonders what defines Conrad's life as normal and her life as strange. In a sense, Conrad also seeks the drive of political goals, even if to argue against it and smash it. The Swedish lover, Marcus seeks Rosa not as a sensual thrill but as a political adventure. He offers his intense sensuality to her in exchange for information and an inner feel for the revolution. In contrast to this banality, Rosa is drawn to Marisa, who tries to look at humanity in a universal way. Marisa represents a unity of revolutionary white and black thinking, as opposed to the so-called only-black-thinking philosophy. Rosa knows that she can get into serious trouble for being a so-called named person and meeting with a so-called banned person, but she does it anyway. She is always drawn to these people and their struggle.

The reader is given the story of Baasie, Rosa's black adopted brother and Baasie's father in a very natural, organically linked way. Rosa is sad and feels guilty to know that her operation went awry, and Isaac Vulindlela is jailed and dies there. She realizes that she did her best and that she is at war with the apartheid regime. This story is important because it directly foreshadows the unity of black and white activists and their fate. Few whites die in prison and are lionized like the aptly named Lionel Burger. Many blacks die or are killed in jail with few people knowing their name.



Pages 144- 170

Pages 144- 170 Summary

New Section, P. 144- Later in the day, Rosa goes home and she is visited by a press photographer named Orde Greer. He is there to pick up Rosa to meet Marisa Kgosani. Rosa wonders if Orde is really loyal to the movement, but goes with him. Orde is slightly crippled and is a familiar figure from the trial of Rosa's father. On the drive there, Orde mentions a book that refers to Rosa's family, but Rosa is getting it already from Flora Donaldson. Orde drives to Orlando, a black township, as Rosa thinks of how Conrad would respond to her situation. The destination is Fat's Place, where Marisa is to come later. Black men, women and children talk and drink there. Rosa is acknowledged as the daughter of Lionel Burger, a martyr to the cause of freedom.

In her childhood, Rosa has been to rundown black townships many times. Though Fat's house is nice, the surroundings are not. Fats is planning to have the young men who fight under him box in Germany and America. Fats, a former boxer, demands that blacks exploit their skills in sports and try to get professional sports privileges. Marisa comes in and great Rosa, introducing her to Fats and his wife Margaret. Marisa is coming back from shopping. Orde wonders if they have been followed by the secret police, but Marisa says no, making jokes about all the places she has been that day. A young man, Duma Dhladhla attacks the notion that individual blacks can get ahead. Orde Greer objects to this idea of separating whites and blacks in the struggle. Orde brings up the case of Rosa's father dying in jail to fight apartheid, but this does not impress Dhladhla. An older black schoolmaster objects that the white people in South Africa will not disappear and have to be dealt with one way or the other. Marisa comments that her husband Joe does not want to see the black masses exploited under a white elite that uses some black bourgeois businessmen. Marisa wonders aloud if the black students will submit to the leadership of people like her jailed husband. Dhladhla still insists that blacks in South Africa have a special state of consciousness and that this does not include white radicals. Meanwhile, Rosa is holding the baby of Tandi, a young woman and the baby's father is apparently Dhladhla. Rosa later helps Marisa and the other women in the kitchen. At the same time, back in the living room, Dhladhla refuses Orde's appeals to think as if he were in Orde's shoes. Marisa talks of the police raid that morning where Rosa was turned away by a police barricade. Orde was there and took pictures. It is getting late, and Orde decides to drive Rosa and him home, though he is quite drunk. It is difficult to drive out in the broken streets.

Pages 144- 170 Analysis

Rosa thinks that she is neglected by the revolutionary movement, but this is not the case. By being friendly with Marisa Kgosana at the Department Store, Rosa pays the price of again being drawn into the orbit of revolutionaries. Orde Greer is sent to pick her up, and though Rosa suspects him of being a BOSS spy, she cannot refuse



because he is a messenger from Marisa. Rosa's life in the white section, which is at worse shabby apartments, is contrasted with the black township, where the area looks like a huge junkyard and the roads are poor.

In Orlando Township Fats is fairly wealthy because he is a promoter of professional boxing matches, but he still has to live in a dirty neighborhood. A young black man tells Fats that it is useless to get blacks into sports without first getting political rights. This idea may sound theoretically pure, but Fats is an ambitious man who wants to get as involved in the world of international sports as he can. Fats argues that his ambition does help the black cause, and being pure will not. He is answered by a young black man, Dhladhla, who says that they will only be co-opted as tools for the white elite. Blacks must decide for blacks, according to Dhladhla, and not trust even white revolutionaries.

Rosa thinks back to the large groups of whites and blacks that hung around the swimming pool in her father's backyard. Although this was not a genuine condition of racial integration, for the people involved it was a start and a breath of fresh air. Even social gatherings where whites and blacks talk and play together help in the effort to smash racism and apartheid. Various people talk about the police raids against Rosa's father and mother, which ended in Lionel Burger's imprisonment for life. Though the various radicals have a heated discussion, everyone seems to enjoy the experience, and Rosa is lucky to be able to go home in one piece. The roads are bad and Orde is drunk.



Pages 171- 210

Pages 171- 210 Summary

New Section, P. 171- Rosa complains to Conrad in her mind that he does not understand relations in her family. They were individuals, but worked together for the liberation of South Africa. Still Duma Dhladhla's rejection of all whites disturbs Rosa.

New Section, P. 173- This section is in the third person viewpoint and describes Rosa's relationship to the police and a politician. Rosa goes to visit prominent Afrikaners in the town of her father's trial, Pretoria. The secret police see her visit Mr. Brandt Vermeulen, a prominent "New Afrikaner" politician. In the meantime, the Portuguese colony of nearby Mozambique gets its independence and this may have given Rosa a reason to get out of the country. Perhaps she fears a new police crackdown.

New Section P. 178- Rosa drives past the site of the Conrad's demolished cottage to the house of Brandt Vermeulen. Brandt is divorced, middle aged man who is dressed casually. Rosa and Brandt sit down to chat. Brandt remembers being in Lionel Burger's house when he was 15 and was injured in his knee. He heard that Lionel was an open Communist, but Lionel is pleasant, looks at the knee, and talks about rugby. Rosa indicates that she is bored with her job at the financial office and would like to travel to Europe. She speaks of her parent's trips to the Soviet Union as the last time anyone in the family has been given a passport. Brandt considers helping her as a fellow Afrikaner, despite her late parents being leading Communists. Brandt tells her that she must be ready to go through a new police investigation and to be patient. Rosa visits Brandt again and suspects that now their conversation is being recorded. When Rosa returns to his home again, she is cautioned to not get together with other South African political exiles in her travels. She cannot seek publicity or meet her half-brother from her father's first marriage, in Europe. Rosa gets a passport that allows her to visit France, the UK, Germany and Italy, and soon after takes a plane out of the country.

New Section, P. 192- Rosa hears of an accident involving a yacht traveling in the Indian Ocean, and vaguely suspects that Conrad may have died in this way. She leaves South Africa despite her fears of being stopped at the last minute. Rosa thinks that Brandt's motivation in helping her is that he wants to show that he is broad-minded enough to let her out of the country, despite the added tension due to the withdrawal of the Portuguese from their colonies. While Brandt pushes dialogue between the South African White Nationalists and African ethnic groups, political prisoners are still being jailed and tortured by the police. Rosa wonders what her father's friends think when she is allowed out of the country. Rosa leaves in late April, after the white colonial regimes in Portugal's colonies are overthrown.

New Section, P. 196- Before she leaves the country, Rosa visits Flora Donaldson. There is a luncheon, and the ladies there discuss black and white relations, in a social context. Rosa must be careful because she is a named person on government lists. If it comes up, Rosa is to say that she is the visitor of William Donaldson, Flora's non-political



husband. Rosa and Flora have a quiet discussion while preparing food in the kitchen, talking about trivial matters. The lunch meeting is a racially mixed crowd that talks about general issues like road safety and personal courtesy. Black women raise issues like health care and meeting the family budget. A freelance white female journalist gets up to complain about the lack of politics in the discussion. Rosa discounts the journalist as an agent and police provocateur. Rosa drives three black women home and thinks about visiting Marisa Kgosani, but end up not doing it. One lady lives in an in-between area near small factories. Rosa sees that she is miles from Marisa and Fat's Place, and that the roads in the black areas are terrible. In this area black children run around and Rosa sees a donkey with a cart and driver. The driver whips the donkey and Rosa thinks of the donkey's pain, along with the pain of her father Lionel and other political prisoners.

