

Cutting for Stone Study Guide

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Plot Summary

Cutting for Stone is the complex story of the Praise family, focusing on twin brothers Marion and Shiva as they negotiate the hidden histories of their past while working hard to make medical advances for the future.

The novel opens with Sister Mary Praise leaving India to travel to Africa as a nurse. The ship she is traveling on has an outbreak of typhoid, killing many of the passengers. As she struggles to provide proper medical attention, she meets and falls in love with British doctor Thomas Stone. When they reach their destination, Stone asks Mary to come with him to Ethiopia where he is contracted to work at Missing Hospital, but Mary refuses, since she has promised to take up a post in Aden, Yemen. When Mary is raped at her post, she travels to Missing and is reunited with Stone. For seven years the two work side-by-side but never profess their love for each other. Unexpectedly, Mary goes into labor with twins, a shock since she claims to be a celibate nun, but everyone around Missing knows that Thomas Stone is the father. Everyone except Thomas Stone, that is. He does not remember impregnating Mary because he was blacked out drunk. Sister Mary Praise dies during childbirth, and Thomas Stone goes mad with grief. He runs away from Missing, leaving behind his twin sons, whom he has no desire to raise, in the hands of Hema, the resident gynecologist, who happily raises the boys with her husband, Ghosh.

As the twins age, they often wonder about their father, Thomas Stone, and why he abandoned them. They love their parents, Hema and Ghosh, but Marion in particular, daydreams about his real father returning. Marion spends most of his childhood obsessing over his best friend, Genet. He is desperately in love with her and fantasizes about marrying her, losing his virginity to her, and raising a family with her. Genet betrays him when she is sixteen and loses her virginity to Shiva, Marion's twin brother, instead. Marion is never able to forgive Shiva for this betrayal and their relationship is severely damaged. In medical school, Genet joins a rebel party that has plans to overthrow the government, and she high-jacks an airplane. Somehow, Marion's name comes up in questioning and he is named as a suspect. Marion is forced to leave Africa forever and take up medical residence in America. He does not plan to ever see Genet again, and if he does, he plans to kill her. Shortly before Marion is forced to leave the country, Ghosh dies from leukemia and asks Marion, on his deathbed, to find Thomas Stone and tell him that Ghosh forgives him for his mistakes all those years ago. Marion is devastated by this final request, but knows he will fulfill Ghosh's wishes.

In America, Marion starts his residency at Our Lady of Perpetual Succor. There, he thrives under the influence of Chief Resident Deepak, whose calm manner and courageous spirit in the operating theatre creates buzz about his work. One of the surgeons who visits Deepak during surgery is none other than Thomas Stone, whose appearance throws Marion through an emotional loop. He tracks Stone down and then breaks into his apartment, trashing it. Realizing who the vandal was, Stone reaches out to Marion and the two meet for an awkward dinner where they discuss Sister Mary Praise. Stone proves to be a man in high distress who has never fully recovered from



Sister Mary Praise's death. The two carry on a strained relationship for many years. During this time, Genet returns to Marion's life and the two finally sleep together. Marion contracts hepatitis from her, and becomes terminally ill. Stone immediately sends for Hema and Shiva, who fly from Ethiopia. Marion hasn't seen either of them in over seven years. When it becomes clear that Marion will certainly die, Shiva proposes a risky surgery in which he donates half of his liver so Marion can survive. Although he is hesitating, Stone agrees to perform the surgery. Ultimately, Marion survives but Shiva dies.



Part One: Chapters 1 - 5

Part One: Chapters 1 - 5 Summary

The novel opens focusing on Sister Mary Praise, the mother of the novel's narrator. The unnamed narrator states that before writing this novel, he went to Madras in search of his mother's story. The following 500+ page story is what he learned.

Sister Mary Praise and her best friend, Sister Anjali, leave India for Africa after becoming nuns. While aboard their ship, many of the passengers come down with fever and fall deathly ill, including a rugged English doctor, Dr. Stone. Sister Mary Praise cares for him as best she can, and also runs between the various other passengers doing her best to care for them all. Slowly, it becomes clear to the reader that Sister Mary Praise is falling in love with the doctor, delusional with fever, as she cares for him, and even falls asleep next to his bed. It appears that Dr. Stone is close to death, but Sister Mary Praise prays desperately for his survival, and never leaves her bedside vigil. In time, he wakes from unconsciousness and begins to heal.