Pages 171- 210 Analysis

While people had their political fights over Communist doctrine, they also had their way of acting as individuals. Lionel Burger lived his life in racial integration, and that was the basis of his politics. Rosa is upset by blacks like Dhladhla that discount Lionel Burger's achievement. She gets to the point that she thinks the only person solution for her is to get away from South Africa. This could be for a year's vacation, or it could be forever.

The scenes where Rosa approaches Brant Vermeulen have an incredible air to them. The reader is reminded that Rosa comes from a prominent Afrikaans family, and has the ability to approach other Afrikaans though they totally disagree with her. Brandt is somewhat attracted to Rosa, but is polite and shows her around his comfortable home, even offering her a chance to swim in his backyard pool. Brandt has a close friend in the Interior Ministry and Rosa hopes to use this connection to get a passport and travel outside the country. First, however, Rosa has to prove that she is trustworthy. She cannot be allowed to leave South Africa to then have loud anti-Apartheid press conferences in Paris, and London. Brandt respects Rosa's father, but wishes he had more faith in the system. Rosa explains that she just needs a vacation and will not cause any trouble.

Rosa does not tell any of her revolutionary friends about her plans to leave the country or how she is able to get a passport. She does not inform on anyone and commits no crime about the political movement except for abandoning it. Flora Donaldson is an old friend who is not a Communist Party member, but a useful so-called fellow traveler. At Flora's there is a lunch party that includes Mrs. Daphne Mkhonza, a prominent black businesswoman. She owns gas stations in the Transvaal black areas. The black women at the luncheon ask for handouts like spare furniture and beds for the sick. They know that they will be targeted if they get too political, and consider the white journalist there who attacks them to be a government agent. When Rosa drives black women home she drives near a black donkey driver who is whipping his donkey. Rosa considers that the black driver is also brutalized by the conditions of her country. As a white woman, Rosa thinks of getting out and ordering the black driver to stop his brutality to the donkey, but then decides to not intervene. She realizes that the bigger crime is to treat the black donkey driver like an animal.



Pages 214- 261

Pages 214- 261 Summary

New Section, P. 214- Rosa arrives in a plane at an airport in Southern France. A woman is waiting for her as she shows her passport to authorities. Rosa is in jeans and recognizes the older woman, who comes up and gives Rosa a hug. Rosa is in Nice, on the Mediterranean seacoast, with Madame Bagnelli, who is the first wife of Lionel Burger. Madame Bagnelli drives Rosa to her home in an old Citroen car and they stop to buy bread and salad for lunch. There are tourist sties around relating to the painter Renoir and also a Picasso museum. By now Rosa is 27 years-old.

Rosa is brought to the village, and the two women have a drink as Katya tells Rosa about the history of the village. Between the people with big money, and the near slaves, Katya manages to survive doing odd jobs, since her so-called husband, Bagnelli is dead. Bagnelli was involved in fixing yachts and sailing. Rosa thinks of Conrad and his yachting friends. Long ago, Katya met Lionel Burger and his friends like Ivy, Dick and Aletta, and they were all in the Soviet Union together. Rosa has seen photos of this group in the Soviet Union. The group of young communists from South Africa included Katya and Lionel and were there for a Communist Party Congress. Katya remembers missing meetings there because she and her friends were drunk.

In the afternoon the women relax outside in the sun. A young man, Didier comes by wearing white slacks and no shirt, showing off his well-built body. He is the well-treated young man of an older woman named Donna. Didier is very charming with the older women. Later, Rosa and Katya clean up and Rosa gives Katya a native-craft necklace from Namibia and other gifts she brought. The two women discuss how Rosa has never before been out of South Africa and that Katya has never returned to it. Rosa is given a light-filled room on the top floor of Katya's house.

New Section, P. 231- Rosa thinks back to landing in Paris and perhaps running into her cousin Marie, who works there on the Citrus Board. Rosa watches the people parade on a main street, including students and male prostitutes. She joins a crowd in the evening that enjoys a street performance. Rosa grabs the hand of someone attempting to pick out her wallet from her bag. It is a young black man. Rosa holds his hand, speaking in English or Afrikaans, but then realizes that she cannot speak the language there, French. She lets the man go, and he disappears into the crowd.

New Section, P. 235- Rosa feels out of place among Katya's friends, with their feeling of safety and their gossip. Donna's new young boyfriend Didier knows not to flirt with someone as young and attractive as Rosa. The group is swimming and the older women tire, and Didier and Rosa push on, coming on the beach alone around a headline. They are isolated and cannot be seen. Rosa cuts her toe a bit on the beach and Didier examines the cut, and then sucks the bleeding toe. Rosa sees this as a sexual advance, at least implicitly, and immediately discourages him. Rosa asks Didier



how he feels with an older woman, and is it unnatural. Didier keeps holding Rosa's foot, hoping to get her excited, but she ends up telling him about her father who died in jail. The two of them swim back, with Didier disappointed that she stopped them from having sex.

New Section, P. 244- Katya and Rosa pass the time, another day in the local market. Later, Katya works on refurbishing an old table and sewing a dress. Rosa hears that an old famous female singer named Arnys lives in the village. There is also a Japanese girl with a dog who lives with an older Englishman. The Englishman used to have yachts designed and built for him by Ugo Bagnelli, who had Katya as his mistress. Katya reminisces about her time with Lionel Burger, but regrets that she was not revolutionary enough for him. Rosa is beginning to learn French and visits the bar owned by the old singer Arnys. Rosa feels the sensuality of the place, with its mix of cute homosexuals and couples in romantic encounters. Katya tells Rosa about places going back to the Romans, like old olive presses. Rosa also talks to old Pierre and his wife Gaby Grosbois, gradually improving her French.

Pierre talks at the bar about how the French do not need to be nice to the Germans, because the atrocities of the war were only 30 or so years ago. Pierre and Gaby find it strange that the post-1968 young people are always threatening violence to get what they want. At the bar, a man that Rosa has seen in the village comes up to Rosa. The man, Michel Pistacchi, buys roses for Katya and takes Rosa out to dinner. Michel is a unionized bricklayer and dances with Rosa, but is not successful in wooing her. Another day, Rosa visits Michel's and his parents' farmhouse, and is given some fresh asparagus.

At Katya's house, Katya invites an old homosexual couple Georges and Manolis over for dinner and Rosa is also there. A woman drops by named Bobby who is the widow of a Free French officer. Georges has leg pains and it is agreed that Rosa should use her medical skills and give him a massage. Rosa mentions that many in South Africa want to celebrate when Frelimo takes over Mozambique, but they risk being arrested. Georges mentions that Rosa could make a good living in Nice as a physical therapist, even though she has no work permit. Later, Rosa and Katya stroll outside listening to the nightingales.

Pages 214- 261 Analysis

Rosa escapes South Africa for the quiet of a village outside Nice, France. After a brief struggle with a pickpocket in Paris, Rosa is able to totally relax at the home of Katya, her father's first wife. The talk of revolutionaries contrasts with the relaxed people around Nice, France who have nothing to fear and sit outside on their terraces. Katya's friend Alice comes by and they talk about what another friend is doing. The small village outside Nice, France is never given a definite name. It is a mythical place where women escaping from emotional stress, homosexuals and artists can come and live an easy life. The chief obstacles to pleasure are taxes and the necessity to do some work if one is not already rich. Katya does some work, like typing up the manuscripts of an old



novelist, but nothing too strenuous. One day, Rosa and Katya go to a museum. Another day, Rosa goes to the beach at Antibes with Katya and her friends. Rosa hears how Donna's former young boyfriend left her for a man, and stole her Alfa Romeo sports car, which was technically in his name. The reader is given a foreshadowing warning that crime and conflict can even invade paradise. Donna's new boyfriend Didier serves as a sexual temptation to Rosa, who is not ready to abandon herself to sensuality on such a low level. Some of these characters have direct symbolic value. Didier represents pure sensuality, without any social values. Another character, Arnys owns a bar. She is a formerly famous singer who represents a past that is largely forgotten, but that may have been more meaningful. In a sense, Arnys could represent Rosa's memories of her former revolutionary life.