When Dr. Stone is well enough, he obsessively takes notes about the sick passengers and how the fever might have spread. Sister Mary Praise is devastated when she learns that Sister Anjali, her best friend, has succumbed to sickness. When the boat is cleared to dock, Dr. Stone blushing asks Sister Mary Praise to join him in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Although she desires to join him, Sister Mary Praise follows her orders from the parish and leaves for Aden, Yemen, feeling a heavy sorrow pooling in her chest at leaving Stone. In Aden, Sister Mary Praise immediately feels uncomfortable in her surroundings, and is forced to live in a room with a creepy landlord, who unabashedly looks at Sister's bosom, where the previous nun unexpectedly died. She considers Aden to be an evil city.

After an unknown period of time, Sister makes her way to Missing Hospital where she knocks on the Matron's doors, bleeding from between her legs. She calls for the doctor, and Dr. Thomas Stone arrives, blushing and crying at being reunited with an unconscious Mary Praise. It was clear, then, that Sister Mary Praise would never leave Missing again. Dr. Stone is known around Missing for his bravery, daring, and boldness in surgery, but all of these characteristics vanish when Sister Mary Praise, his surgical assistant for seven years, goes into labor. Realizing she is missing, Dr. Stone sends a nurse practitioner to see what's keeping Mary, but the probationer doesn't recognize the obvious distress Mary is in. Hours later, Dr. Stone investigates Mary's absence himself and finds that she is near death. In this moment, he realizes that he loves her, and always has. Everyone is shocked by Mary's obvious pregnancy and cannot contain their confusion. The Matron works feverishly to try to save Mary's life, knowing that the only doctor who may be able to save Mary is Dr. Hema, who is away from Missing on business. Meanwhile, Dr. Stone is too full of rage and hatred toward the baby, which actually turns out to be twins, killing Mary to offer any medical support.



Chapter Three shifts to Hema's point-of-view as she travels back to Missing from Aden. Throughout her trip home, she can not stop herself from constantly thinking of Dr. Ghosh, her best friend back at Missing. Ghosh is an unattractive but talented man, who is clearly in love with Hema. She thinks of him with terrible fondness and her airplane suddenly plummets from the sky. Meanwhile, Sister Mary Praise is bleeding out on Stone's operating table as he struggles to figure out how to save her. He completely disregards the infant stuck by his skull in Mary's birth passage, and desperately calls for a skull-crushing abortion tool. He fastens the pincers around the baby's head, and the Matron whispers a prayer for forgiveness. On the airplane, in the last moment of safety, Hema's plane rights itself, and she learns that the whole accident had been a stunt so the pilot would be given permission to make an emergency landing. She is so outraged that she threatens to cut off the pilot's testicles.

Part One: Chapters 1 - 5 Analysis

This section introduces many of the major players that will affect the lives of Marion and Shiva Stone, the protagonists of the novel. The events in this section set up the future life of the twins and the personal demons with which they will struggle as they age. Perhaps the largest mystery created in this opening section is that of the relationship between Sister Mary Praise and Thomas Stone. Their individual personalities have stopped them from expressing their true emotions for each other, even after seven years of working side-by-side. Thomas Stone's inability to process his emotions will be vital to Marion's struggle to understand his father and his father's abandonment later in life.

Clearly, Mary's life could have been saved had basic medical interventions taken place. The nurse practitioner, who returns later in the novel, was the first to make grievous errors, and Thomas Stone is so overwhelmed with emotion that he cannot think clearly enough to perform medicine. While Thomas' inability to save Mary is a crucial plot point, it is also foreshadowing for later in the novel when he is, again, forced to save the lives of his twins. In this case, Stone does not care about his children's lives and will stop at nothing to save Mary. He even goes so far as to attempt to abort the twins.



Part One: Chapters 6 - 10

Part One: Chapters 6 - 10 Summary

Hema arrives safely back in Addis Ababa. When Hema finally arrives back at Missing, she is immediately leapt upon by Gebrew, the hospital's watchman, who is desperately shouting something about Sister Mary Praise's blocked passage. Although she understands Gebrew's message, Hema can hardly believe what she's hearing: that Sister Mary Praise is in labor. Hema bursts into the operating room to find the bloody mess that is Sister Mary Praise. She is outraged and disgusted by the treatment Mary has been given in Stone's desperation. She quickly registers that Mary truly is pregnant, although she still cannot believe it. She also realizes quickly that Stone must be the father. She shouts at Stone that he is an idiot and why couldn't he have brought Mary in for ONE prenatal visit. Stammering, Stone claims that he didn't know Mary was pregnant, which Hema finds hard to believe.