Rosa is able to use her therapeutic skills on Georges, whose leg is injured. She is assured that she could easily make a living in the village, with or without working papers. Both Katya and Rosa have Georges lay down and Rosa works on the leg for about half an hour. Rosa is cooperating with Katya, and comes to look at Katya as a role model on how to escape politics and to live a personal life. They see people in their houses eating and cars and motorcycles pass. The nightingales are easy to enjoy in the summer. Katya was a man's mistress for many years, and soon Rosa is tempted to find a man as well.



Pages 262- 290

Pages 262- 290 Summary

New Section, P.262- Katya describes her rough life when she was pregnant and a member of the Communist Party in South Africa. She tells the story of her brief affair with Dick Terblanche, an old friend of Lionel Burger. Rosa thinks of her real and staged flirtations with men. Katya loses Lionel to Rosa's mother, the real revolutionary. Rosa starts meeting men in the village. New Section, P. 265- Rosa is talking to a man on July 14th, the French National Holiday about how she stopped a pickpocket once in Paris. Later, she meets the man again at a restaurant, dances with him and goes with him to have a drink. They go to the Arnys Bar and Rosa finds out that he is a teacher and a married man from Paris, Bernard Chabaliere. This teacher is writing a book and has plenty of time to have an affair with Rosa.

Bernard hears the record player playing a song sung by Arnys and is shocked to find out that Arnys is there. He jokes with Arnys about her songs concerning politics and love. Bernard and Rosa agree to meet at the Arnys Bar the next day fairly early. Rosa loves the bar and the sensual atmosphere. They discuss Bernard's thesis which was first to be about the old French peoples of the south such as those of Provençal. Later, Bernard decides to write about the French colonists from Algeria and other places that have to return to France, the so-called *pièdes noirs*. By then, Bernard knows the story of Rosa's father who died in jail.

Bernard is a French leftist and jokingly suggests that he could interview Rosa as Lionel Burger's daughter and split the fee from it with her after it is published. Rosa tells Bernard that she intends to be quiet in the village, and talks about how she was giving a passport. Bernard suggests that Rosa come to his room to see his thesis paper and to make love. They go there and make love amid the piles of academic papers. New Section, P. 279- Rosa's lover comes and sleeps with her often at Katya's house. Rosa, Bernard and Katya go on local outings together, with Rosa enjoying that there is no revolutionary dimension to her normal love affair.

New Section, P. 281- Georges and Katya are planning a party for Georges' boyfriend Manolis. Gaby Grosbois designs a dress for Rosa to wear for the occasion. Rosa and Bernard look out on the sea and think of traveling. At the same time, Katya's friends are discussing which doctors they go to and how it is necessary to examine one's breasts for lumps. Pierre Grosbois decides that he likes how Rosa looks in the dress that Gaby made for her. Rosa makes Katya think of her former husband Lionel, and his revolutionary passion.

New Section, P. 285- Bernard and Rosa compare their experiences of growing up. Bernard describes his condominium in Paris with his wife and two children. Bernard and Rosa enjoy walking around the village, going fishing and visiting museums. Rosa compares a painting by Bonnard from 1895 to one done by the same artist 50 years



later, both shown at the museum. Both paintings are of a woman and leaves and seem timeless despite all the wars, mass murders and political upheaval that occurred in this period of time. Rosa wonders what her life will be like if she goes to Paris. Bernard assures her that she will live near him and that he will see her every day. Rosa can get working papers, and have a new life in Paris.

Pages 262- 290 Analysis

Katya is disciplined by the Party for not going to meetings on Marxist-Leninism. Soon after Lionel leaves Katya for Rosa's mother, although in the official story it is said that she leaves him. Once Katya meets Cathy, the mother of Rosa, she realizes that she does not have a chance with Lionel. Cathy is the political co-conspirator that Lionel Burger needs, while Katya is more interested in dancing and the arts. Rosa begins to think about what sort of man she wants. She meets a brick mason, Michel who shows her his parents' farm. She does not get involved with this man, perhaps because it would represent a relationship that would tend towards marriage and something permanent. This is never said explicitly, but this is a possible explanation why Rosa rejects Michel and soon after chooses a married intellectual. Rosa is looking for someone flashy to have an affair with, like Katya's yachtsman, the late Ugo Bagnelli.

The man that Rosa meets, Bernard, makes jokes about his nervousness at flirting and asks if she had done something wrong in her native country. Rosa cannot explain to Bernard what it feels like to be watched and followed by the police as a routine thing. Bernard makes clear to Rosa that he is attracted to her and that he is free this summer to have an affair with her. He is also writing his Ph.D. thesis. Rosa could easily reject him, but is drawn to someone who is intellectual, yet free from a purely revolutionary identity. In a short time, Rosa is planning how she can spend her life in France as Bernard's mistress. Being a mistress can be viewed as a degrading station in life, but in a sense it is more free than being a wife. It is a relationship based on purely personal and not legal understandings. It is even possible in this arrangement for Rosa to have Bernard's child. Bernard says that Rosa can get help from the anti-apartheid activists in Paris in getting working papers. Perhaps Bernard could take a year off from teaching and go to Black Africa to do academic research, and then Rosa could join him there. Bernard is only 5 or 6 years older than Rosa, who is about 27, and he loves her very much. Ironically, Rosa who is the one who fights against exploitation of human beings, is about to be exploited as a mistress.



Pages 291- 324

Pages 291- 324 Summary

New Section, P. 291- The rich woman, Donna has a party for a distinguished English visitor named James Chelmsford. English speakers are brought to the party including Rosa and Bernard. A journalist there talks about how there is a break between the Western Leftists and the Soviet Union over the brutality revealed in Solzhenitsyn's book about the Gulag. There is a condemnation of the Soviets, but all political alternatives are also questioned and belittled. New Section, P. 300- Rosa thinks of the young Japanese woman Tatsu dancing. She thinks of walking in the village and meeting one of the lesbian women or another woman who will ask Rosa for help. Rosa cannot get this woman to tell her what the problem is. Rosa and the woman enter a house and suddenly the woman is calm and gossiping about trivia. Rosa goes back home and tries to tell Katya about what happened, but cannot. New Section, P. 302- Rosa wonders what will happen to her as Bernard's mistress, just as Katya was the late Ugo Bagnelli's mistress. Bernard admits that he will continue to occasionally have sexual relations with his wife. As Bernard's mistress, Rosa will settle down in the life of a mistress and give up working for a better future. New Section, P. 305- Bernard and Rosa enjoy a trip together for a few days in Corsica. Now Bernard is thinking of an expose to go to London and meet Rosa there. There is a flat in the Holland Park area of London that Rosa can use. Bernard has to go back to Paris in the beginning of September to start his teaching job and take his own children to school. After that he plans to join Rosa in London.

As Bernard prepares to fly to Paris, Rosa tells him that she loves him and that he has made new things possible for her. Ten days later, Rosa takes the train to London and arranges by phone with Flora Donaldson to use the London flat and even to get some extra spending money. Rosa leaves behind her light dresses because of the cold autumn expected in London. Bernard phones Rosa every day and tells her he is delayed by two weeks in his plan to join her. In London, Rosa registers at a student center and meets an Indian couple from South Africa. They invite her to a party, and later she goes to a meeting that is celebrating the Frelimo liberation of the former-Portuguese colony of Mozambique.

These Frelimo people speak English and many of them have worked in South Africa. A speech is made about the ANC and the fight in South Africa, and Lionel Burger is mentioned, along with a veiled reference to Rosa. Rosa speaks to someone who knew Lionel, and is greeted by an Englishwoman. Media people talk to Rosa and ask for interviews. Rosa eats some food and is looking at a few young men until she realizes that her one time adopted black brother, Baasie is there. Baasie talks about what he has done in the last few years, such as studying economics in Europe. They talk about Rosa's prospects for work if she stays in Europe. A TV reporter comes back and mentions that Lionel Burger acted as a doctor while he was in prison. Rosa gives Baasie her phone number and address in London. The rest of the evening Rosa talks to



other people, though she sees Baasie looking at her. Rosa mentions to a Frelimo man that he should meet someone when his delegation goes to Paris, referring to Bernard Chalabier.

New Section, P. 318- Baasie calls Rosa on the phone in the middle of that night. He announces that his name is not Baasie, but Vulindlela, meaning suffering land. Baasie's father died in jail too. Baasie does not like what Rosa said that night and all the talk of Lionel Burger. Many blacks in South Africa are getting killed, and Baasie does not care if as a child he was allowed to sleep in Rosa's bed. He was monitoring what Rosa said to other people and does not want to see her again. Rosa mentions about the death of her brother Tony, and that she was the courier who took a passport to Baasie's father the last time before he was arrested. Rosa accuses Baasie of wanting money from her and gets more and more outraged. She has not seen him since he was nine years old. Rosa finally ends the conversation and vomits in the bathroom. New Section P. 324- Rosa is hysterical and with difficulty falls asleep. She wakes up at noon and it is sunny, but this is the real end of Rosa's trip abroad.

Pages 291- 324 Analysis

There is a certain clouded symbolism between Rosa and the other women of the village. Rosa imagines the Japanese woman Tatsu dancing and then asking for help. Rosa who is a foreigner as well, also would like to ask for help but does not know from whom to ask it. Rosa notices that people are either used for their money, or attract other people with money because they are physically attractive. While Soviet Communism is attacked as brutal, capitalist relations on a small scale show their own brutality in the village. Bernard argues that the Soviets have betrayed socialism. Bernard and the Englishman agree that there are problems with all large structures, whether socialist or capitalist. Bernard remarks that despite Rosa's father's struggle in South Africa for the blacks, there is no Utopian solution. This type of conversation is typical of people that follow political events and have opinions about them, but have little or no intentions of doing anything about them. Their opinions are often excuses for parties, trips and other diversions.

Bernard talks of going to the island of Corsica where he says that tension is building between the native Corsicans and the French Pied Noirs who moved there from Algeria and other former French colonies. Yet when he and Rosa go there they spend days in sensual bliss. Rosa is ready to live the life of a mistress, though this is in a sense a betrayal of her needs and those of Bernard's family. However, this arrangement seems to be what will happen until Rosa goes to London. The trip to London is nearly accidental, because Rosa would like to use the flat there that she can arrange to use with the aid of Flora Donaldson. Flora again enters the story as the kind but aloof helper of revolutionaries, and arranges Rosa to use the flat by phone. London is not the village anymore, since it is not a sheltered environment. Rosa's reality is severely shaken by meeting her former adopted brother Baasie at a party. Rosa is in a good mood with the liberation of Mozambique from Portuguese colonialism by the Frelimo movement. When Baasie, or Zwellinzima Vulindlela calls in the middle of the night, Rosa is reminded of



the brutal reality of blacks dying in the streets of South Africa without recognition. While Lionel Burger is lionized, Baasie's father dies like a dog. Rosa sees that she has been transformed into a person like Katya, who has abandoned the revolution for sensual pleasure. This conversation with Baasie is similar to the one that Rosa hears from Duma Dhladhla long ago at Fat's Place in Orlando Township. However, then Rosa was part of the situation, now she is trying to escape. She abandons her plans for a life in Paris and returns home.



Pages 328- 361

Pages 328- 361 Summary

New Section, P. 328- Rosa changes her plans when the phone call from Baasie reminds her of the hard reality of racial conflict in South Africa. Rosa feels guilty about going along with Katya's disassociation from the struggle in South Africa. When she talks with Baasie her white liberal illusions are destroyed. Rosa tries to explain her reaction to Bernard over the phone, but Bernard belittles the whole incident. Rosa decides to return to South Africa, not only because of Baasie, but because of her family tradition, and even Brandt Vermeulen, the man who helped her get a passport. New Section, P. 333- Rosa finds out that the photographer Orde Greer is on trial for treason. Rosa attends the trial one day and sees that evidence against Orde comes from a BOSS wiretap. Orde Greer is said to have been trying to get back in the good graces of the Communist Party by recruiting a young liberal Army man to spy for the revolutionaries. The evidence against Orde is extremely weak, including a taped phone conversation which is subject to different interpretations, but he is found guilty. There is another newspaper story about Rosa's cousin, Marie Nel, who is said to have safe-housed a notorious terrorist in Paris, and this case is soon associated with Rosa and her family. New Section, P. 340- Rosa thinks of not even receiving a French museum postcard from a certain person, by implication her lover Bernard. Bernard is like the picture of a unicorn that never existed.

New Section, P. 342- Rosa is helping to rehabilitate children at a hospital. By 1976, more black children are victims of bullets. The funerals of black children become occasions for renewed protest. Rosa is visited by her old friend Fats Mxenge, at whose house she used to meet Marisa Kgosana. He delivers a message, and talks about the terrible situation in his African township. New Section, P. 346- There is presented a leaflet from the Soweto Student Council on avenging the deaths of children shot dead by the White police. The students are fighting for freedom and against the attempts by the White regime to distract or weaken them. New Section, P. 348- The parents of black children try to control their children, but the parents are also arrested. Rosa notes that the children are leading the revolution, talking to Lionel in her head. Rosa visits the Nel family, who are still stunned that their daughter Marie Nel has been charged with aiding terrorists. Rosa sees the searchlight installed along the road near the Nel family farm, and wonders if black freedom fighters will attack the area.

New Section, P. 35- By October 1977, many organizations and people have been charged with crimes as the situation heats up. Rosa is picked up and jailed without charges. Her lawyer, Theo Santorini suspects that Rosa will be charged in a case involving Marisa Kgosana. Clare Terblanche and Marisa Kgosana are jailed in the same cellblock, which is racially integrated. Marisa has a fine voice and sings freedom songs and some pop songs. A potential indictment against Rosa includes her activity at the Frelimo meeting in London, before her return to South Africa.



New Section, P, 357- Flora Donaldson is again visiting a prison and bringing things for the prisoners, this time including for Rosa. Flora rings the prison bell again after a long wait. The Chief Matron of the prison is fairly plump and intent on doing her job correctly. The Matron refuses to allow a cake to be brought in for a prisoner, or a bunch of flowers. Rosa cannot receive prisoner's visits then, but later Flora is allowed to visit her. Rosa is also visited by Brandt Vermeulen, though the conversation must be confined to family and general matters, under observation. Flora remembers when Rosa was 14 and visiting her mother in prison. Rosa also writes a letter to Katya, also known as Madame Bagnelli.

Pages 328- 361 Analysis

Rosa censures herself for implying to Baasie that he is also in London for a vacation, when he could be on an important, secret mission for the resistance. Rosa calls Bernard Chalabier and tells him about her chance meeting with Baasie and of course, Bernard belittles the importance of Baasie's bitter reaction to her. Rosa calms down after a few days, but realizes that she should be back in South Africa. This ends her relationship with Bernard and actually all communications with him, despite his pretense to be in sympathy with the struggle against apartheid.

At home, things have changed with the liberation of the Portuguese colonies and of Rhodesia. The racist Afrikaans establishment is already lashing out against fringe political figures with the trial of Orde Greer. From the newspapers, Rosa sees that the evidence against Orde is weak, with classical military texts in his apartment being used allegedly by him to plan dirty operations. Among whites, the most upsetting charge is trying to recruit the Army man. This young man changes his mind before actually doing anything, but such charges terrify the upstanding Afrikaans citizens of South Africa. William and Flora Donaldson argue if it is right for an Army man to betray the White regime. Such a sensational charge divides even the supporters of majority rule in South Africa. In a more stunning development, Rosa's cousin Marie Nel is charged in France with safe-housing a notorious terrorists. She was working for the South African Citrus Board, and the press soon notes her family relationship to Rosa. Marie Nel is from an upstanding Afrikaans family and is charged with these crimes in the haven of democratic France. Perhaps this is a comment by the author on the excess of political radicalism in the era after 1968. Protesters are seen as running wild in Europe by people in the village near Nice, France, without any clear goals.