Matron sits by Mary's side, weeping, as Hema performs the emergency cesarean section Stone should have performed hours ago. As she cuts into Mary's body, she realizes that there are twins inside, and that they are connected by the head by a narrow tube, which explains why Mary was unable to pass them naturally. Hema quickly removes the twins, and cuts them apart from each other. Neither of the babies is breathing, but Hema's attention is solely on Mary. The same nurse practitioner nun who failed to notice Mary's earlier medical distress also fails to notice that one of the twins is slowly coming to life. Meanwhile, Hema makes the horrible realization that she will not be able to save Mary's life, that she has lost too much blood, and that she's gone. When he hears this, Stone becomes like an animal. He slices open Mary's chest and frantically tries to restart her heart. He is weeping and calling out to God, but nothing can be done. Hema has now restarted both twins' breathing, but Stone refuses to look at them. He demands that Hema take them away, that he never wants to see them again, for they killed Mary. Hema shouts back that Stone killed Mary, and that these are his children. From the moment Stone storms out of the operating room, the twins become Hema's. And she is thrilled by her new role as mother.

Part One: Chapters 6 - 10 Analysis

Hema spends the majority of the drive back contemplating her life in Ethiopia - how she had always focused on her studies and her career while her family hounded her, begging her to get married. In this section, Hema's character and desires are flushed out for the reader, preparing them for the mothering role into which she will soon be thrust. Because the reader understands Hema's true desires in life, they can trust that the twins will be well cared for.

During her drive back to the hospital, Hema looks around the city, noticing with wonder, that it is clear that after many years of work, the Emperor's City is taking shape. This is

the first foreshadowing to the major theme of construction and government control, which will greatly affect the lives of all of the characters.

The narrator, the eldest twin, claims to remember pulling his brother by the heel out of their mother's birth canal when Stone attempted to attack him with the skull crusher. He also claims to remember the moment in which he and Shiva were separated. This idea of being conjoined at birth - essentially being one body - is very important to understanding Marion's relationship with Shiva, and his emotional betrayal later in the novel. The idea that he and his brother are one is a theme that cycles throughout Marion's personal journey.



Part Two: Chapters 11 - 16

Part Two: Chapters 11 - 16 Summary

During the time that Sister Mary Praise is dying on the operating table, Ghosh walks leisurely around the hospital grounds, unaware, contemplates sexually transmitted diseases, and visits a prostitute. When he returns home, Almaz, his maid, is crying outside as Ghosh desperately fears that it is because Hema has finally returned home married. Almaz breaks the news that Sister Mary is dead.

The next morning, Matron and Ghosh search all around the grounds and city in search of Thomas Stone but it is clear that he is gone, perhaps forever. Matron receives a mysterious phone call from the Emperor sending his condolences for the Sister's death. He also wants to know if anyone at Missing has treated an army general. This general allegedly was organizing a coup but fell ill. The Emperor has put a ransom out on his head. Immediately after, Matron receives a call from Eli Harris of the Baptist Congregational Church. This church has been sending Matron money to fund an educational seminar about STD's in Addis Ababa. Matron accepted the money but never created the project so she is forced to lie to Eli Harris. She contemplates her own frustration with her government's inability to fund the hospital when people all over Ethiopia are in desperate need of medical attention.

Soon after, a man shows up in Ghosh's office complaining of severe stomach pain. He is accompanied by three men in spit-shined shoes. After a short questioning, Ghosh explains that the man's intestines are twisted and that he is near death. He needs immediate surgery but there are no surgeons in the hospital - Stone is missing and Hema has taken a sort-of maternity leave, refusing to leave the twins, even for the most desperate patients. Ghosh quickly realizes that this patient is General Mebratu, the missing General about whom the Emperor called. Knowing that Mebratu will soon die, and perhaps for a shot at grandeur, Ghosh unwillingly agrees to perform Mebratu's much needed surgery. The surgery is a success and Ghosh is hailed by the General as a hero. Immediately afterward, Ghosh attends Sister Mary's funeral as she is buried in the grounds of Missing.

From the moment of their birth, Hema has been obsessed with caring for the twins. Ghosh is shocked when Hema calls for him in the middle of the night. He rushes to her bungalow and finds her in tears. The younger twin, Shiva, had stopped breathing. He is fine now, but Hema is beside herself with worry. Ghosh discovers that the infant has a form of sleep apnea that would have certainly killed him had Hema not noticed his first fit. He attaches an anklet to the baby and he and Hema take shifts waking him by pulling on the anklet whenever he stops breathing. They live as though they are married, with Hema even preparing meals for Ghosh to eat when he returns from work. When he tells her that he would like to marry her, Hema laughs in his face, just as Ghosh feared. He storms out of the house and says that he will not return. Realizing



that she is about to lose Ghosh forever, and that she truly loves him, Hema chases him down and agrees to marry him.

Part Two: Chapters 11 - 16 Analysis

The second section of the novel focuses on Dr. Ghosh and his nearly-obsessive love of Dr. Hema. Before Hema left for her visit to India, Ghosh wanted to shout, Let's get married! But he was afraid Hema would laugh in his face. They've been friends for many years and their relationship seems to function by teasing each other mercilessly. Whenever Hema travels home, Ghosh is terrified she would return married, but she never has. Because he feels unable to tell Hema how he truly feels, Ghosh occasionally sleeps with his maid, Almaz, who had once been a patient at Missing.

This section also highlights the financial strain Missing Hospital is under. This underscores the author's argument that not enough funding is made available to international hospitals, where those who need medical care the most must go without. The need at Missing is so great that Matron, a mother nun, would lie to a church family in order to receive funding. She delivers a tenacious speech, through which the audience can almost hear the author's booming voice, questioning why Westerners feel the need to send Bibles to countries where people cannot read - let alone speak English - when there are other needs much greater.

The nightly practice of monitoring Shiva's apnea goes on for two months, much longer than Shiva needs the anklet, but neither Hema nor Ghosh wants their nightly meetings to end, although neither has admitted their feelings to the other. Much like Sister Mary Praise and Stone, the two are desperately in love with each other but are too filled with pride to admit it to the other, making them emotional stand-ins for the twins' birth parents.



Part Three: Chapters 17 - 21

Part Three: Chapters 17 - 21 Summary

Marion remembers what life had been like for him as a toddler. His life is full of love, laughter, and time spent with his parents' household staff, including Rosina - who later gives birth to Genea, and Almaz. Marion remembers when Rosina held him on her hip and offered him her breast. She was singing the song "Tzita," a song that Marion would hold dear to his heart for the rest of his life.

Fast-forward six years, and the twins are known as a single entity: ShivaMarion. Everyone is surprised to learn that Shiva has stopped talking. No one knows exactly when it happened because Marion has always been the twins' mouthpiece. Although he is seemingly mute, Shiva is clearly bright. He can do complicated arithmetic after simply glancing down at the problem; he can draw beautifully; he reads complicated texts without trouble, although he refuses to read aloud. Hema becomes desperate in her guilt and forces the children to study almost non-stop. When she assigns a handwriting course, Marion loses his temper and shouts that Shiva, "won't speak till he's ready" (Page 194). He dashes out of the house and runs smack into Sergeant Zemui, the driver of Colonel Mebratu, whom Ghosh saved in surgery all those years before. Zemui and Mebratu are regular faces around Missing, and often come over to play cards and drink with Ghosh. Shiva also translates letters from his best friend, a soldier, for Zemui, who is illiterate.

Later, Hema and Ghosh take the twins into the city where they see the emperor driving toward his palace in the middle of the city. Many people gather to salute and cheer the emperor, but there is one poor, old woman off of whom Marion cannot take his eyes off. She approaches the Rolls Royce and manages to hook her fingers on the window, saying something to the Emperor. She is attacked by the bodyguards, kicked and beaten with their clubs. Marion watches in horror. This horror is revisited when young Marion discovers that Koochooloo, the dog that hangs around Missing, has given birth to a litter of puppies. He and Shiva are delighted to name and play with the puppies. On their way to school in the taxi, Ghosh orders Gebrew to tie the puppies in a plastic bag to the exhaust pipe of the car. When he realizes what is going on, Shiva attacks the bag, trying to tear it open, but he is too late. All the puppies are dead. Hema claims that it is population control, and promises the boys that Koochooloo will forget. Speaking for the first time in years, Shiva spits out, "Would you forget if someone kills me or Marion?" Everyone is shocked, not only that Shiva has spoken, but that he snaps off his anklet, the one he's worn since birth, and throws it in Hema's face.