Rosa thinks of a picture of a unicorn and ladies, with this being a clear reference to her former lover Bernard Chalabier, with his wife and mistress. There is music and a garden in a beautiful dream world, but the problem is that unicorns do not exist. Bernard's academic fantasies are merely an excuse to acquire a mistress and sensual pleasure. Bernard, like Rosa's former lover Conrad seeks sensual and personal pleasure above anything else. Rosa feels guilty for trying to escape from South Africa. She thinks of Bernard Chalabier who understood her as a woman, but not her family legacy as a part of the revolution. Meanwhile the situation in South Africa continues to deteriorate, with riots and youth protests happening on a regular basis. Fats, in the black township of



Orlando is afraid that the youth mobs in his township will soon burn out his car. He wants to drive his children to a native homeland where they can be safe and go to school, but does not know if he can do even that. Rosa meets her old friend Dick Terblanche, but his wife Ivy is already a fugitive. Soon there is a further crackdown and Rosa, along with her old friends Marisa Kgosana, and Clare Terblanche, is jailed. Rosa gets a sketch book and is soon using it to send messages to the outside world, with her Christmas card drawings of her friends in her jail cell. Again, the motherly figure of Flora Donaldson is called upon to bring goods to the prisoners, being the useful fellow traveler to the revolution.



Characters

Rosa Burger

Rosa Burger is the central character and protagonist of the novel. The reader sees her develop from a 14-year-old girl bringing things to her mother in prison, to an adult. Rosa is a conflicted individual who never becomes a key organizer, player or agent in the anti-apartheid movement, but can never totally disassociate herself from it either. Early, Rosa understands that love can be used as a weapon, just as it can be bought and sold, though with real consequences. She successfully pretends to be the fiancée of Noel de Witt, when he is a prisoner and needs someone to visit him and communicate back and forth with him. She is attracted to Conrad and becomes his lover, though at the same time her father Lionel Burger is on trial and about to be sentenced to life in prison. She hopes that Conrad can teach her how to become a person who lives only for herself and not for a cause, but cannot go along with him.

Rosa is too much a believer in the immortality of the soul and a person's action, even though she comes from a background that would be against religion. Rosa's number one act of manipulation and near betrayal is to go to the politician Brandt Vermeulen, to help her get a passport. Yet, even in this case she is careful to not go too far. She is only seeking freedom and escape from her situation. In France, Rosa goes to the village outside of Nice and gets a life of relaxation and ease. She finds herself mocking the people in their bourgeois concerns. Rosa takes Bernard as a lover, not for any particular reason than a sensual attraction. In London, her upsetting meeting with Baasie shocks her out of this approach to life and she soon ends the relationship and returns to South Africa. As the political situation in South Africa heats up, Rosa meets her fate to end up in jail and on trial like her father.

Conrad

Conrad is a person who selects Rosa, but is also selected by her to relieve her of her political burden. In the beginning their relationship is casual, with several sexual encounters. Conrad is a young man in his twenties who is a part-time student and part-time worker at a racetrack. He dreams of traveling around the world, learning Spanish and even having a Spanish teacher as a second girlfriend. Rosa does not see him for months and then decides to come back and live with Conrad in a cottage which is scheduled to be demolished. Conrad is a transient person who wants to go on a yacht and go island hopping among other things. Rosa's relationship with Conrad descends to the level of sibling rivalry as they have extensive arguments over the proper perspective of life. Conrad argues that a person must be totally individual, even if that makes him irrational. This mental contests between Conrad and Rosa ruins their love relationship and eventually Rosa leaves him. Nevertheless, Rosa in her mind still stays arguing with Conrad for more than half of the book.



Lionel Burger

Lionel Burger is a central figure of the book, who only appears as a living figure in the beginning of the book. Lionel is a leading figure in the South African Communist Party, which has been declared illegal since 1950. He and his wife Cathy are repeatedly jailed while Rosa is growing up. After the death of his wife, Lionel is brought up on charges on crimes against the state for his role in organizing for majority rule in South Africa. He is jailed for life and dies after being in jail a little bit more than three years. Lionel decides to devote his life to the cause of majority rule after seeing blacks oppressed while he is going to medical school. He is a doctor that has many grateful patients and many friends that come to visit his backyard and pool by his house in Johannesburg. Despite his advantages, he joins the south African Communist Party, becoming a founding member in a trip to Moscow. Though Lionel learns Marxist-Leninist thought and terminology, he is shown in person and in Rosa's memory as a person who primarily wants to help suffering human beings.

Katya, Madame Bagnelli

Katya, also known as Madame Bagnelli is Lionel Burger's first wife. Katya went to the Soviet Union with Lionel Burger for a conference, but is never a very good revolutionary. After Cathy appears on the scene as a real revolutionary and competition to Katya, she divorces Lionel. Katya leaves South Africa and settles in a village near Nice, France. There she becomes the mistress of Ugo Bagnelli who later dies, and she assumes his name. Katya is very kind to Rosa, who lives at her house for several months in the summer. Katya represents someone who has successfully abandoned politics and who at one point is Rosa's role model.

Bernard Chabaliere

Bernard Chalabier is Rosa's lover in the village outside of Nice, France. He is a French leftist who is a teacher or a so-called professor in Paris, France. He is staying at a friend's house while writing his professional thesis. He meets Rosa at a series of parties on July 14th, Bastille Day and becomes Rosa's lover. Bernard offers Rosa his assistance to settle in France in return for becoming his long-term mistress. He admits that he has no intention of leaving his wife and two children.

Flora Donaldson, William Donaldson

Flora Donaldson is an old friend of the Burger family. She is not a Communist Party member, but a so-called fellow traveler. Flora goes to the prison to bring goods to prisoners there when Rosa tries to bring things to her mother, and about 15 years later, Flora performs the same service for Rosa. Flora's non-political husband William tolerates Flora's support for liberal causes and lives away from her in Europe for half of the year.



Dick Terblanche, Ivy Terblanche

Dick Terblanche is an old comrade of Lionel Burger. He is on the trip to the Soviet Union to a conference in the 1920s and at one point during the war years is briefly Katya's lover. Dick and his wife Ivy and longtime dedicated Communist Party members and revolutionaries. They go in and out of jail, and are banned from meeting many other people or practicing certain professions, such as Ivy's former job as a trade unionist.

Clare Terblanche

Clare is the daughter of Dick and Ivy Terblanche. Unlike Rosa, who questions her revolutionary heritage, Clare is the obedient daughter who helps her parents Ivy and Dick in their political schemes. Rosa thinks of Clare as someone without a personality until Clare admits to having an affair with one of the people she is trying to help by finding them an apartment to hide in.

The Swede, Marcus

The Swede, Marcus is a film maker who has an affair with Rosa. Marcus is a sensual delight to Rosa and is blonde, handsome and erotic. Rosa helps Marcus make his film, but later realizes that this Swede is subject to the whims of other's opinions. He cannot go forward with his project until he receives financial backing.

Brandt Vermeulen

Brandt Vermeulen is a politician of the New Afrikaner tendency. Rosa goes to him to help her get a passport. His family like Rosa's is an old and respectable Afrikaans family. Brandt wants to transform South Africa, but on the basis of the whites as one of a number of black and colored nationalities. He and Rosa come to an understanding so that Rosa can get her passport, which Rosa largely abides by.

Baasie, Zwelinzima Vulindlela

Baasie is Rosa's one-time black brother who is raised with her until the age of 9. He then disappears when Rosa must go to her aunt's house. Later, Baasie shows up as Zwelinzima Vulindlela in London as an activist, almost 20 years later. He is highly critical of Rosa and rejects her. He makes her feel guilty about not going back to South Africa.

Didier

Didier is the kept boyfriend of an older rich woman named Donna in the village near Nice, France. Didier represents pure sensuality trading himself for money and comfort.