One of the games that Shiva, Marion, and Genet play regularly is Blind Man's Bluff. Marion is intrigued when he realizes that it takes Genet much longer to find the boys than for the boys to find her. Then, when it is his turn, Marion is able to locate Genet, simply by her smell, in thirty seconds. This happens repeatedly, as if Marion is drawn to her, while Genet grows increasingly angry. She has always been a physical equal to the



twins, but now Blind Man's Bluff had found a difference. Later that night, Marion lies in bed feeling terrible for Zemui, who must trudge back to his wife and children late at night, even in the rain, when Genet appears by his bedside. She wants to know if Marion will play Blind Man's Bluff with her again. Outside, Genet binds his hands and blindfolds him, rendering him helpless, but he still manages to find her in a matter of seconds. She is hiding in the pantry and she is completely naked, weeping. She kisses Marion, and he feels her naked body. Suddenly, Genet's mother, Rosina, walks in. She demands to know what they're doing. Genet spits that it is no more inappropriate for her to take off her clothes for Marion than it is for her mother to take off her clothes for Zemui. Marion has a very difficult time processing this new information - that Zemui has been having an affair with Rosina, and that he is Genet's father - and he avoids him at all cost. Meanwhile, rumors are beginning to spread that someone is planning to overthrow the Emperor, and Ghosh begins spending time alone with Marion in the hospital, awakening a deep love of medicine in the boy.

Part Three: Chapters 17 - 21 Analysis

This section furthers the relationships between the twins and their parents, as each boy grows up to be a unique child. Although physically speaking, the boys are mirror images of each other, their personalities could not be more different. Both are successful, but Shiva's success seems to come naturally, while Marion must work harder for his. Also, Shiva is withdrawn and shy while Marion is outgoing, making friends wherever he goes. Marion struggles with his feelings of loss regarding his birth parents. He knows that his mother is dead, but he is fascinated by the mystery surrounding his birth father, Stone. Marion often daydreams about what he would do if Stone suddenly returned to Missing to claim him.

This section also foreshadows the dark rivalry and tension that will arise between the boys over Genet. One afternoon, Marion finds Shiva and Genet in the midst of a dancing lesson. As with reading and numbers, Shiva is a natural, and Marion feels betrayed by Shiva's elegance. Later, Genet's bold pursuit of Marion in the pantry foreshadows the way she will control Marion sexually for the rest of his life. The blindfolds she places over his eyes, and the fact that she ties his hands behind his back are symbolic of the way Marion will mature through life completely lost without Genet, unable to function on his own, completely controlled by her manipulative power.



Part Three: Chapters 22 - 26

Part Three: Chapters 22 - 26 Summary

On their way to school one morning, Shiva and Marion see a village man running toward the hospital carrying a lifeless child in his arms. It is clear that the man is about to fall over, that he will not make it to the hospital, so Shiva and Marion race toward him and reach for the child. Marion thinks that he will never forget how cold the child's skin feels against his, or the howling wail from the parents when they arrive at the hospital and learn that their child is dead. Throughout his childhood at Missing, Marion sees many disturbing images of village people who aren't able to get proper medical care and finally come to the hospital when their symptoms were completely out of control. The medical image that has the greatest impact on him, however, is the image of a barefoot girl and her father walking slowly toward the hospital. The girl has completely stiff legs and a terrible odor from the liquid that drips from between her legs. Everyone covers their noses and veers around them on the road, but the father defiantly meets each of their eyes. Rising from the hill as he watches them pass, Shiva walks straight up to the girl, takes her hand, and leads her toward the hospital. Marion knows in that moment that Shiva's medical future will be vastly different than his own.

Soon after, the family receives word that General Mebratu has organized his coup against the Emperor. Ghosh had been summoned to the palace when an old man had an asthma attack, and he had learned about the overthrow. No one has been injured or killed - Mebratu wants the event to be peaceful. Desperately, Rosina runs from the house toward the palace hoping to convince Zemui to come home, knowing that if a fight breaks out, Zemui could be killed. The streets surrounding the hospital are silent - no patients coming or going - until a march of college students takes to the streets carrying banners proclaiming that the people of Ethiopia should band together and support the new government. They attempt to convince the army to join in the revolt, but are met by the sound of rifles cocking. Still, the revolt starts, and Shiva and Marion are forced to lie on the ground covered by mattresses to protect them from the constantly whizzing bullets that fly through the streets and occasionally, through their walls.

Rosina has been gone for nearly two days when she finally makes her way back to Missing without Zemui. She claims that things are much, much worse than anyone anticipated. Matron arrives to sit with the family during the night, carrying a large handgun. While the children sleep, she tells Ghosh about the only man she ever loved, John Melly, who was shot and killed during a similar coup many years before. By the next evening, it becomes clear that Mebratu's coup has failed. Hundreds of soldiers have been killed, and the Emperor has put out a reward for Mebratu's head. The streets erupt with celebration, but inside the bungalow, the family's mood is somber. Marion has a difficult time reconciling how Mebratu and Zemui, two men he always admired, could be the bad guys. Soon after, Marion learns that both Mebratu and Zemui have been shot and killed.



Without warning, four men arrive in a Jeep and arrest Ghosh. They take him away like a common criminal, without explanation. The family waits outside the jail for days, hoping for some news, but they learn nothing. One afternoon, a very drunk soldier arrives at the bungalow and demands Zemui's motorcycle. He punches Rosina in the face and points his cocked gun at Genet, demanding the bike. The soldier gets on the bike but floods the engine, making it clear that he does not know how to drive it. Marion pipes up that he can help the man, give him instructions of how to drive it if he will take the bike and leave the property immediately. The drunken soldier agrees. Marion tricks the soldier into driving off the cliff, and is horrified to see that the man has survived the crash but is gravely injured. The butt of his rifle has stabbed him through the chest and he pleads with Marion to pull the gun out. Desperate and terribly guilty, Marion tries to help the man, but the gun unexpectedly goes off, and the soldier dies. Rosina slaps Marion hard when he starts crying, and tells him that he is very brave, a hero, and that he must never, ever, tell anyone what happened. Then she and Marion set out to bury the man's body in the hospital sewage hole.

Part Three: Chapters 22 - 26 Analysis

This section highlights Marion's coming-of-age as he is forced to protect his family during the coup and kill a man. The guilt of this murder will haunt Marion for the rest of his life. Around this same time, Marion and Shiva both have experiences with Missing patients that will affect the type of doctors they will become later in their lives. From the young girl with stiff legs, Shiva will become a world-renown fistula expert. From the dead baby, Marion will become an excellent general surgeon.

After the death of the soldier, Rosina begins to exhibit her wicked and dangerous tendencies that will continue to grow, manifesting themselves in increasingly abusive ways. The missing tooth is symbolic of Rosina's loss of happiness - physically and emotionally she will never smile again, without it being sinister.



Part Three: Chapters 27 - 31

Part Three: Chapters 27 - 31 Summary

When he is not reading medical books, Marion is searching for ways to reconnect with Ghosh, whether through prowling the hospital, or praying to his deceased mother, Sister Mary Praise, in the hopes that she could intercede on Ghosh's behalf with the prison. An hour after Marion makes his first request to Sister Mary, a letter arrives, clearly from Ghosh, reminding the boys to "Screw your courage to the sticking place!" The next day, Hema and the boys are allowed a quick visit with Ghosh in the prison yard. There, he tells them all about his arrest and how he was brought in to care for General Mebratu, who lived through his brother's attack and a shot to the head. Three weeks later, however, after he recovers in the hospital, Mebratu is sentenced to death by hanging. The night before Mebratu's execution, Ghosh returns home from prison.

The next day - the day of the hanging - the entire family makes a huge feast to celebrate Ghosh's return. The celebration is cut short, however, when an army truck pulls up and the soldiers demand to know what happened to Zemui's motorcycle. Marion's heart nearly stops beating. One of the men on the search is the dead soldier's brother. He searches the premises, including the tool shed where the actual motorcycle had been dismantled, the parts strewn throughout various storage boxes, but eventually leaves, convinced that the motorcycle, and his brother, are missing forever. Soon after, Marion hears the ululation of celebration coming from Rosina's bungalow. He enters to see Genet holding a bloody towel to her face. Hema follows and pulls the towels off Genet's face. She is horrified to see the cuts - two vertical slices at each of Genet's eyebrows - bleeding blood thick as tar. Rosina shouts that if Genet's father were alive, he would have been very proud. These are the markings of his tribe. Hema makes the decision then and there that Genet will no longer live with her mother, who is obviously losing her mind. Genet moves into Hema's bungalow that night. Living together, Genet and Marion make up but their cruel flirtation continues. One afternoon, Genet expresses her deep hatred for the Emperor and Marion warns her not to talk that way or she'll get her neck stretched.