Though Didier tries to seduce Rosa in an offhand way, his attraction to her is physical attraction and an ego issue.

Pierre Grosbois, Gaby Grosbois, Donna, Alice, Georges, Manol

These are people who are friends of Katya in the village near Nice, France. Pierre and Gaby are an old funny couple. Donna and Alice are rich women. Tatsu is a Japanese girl married to an older Englishman. Georges and Manolis are a homosexual couple involved in the arts.

Marisa Kgosana

Marisa Kgosana is a black activist whose husband is held in prison for a long time. Marisa has some black friends who want to exclude white radicals from the political movement, but she is never like that. Marisa is a key figure who draws Rosa back into politics, or at least a concern for human suffering.

Fats

Fats is a black businessman and prize fighter promoter. He believes that practical black business relationships with whites will help liberate the black majority. He finds such a belief also convenient for his desire to get involved in the international boxing fights.

Arnys

Arnys is an old French singer who made records and was popular many years ago. She now runs a bar in the village near Nice, France. Arnys and her bar symbolize the politics and pleasures of the past.

Duma Dhladhla

Duma Dhladhla is a young black man that Rosa meets when she goes to see Marisa. Dhladhla is wary of any collaboration between black revolutionaries and white revolutionaries.

Orde Greer

Orde Greer is a photographer who brings Rosa to go to Fat's Place where Rosa can meet Marisa Kgosana. Later, when Rosa comes back to South Africa, Orde is put on trial for treason. The evidence in his case include abstract details such as his having a copy of military texts such as those by Clausewitz.



Tony Burger

Tony Burger is Rosa's kid brother, who drowns in a swimming pool accident while still young. Tony knows how to swim, but hits his head while diving. He symbolized the ordinary tragedies that can hit a family whether or not they are involved in political struggles.

Cathy Burger

Cathy Burger is Rosa's mother, who steals Lionel Burger away from Katya because Cathy Burger is a real revolutionary. The story begins with the 14-year-old Rosa delivering goods to her mother who is in jail. Cathy Burger dies of a disease before Lionel Burger is convicted and jailed for life.

Marie Nel

Marie Nel is Rosa's cousin and the daughter of Velma and Coen Nel. When Rosa meets her as a girl, she seems to be the pure girl untouched by politics. When she grows up she goes to France to work for the South African Citrus Board, and is charged with aiding international terrorists.

Aunt Velma Nel, Coen Nel

Aunt Velma Nel is the sister of Lionel Burger and is married to Coen Nel. The Nels live on a farm and also run a hotel in a rural area in South Africa. Aunt Velma takes care of Rosa and her brother Tony during a rare occasion when both Lionel Burger and his wife Cathy are jailed at the same time.

Michel Pistacchi

Michel Pistacchi is the first man that Rosa goes out with when she is at the village near Nice, France. He does not seem to be intellectual enough to rouse her continued interest.

Lily Letsile

Lily Letsile is the black family servant of the Lionel Burger family. She deeply mourns when Tony Burger, and Cathy Burger die. She also mourns when Lionel Burger is sent to jail, and has to be retired to a black South African homeland after the Burger house is sold.

Theo Santarini

Theo Santarini is the Burger family lawyer. He is not explicitly political but is committed to Lionel Burger's defense in a long trial. Later, Theo appears again as Rosa Burger's lawyer in an expected conspiracy case also involving Marisa Kgosana.



Objects/Places

The Burger House

The Burger house is located in Johannesburg, South Africa and is the home of, at one time, Lionel and Cathy Burger, and their children Rosa and Tony. After the conviction of Lionel Burger, Rosa is the only one left and the home is sold. At one time, Lionel Burger hosted lively cookouts in the backyard of the house where people also could swim in a pool. Many people come around the house and even stay there for prolonged periods of time.

The Cottage

The cottage is where Conrad lives in a section of Johannesburg. It is on an estate that is condemned for destruction for a highway, and Conrad is able to pay a very low rent. Rosa lives at Conrad's cottage for a fairly long time before she tires of Conrad and his excuses for not being political.

The Nel's Farm and Hotel

Rosa's uncle and aunt, Coen and Velma Nel have a farm and a hotel where Rosa stays for several weeks when both of her parents are put in jail. The Nels have a child named Marie, who later ends up working in Paris for the South African Citrus Board.

The Yacht of Conrad's Friend

Rosa and Conrad visit the yacht that Conrad's friend is building in his backyard. Conrad talks enthusiastically of going on a trip on this yacht, and the friend says that he will go island-hopping all the way to Australia. Later, a yacht is reported to have gone down somewhere in the Indian Ocean near Mauritius. Rosa thinks that perhaps Conrad is on this yacht and has drowned.

The South African Communist Party, the ANC, the Revolutionary

The South African Communist Party is the brains and central control of the fight for majority rule in South Africa. Members of the Communist Party travel to Moscow for a conference in the 1920s including Lionel Burger, Ivy and Dick Terblanche and Katya. The ANC is a more general organization also committed to majority rule. The Communist Party, the ANC and other people overlap, so they can all be called in general, the Revolutionary Movement, or Anti-Apartheid Movement.



The Village near Nice, France

The village where Katya, aka Madame Bagnelli lives is never named, but it is near Nice, France in the part of France near the Italian border and the Mediterranean Sea. Rosa stays there from April to September on her trip outside of South Africa.

A Banned Person, A Named Person

A banned person is someone who is not allowed to gather and meet with other people, especially other banned persons. A named person is someone on government lists who is not supposed to associate with banned persons.

The Smuggled Passbook for Isaac Vlulindlela

Rosa smuggles a passbook to a gas station where it is picked up by Isaac Vlulindlela, Baasie's dad. Later, it is believed that the authorities catch Vlulindlela while he is crossing the border. Rosa brings this matter up when Baasie calls her in the middle of the night in London, but even to Baasie it is obvious that it is not Rosa's fault, it was just an unfortunate occurrence.

Black Areas- Soweto, Orlando, the Transkei

Soweto is the famous black township outside Johannesburg that had a big student revolt in 1976. Orlando is the township where Fats and Marisa live. The Transkei is an outlying area that seems to be a black area where Lily, the Lionel Burger family servant comes from.

The Secret Police, BOSS

The Secret Police or BOSS are a pervasive part of South African life in this era. Rosa both fears and is certain that she is observed by BOSS both inside South Africa and also in places such as London, UK. Many times the secret police observes people and the records of this surveillance does not come out in legal charges until years later.

The Native Craft Belt

Rosa's former Swedish lover requests a native craft belt, which brings Rosa to downtown Johannesburg, where she runs into Marisa Kgosana. At the department store, Rosa buys a native made wristband, since she cannot find a beaded belt.



Fat's Place

Fat's place is a fairly comfortable house in Orlando Township. Fats is able to build a bigger and nicer house by bribing the building inspectors. Fats is able to have this nice house do to his successful work as a boxing and fights promoter. His house is still surrounded by the squalor of the township.

Brandt Vermeulen's House

Brandt's Vermeulen's house is a large house with a swimming pool in the backyard, in an old section of Johannesburg. Rosa visits Brandt here several times in order to make it possible for her to receive a passport. Though Brandt's house is quite nice, he is always informal with Rosa at their meetings.

Mozambique, Angola, the Portuguese Colonies, Frelimo

The Portuguese colonies after hundreds of years are liberated and made independent. Many of the former white elements in these countries flee. In Mozambique, the guerilla movement seeking independence is called Frelimo. Frelimo has the victory celebration that Rosa attends and where she meets Baasie again.

The Donkey Driver and the Donkey

In her trip to a black township, Rosa passes a black donkey driver who is furiously beating his donkey. Rosa wants to intervene to stop this, but remembers that the black man is also being brutalized by apartheid and the prevailing economic system.

Katya's House, Madame Bagnelli's House, Rosa's Room

Katya's house is a fairly small but comfortable house in the village near Nice, France. On the third floor there is only Rosa's room, which is comfortable with a large bed that seems suited for Rosa and a lover. This is Rosa's shelter that gives her a feeling of having an independent life.