Soon after Genet moves in with the family, Rosina decides to take her to the North, to meet Zemui's family. Hema is hesitant, but allows it. In the meantime, Marion meets Tsige, the prostitute who lives across the street from Missing. She arrives at the hospital one day clutching her dying baby. Feeling a strange connection to her, Marion sits with her long after the baby is dead, and acts as the woman's only support system. She will never forget Marion, nor will he forget her. In the days that pass, Marion finds himself missing Genet terribly and he feels as if nothing he does holds any meaning without her there. He wanders the halls of the hospital and eventually finds himself in the nurses quarters. He spies on the nurse practitioner - the one who checked on Sister Mary Praise when she was in labor - and watches her dance. Unexpectedly, she beckons Marion into the room and the two dance seductively together. When she realizes that it is Marion, she begins weeping, apologizing for her role in killing his mother. She offers



to have sex with Marion, who is fourteen, but he declines because he is saving himself for Genet.

Part Three: Chapters 27 - 31 Analysis

In the guilt of knowing that he killed a man, Marion is desperate for his father, his real father, Thomas Stone. Because he has no photographs of him, or any way of contacting him, Marion pushes these desperate desires from his mind and buries himself in Ghosh's medical textbooks. Marion has an inkling that Hema suspects him of looking at the books merely for their photographs of naked women, but she never says anything directly.

After, Genet confronts Marion, accusing him of telling Ghosh what really happened that day. She is furious, spiteful, and cruel, even though Marion is telling her the truth. Later that night, Genet sneaks into Marion's bedroom. He thinks she is coming to apologize for her earlier treatment of him, but she climbs seductively on top of him. She makes him swear that he will never tell the truth. Even though Marion agrees, Genet releases her bladder all over him, soaking his pajamas and sheets, as a warning, perhaps for the ways she will humiliate him if he dares speak the truth. It is clear, now, that like her mother, Genet has a sinister side and that she will take down anyone, including those who love her most, to further her own goals.

After she is marked by her mother, Genet's attitude begins to change as she slowly accepts her dead father's culture. Perhaps hoping to reconnect with him, even after his death, Genet adopts his beliefs about Ethiopian government, even though it is considered treasonous. These moments foreshadow Genet's later involvement with political terrorists that will forever damage Marion's life. Despite her bizarre behavior, Marion still holds onto his love for Genet, and even turns down sex with the nurse practitioner - the one who is somewhat responsible for his mother's death - because he is saving himself for Genet.



Part Three: Chapters 32 - 37

Part Three: Chapters 32 - 37 Summary

Rosina and Genet return from the North a few months after departing. Marion doesn't know how to feel. He is overwhelmingly pleased that Genet is back, but she seems different, and Rosina complains about how all the boys are chasing her. A few days later, while Marion and Shiva are walking home from school, they meet Tsige, the woman whose baby died at Missing - although by this time, it is a few years later - and she clearly wants to sleep with Marion as a way of thanking him. Marion refuses, much to Shiva's befuddlement. A few weeks later, Marion runs into the nurse probationer, who he had been avoiding since her come-on; she flushes when she sees him and thanks him for joining her in bed the other night. She says she enjoyed it thoroughly and would love to do it again. Clearly, Shiva has slept with her while she thought it was Marion. When Marion furiously confronts Shiva, Shiva admits that it was not his first time; in fact, he's had sex with twenty-one different women. When Genet finds out that Shiva is no longer a virgin, she is ecstatic and wants to know every detail, which makes Marion extremely uncomfortable. As a sixteen-year-old girl, Genet is curious about sex and sexuality, and describes herself as being "in heat." She begs Marion to sleep with her, which he happily agrees to do after they are married.

After Genet's return, life goes back to normal at the bungalow with all the children studying hard to pass their exams that will allow them to enter medical school. Only Genet struggles with her homework, as she is clearly overwhelmed by her own hormones. She begs Shiva to tell her details about his sexual escapades, and when Shiva obliges, she moans with lust. On one such occasion, Marion is almost overcome with desire for Genet, so he excuses himself to visit the souk, leaving Genet and Shiva to continue their immoral discussion. Instead of visiting the souk, as he told Rosina he was going to do, Marion aimlessly wanders the halls of Missing, contemplating what he should do about Genet. When he returns a few hours later, Rosina attacks him in the bushes, slapping and cursing him. She is screaming nonsense, wondering what will happen if Genet gets pregnant. Marion has no idea what she is talking about until she produces a pair of Genet's underwear, stained with blood and semen. Marion immediately recognizes that the scent belongs to him, but it cannot be his because he has never slept with Genet. Slowly, he realizes that the semen can only belong to one other person: his twin brother, Shiva.