The Pied Noirs

The Pied Noirs are Frenchmen that have settled, in some cases for generations, in French colonies such as Algeria. When these places are given independence, the Pied Noirs return to France. Bernard chooses to write his thesis about the Pied Noirs and their patterns of behavior after they return to the territory of France.



The Arnys Bar

The Arnys Bar is an especially romantic bar in the village, run by an old famous singer, Arnys. This is the place where Rosa has Bernard Chalabier take her and they meet drinking hot lemon juice as their desire for each other deepens.

Paris, France

Rosa is briefly in Paris, where the main event there is that she walks around and a young African man tries to steal her wallet. Paris represents a city that is much more business-like than the village near Nice, France. Bernard goes back to Paris to be a professor when the school year opens in September. Rosa is supposed to return to Paris and be Bernard's mistress before she changes her plans.

London, UK, the flat in Holland Park

London, UK is a city teeming with student activists and many expatriates from Black Africa, Mozambique, and South Africa. Rosa goes there early in September and by chance meets her long-lost adopted brother, Baasie at an event. Rosa is tempted to travel to London because she is allowed to use a flat in the London neighborhood of Holland Park. This flat is used by revolutionary activists and seems to be controlled by Flora Donaldson.

Corsica

Corsica is a French Island in the Mediterranean Sea. Bernard makes arguments that Rosa and he should go there so he can do research about antagonism between the Corsican natives and the immigrants there from Algeria, the pied noirs. Actually, Bernard and Rosa have a wonderful holiday there for a few days together.

The Sharpville Massacre

The Sharpville Massacre is the event of a killing of a large number of South African blacks in 1960. After the massacre, Rosa tells Conrad that there is a political meeting at her house about it. Lionel Burger is particularly outraged that the dead bodies are found shot in the back. This indicates that people were killed while running away, not when charging forward at police.



Themes

Motives of Suffering and Morality Compared to Motives of Ide

It is readily apparent that the author is not a big fan of Communist ideology. Yet in the context of the struggle in South Africa in the period leading up to the 1970s. There are more important issues, since many different kinds of people are motivated to stop the suffering caused by the apartheid regime. Some of the key players in the revolutionary movement for black rights are not Communists at all, as in the case of Flora Donaldson and of the photographer Orde Greer. On the other hand the South African Communist Party is the central organizing force against the apartheid regime in South Africa and is very important in organizing trade unions, black workers and illegal strikes. Some of the first cases against Lionel Burger and his wife are due to their trade union organizing going back to the 1940s. While, they are not likely to create a Communist regime, they are kept together by their ideology. They have an answer when South African businessmen proclaim that the apartheid regime is profitable and successful. In particular, the South African Communist Party is a direct counter to the so-called New Afrikaaners such as Brandt Vermeulen. The New Afrikaaners claim that the reorganization of South Africa can be done on the basis of the various Black, White and mixed ethnic nationalities of the country, not on the basis of individual rights. The Communists are for majority rule, but in the context of destroying and reorganizing all the business relationships and oppressions of capitalist South Africa.

Developing a Sense of Personal Identity

Rosa is a person who inherits a revolutionary identity from her father and mother. She has to decide if she wants to make this identity her own. Her lover and then pseudo-brother Conrad argues that Rosa does not have an identity and is just a brainwashed victim of her parents' politics. At a certain level, Conrad's ideas appeal to Rosa, because they give her the excuse she needs to stop being active in the networks of the Communist Party and the ANC. The problem is that this ideas clash with reality. Most of the people in the revolutionary struggle are decent people who have their own way of approaching the struggle. Rosa supposes that Clare Terblanche is a non-sexual woman who is totally absorbed with obeying her Communist parents, yet Clare is having an affair with one of the people she is finding an apartment for to hide. When Rosa is in the village in France with Katya, she questions Katya if marriages had to be approved by the Communist Party. While this is not really the case, any tendency in this direction is shocking to Rosa. The interesting thing is that when Rosa gets to London, she misses talking to political people from her country and other people interested in ending apartheid. If Rosa is not still interested in politics, she would have never met Baasie again, an experience which shocks her to go back to South Africa. Rosa realizes that developing a personal identity and having a moral desire to end suffering are two separated though related questions.



The Struggle for Freedom

The novel takes place in the context of the struggle for freedom of the black majority in South Africa. Rosa also must decide what she must do to obtain her own personal mental freedom. The White apartheid regime has overwhelming military and police power and is able to physically remain in existence. What undermines the apartheid regime most is that a significant section of the White population, particularly the Afrikaans-speaking section want to destroy the existing regime. Already it seems that many of the English-speaking Whites are not strongly in support of the apartheid regime. The key element supporting apartheid are the Afrikaans, or Boers, descendants of the Dutch colonists who first settled South Africa. When someone from a prominent Afrikaaner family like Lionel Burger becomes a leader of the South African Communist Party this is a serious matter. It is interesting that according to the book, the Communist Party is not banned in South Africa until 1950, the Cold War era. The Communist Party is portrayed as a tool of the Soviet Union, and indeed Lionel and his friend go to Moscow for Communist Party conferences. Yet, the tight organizational structure of the Communist Party is necessary to organize wider parts of the population to resist apartheid. This helps explain the paradox that while the Soviet bloc is suppressing people in Eastern Europe, in Czechoslovakia for example, the South African Communist Party is helping to liberate South Africa from apartheid. This is why Rosa, who does not seem to be interested in Communist ideology, ends up staying a supporter of the revolutionary movement.

Style

Point of View

The point of view has a fairly unique feature in using much switching from first to third person. For much of the text a first person point of view is used, while these parts alternate with other sections where a third person general observer point of view is used. A distinct shift is created by using a different person for Rosa to address her inner thoughts to in each of the three parts of the book. In the largest part of the book, Part I, Rosa, using a first person viewpoint, addresses her inner thoughts to Conrad repeatedly and explicitly, although Conrad is present in the book in scenes only from pp. 17 to 70.

In Part II of the book, starting on p. 214, many of the first person viewpoint statements and thoughts of Rosa are actually made for herself, although some are made to Katya, aka Madame Bagnelli. In Part III of the book, Rosa returns to South Africa amid a situation of rapidly increasing tension. Though her political involvement does not seem major, even working in a hospital in a black area, for black patients is in part a political statement in this time-frame. Many of Rosa's internal statements are directed at her father Lionel Burger, though not all, as the general level of confrontation increases.

Setting

The primary setting of the book is the nation of South Africa. This includes not only taking place in South Africa, but also the politics, economics, and race relations of South Africa. The Burger family house, where Rosa grows up is in a suburb of Johannesburg. This is a setting of some of the scenes and many of the memories of Rosa's life. This is the location of the backyard where Lionel Burger had his cookouts, and the swimming pool, where children played and Rosa's brother Tony drowned. Conrad's cottage is in another section of Johannesburg which is shown to be a long walk though a possible walk from the Burger family house. Later, after the Burger house is sold, Rosa moves to various houses and apartments in Johannesburg. Another location in Johannesburg is Brandt Vermeulen's house. The events of the book take place from the 1920s to 1976 or so. Lionel Burger and his wife and friends are described attending a Communist Party conference in Moscow. The various strikes and organizing campaigns of Lionel Burger and his second wife are described going from Rosa's birth in 1947. In Europe, Rosa first arrives in Paris, where she is almost pick-pocketed, and then is successfully sheltered in the village near Nice, France in Katya's house, and a lover's vacation in Corsica. Only when she travels to London, to stay at Flora Donaldson's flat in Holland Park does reality hit her in seeing anti-Apartheid meetings and her chance meeting with Baasie. Soon after, Rosa decides to return to South Africa.

Also, key to the story is Pretoria, the judicial center of South Africa, which is a short drive from Johannesburg. Here is where the courthouse is where Lionel Burger is put on trial and makes his speech before being sentenced to life. In Pretoria there is the jail



where various political and other prisoners are held, including Lionel Burger and later Rosa Burger. Nearby are various stores and cafes where Rosa goes to eat after and during the trial, and where she meets Conrad and forms a relationship with him. Outlying areas of Southern Africa are referred to and other places, such as Capetown, where Rosa cavorts with her Swedish lover. People are referred to that come from the Transkei, and Orlando and Soweto black townships. Political and other events involve Namibia and the Portuguese colony that is liberated, Mozambique.

Language and Meaning

The language of the book is fairly straightforward, but understanding the meaning of the different sections of the book can be difficult for some reasons. First of all, there are few tags used to solidly show who is speaking. The reader must take the trouble to figure out from the context who is speaking where there is dialogue. This is not always clear. In some sections it is deliberately impossible to tell who is speaking in all cases, as in where a conversation is reported of several people in the various parties described in the village near Nice. Perhaps this is done deliberately to show that all these people who pride themselves in putting their individual needs first are actually very alike one another. In any case, in the many two-person conversations in the book it is much clearer who is speaking. Likewise the book is not marked off clearly into chapters and sections other than into the general Parts I, II, and III. New sections are indicated only by the author starting a new page.

Another feature that makes the book read a bit slowly is that when there are first person descriptions by Rosa they are often in dialogue with someone else. Most often in the first section Rosa is in dialogue with Conrad including in a mental dialogue where he is not there, though not in all cases. In the second section, Rosa is sometimes in a mental dialogue with Katya, and in the third section, sometimes with the late Lionel Burger. As the author openly writes in Rosa's internal thought, Rosa is comparing her version of events and other people's version of the same events. Then in some cases of writing in the third person, the report reads like a police report. If the reader does not catch this, it may seem odd that the text has become very dry. This is the case where a section describes Rosa's visits to various politicians, until she finds that Brandt Vermeulen is willing to help her get a passport. The text seems to be a report of a police agent of BOSS on what Rosa is doing and where she is going.

Structure

The structure of the book poses some difficulties for the reader. The book is divided into three parts. In Part I that extends from P. 9 to P. 210, there is the story of Rosa's life before she gets a passport and leaves South Africa. In Part II, P. 214- 324, the story continues with Rosa in Paris, the village near Nice, France and in London, UK. Part III is from P. 328 to P. 361, where Rosa first decides that she must return to South Africa. She returns there, sees the political situation get more violent and chaotic, and then is thrown in jail. Outside of these three sections there are no formal chapters. New

sections are begun that can be anywhere from 30 pages long, the first section, to no more than a page or two.

There are other subsections in the book that mark off important periods of Rosa's life. For example there is a breaking point in the story where Rosa decides to leave Conrad and his cottage, because their relationship has become like that of squabbling siblings. This section ends on P. 70. Likewise P. 178 starts a new theme in the book when in a police report-like section, it is described that Rosa begins to visit politicians in the Johannesburg area. She is doing this to get help to obtain a passport so she can either leave South Africa or at least travel out of the country.

Another interesting part of the book's structure is usually no tags, or explicit markers are used to show which person is speaking to which, other than dash lines marking off a passage as dialogue. The lack of definite chapters and tag-markers for who is speaking help to give the book a stream-of-consciousness quality. While the development of the story is fairly clear, the book reads like a compilation of accounts from different people and sources.



Quotes

Flora pretended to cuddle me against the cold, but I didn't need her kind of emotional excitement. She talked about 'the girls' in there, and my mother was one of them.

Part I, P. 15

For nearly thirty years the Communist Party allied itself as a legal organization with the African struggle for black rights and the extension of the franchise to the black majority.

Part I, P. 26

Conrad went off some evenings for Spanish lessons and sometimes came back with the girl who taught him.

Part I, P. 40

The will is my own. The emotion's my own. The right to be inconsolable. When I feel, there's no 'we', only 'I'.

Part I, P. 52

Once a month I sat as they had sent me to take their messages and receive his, a female presented to him with the smiling mouth, the gazing yet evasive eyes, the breasts drooping a little as she hunched forward, a flower standing for what lies in her lap.

Part I, P. 68

We belonged to other people. I must have accepted that, too, very young, in that house. I became Noel de Witt's girl if need be.

Part I, P. 84

Someone with strong Frelimo family connections, he's close to Dos Santos and Machel. It's coming at last.

Part I, P. 108

Oh, bourgeois freedoms. It's not possible for us. We want something else.

Part I, P, 127

I didn't know whether Greer was one of us or not; perhaps he was. His bona finds was that Marisa had sent him.

Part I, P. 145

You know what you're talking about? Race exploitation with the collaboration of blacks themselves. That is why we don't work with whites.

Part I, pp. 158-159

The address upon which she had settled her intention, either because she had been rebuffed at the others, or because she had eliminated all but the most useful, was that of Brandt Vermeulen.

Part I, P. 174



It's understood you won't be giving any press interviews. You don't want publicity, it's not your style, no.

Part I, pp. 189-190

So a kind of vanity counted for more than feeling; I couldn't bear to see myself- her- Rosa Burger- as one of those whites who can care more for animals than people.

Part I, P. 210

The face was young and so black that the eyes, far-apart in taut openings, were all that was to be made out of him.

Part II, P. 233

The girl corrected her. -No, you said- you could see she was a 'real revolutionary'- . A precisely-imposed pause.

Part II, P. 247

-If you talk like that, yes. I say what I think will flatter you and make myself interesting. I like this. Don't think that.

Part II, P. 267

They looked at paintings. -In Africa, one goes to see the people. In Europe, it's pictures.-

Part II, P. 286

When I'm middle-aged I'll have with me a young son at the Lycee Louis le Grand named after Lionel Burger; he would have no need to claim the name of the Chaballier children.

Part II, P. 303

You've had too much to drink Zwelin-zima.- But she put the stress on the wrong syllable and he laughed.

Part II, P. 322

-Every morning I expect to find my car burned out. We've got no garages in our places.

Part III, P. 344

Flora reported that Rosa 'hadn't changed much'. She remarked on this to her husband, William. -She's all right. In good shape.

Part III, P. 360



Topics for Discussion

Discuss why Rosa Burger decides to only do minimal activity in the revolutionary movement in South Africa after her father's death. Is Rosa ever an important political person?

Discuss the motives of Rosa in disassociating with revolutionary politics. Does she think that the revolutionary movement is ineffective, or does she merely want to live her own life, without difficulties?

Discuss the system of apartheid and surveillance in South Africa. Rosa is not under criminal charges after the death of her father, but is still considered a so-called named person. She is not supposed to meet with a so-called banned person, and is not able to obtain a passport to go out of the country.

Discuss Rosa's romantic relationships with men. Is she initially in love with Conrad? What does the relationship become? Discuss Rosa's relationships with the Swede, Marcus and with Bernard Chabaliier.

Discuss the effect of being Lionel Burger's daughter on Rosa. What makes Rosa a part of the revolutionary movement in South Africa? What does she have to do if she wants to leave the movement? Is leaving the country the only way for Rosa to leave the movement?

Discuss Rosa's relationship and conversations with Brandt Vermeulen. Why is Brandt Vermeulen interested in helping her? What acts did Lionel Burger commit that put him outside of respectable Afrikaans society and what must Rosa do to make herself be eligible to receive a passport?

Discuss Rosa's relationship with Katya in the village outside Nice, France. Does Katya become Rosa's model for how to leave politics and create a new life for herself? How to become a mistress of a Frenchman?

Discuss Rosa's relationship with Bernard Chalabier. Bernard admits that he will never leave his wife, yet Rosa finds this acceptable. Why does Rosa abandon her relationship with Bernard?

What is Rosa's reaction to meeting Baasie also known as Zwelinzima Vindlela in London and when he calls her in the middle of the night? Is Rosa more upset by what Baasie says to her or what her reaction is to him? Why is Rosa so upset when other radical blacks, such as Duma Dhladhla says similar things, such as that black people have to have their own liberation movement?

Why does Bernard refuse to even write to Rosa after she returns to South Africa? The short passage about a unicorn and ladies is obviously referring to Bernard Chabaliier

and his ladies, his wife and mistress. Why does Rosa conclude that the unicorn, namely Bernard, is a mythical creature and does not exist?