Strange visitors come to see Rosina and Genet late that evening, and when Hema goes to investigate, she is horrified to discover that in retaliation for Genet's behavior, Rosina has had her daughter circumcised - her clitoris and labia have been cut off, and her vaginal opening has been sewn shut. Hema immediately takes Genet away from Rosina and whisks her away to the hospital where infection has already put Genet in a coma. Six days after being admitted to the hospital, Genet is allowed to return home, to Hema's home. Marion visits Rosina's bungalow one time, to pick up her clothes, and finds that Rosina has hanged herself. Years pass and Marion and Genet enter medical



school together. As time passes, Genet becomes less interested in school and frequently skips lectures and labs. Ghosh has proudly become one of the university lecturers in the medical department, and when Marion begins noticing a change in Ghosh's appearance, he credits it to the stress of his new job. One morning, Marion confronts Ghosh in the bathroom as he is struggling to breathe. He demands to know what is going on, and Ghosh confides in him that he has leukemia. He orders Marion to keep this information from Hema so that she doesn't start to treat him differently.

When Marion finally decides to check on Genet, he enters her dormitory room to find her discussing the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) with a known radical. Marion tries to warn her that even discussing a radical party like EPLF - of which Zamui was a member when he died - could get Genet killed for treason. She doesn't care, and certainly doesn't want to discuss this, or anything else, with Marion. In Marion's final year of medical school, Ghosh's health turns south. He is forced to tell everyone, including Hema, that he is dying. This revelation temporarily forms a bridge between the estranged twins - Marion and Shiva. Ghosh systematically calls each person he knows to his deathbed so he can relay a message to them. When he speaks to Marion, he makes his final wish: that Marion travel to America, reunite with Thomas Stone, and give Stone the message that Ghosh loved him like a brother and forgives him for abandoning them all those years ago. Two years later, Marion is forced out of Africa after Genet and three other Eritrean rebels hijack an airplane. Somehow, Marion's name comes up in questioning, and he is immediately named as a suspect. With the help of Eli Harris, the American preacher, Marion quickly packs up his belongings - including a copy of Thomas Stone's book - and flees the country. The last image he has of home is Tsige the prostitute's long legs stepping out of a cab.

Part Three: Chapters 32 - 37 Analysis

When she returns from the North, Genet does not show Marion any affection, but gives Shiva a lingering hug which infuriates Marion. This furthers the jealous feud Marion feels is brewing between him and his brother over women. When she returns, Marion blurts out that he's saving his virginity for her. Genet doesn't respond. Marion has constructed a whole fantasy about when they will get married and where they will lose their virginities. He has even clipped out a photograph of the exact hotel where he would like to take her. This shows Marion's naivete about Genet and her sexual desires. Her behavior with Shiva - both before and after she sleeps with him - shows that she doesn't care about making her first time "special" and she certainly doesn't care about love. Shiva appears to have the same moral stance on sex - that it doesn't require any sort of emotion - and he highlights that through his frequent visits to prostitutes. When Shiva sleeps with the nurse practitioner, this is preparing the reader for the revelation that Shiva would further betray Marion and sleep with Genet.

When he learns the truth about Shiva and Genet, Marion is overcome with grief, anger, and confusion. How could Genet have handed herself so easily to Shiva when he had been painstakingly waiting for her, loving her, wooing her? Although he is desperately hurt, Marion keeps a 24-hour bedside vigil for Genet at the hospital, never leaving her



side. When she wakes, she admits that Rosina believes it was Marion who deflowered her, and that she agreed to be circumcised if Rosina promised to never tell Hema. Marion does not know how to react to this news - is Genet blaming him for her circumcision?

At school, Marion doesn't think that Genet is being lazy, but he is confused by her behavior. He still loves her, and hates himself for that. During this time, Marion is confused about many relationships in his life, including his relationship with the increasingly belligerent and dangerous Genet. Additionally, Marion must cope with Ghosh's request to keep his cancer a secret. Marion gives Ghosh his word, and over the next few months, he realizes why Ghosh had been so steadfast about keeping Hema in the dark. He finds that he cannot treat Ghosh the same as he did before he knew about the cancer, and that he would give anything to go back to his previous ignorance. While this is transpiring, Shiva is making a name for himself in fistula research, working alongside Hema at Missing, and Genet is practically flunking out of medical school.

Ghosh's deathbed wish opens the plot to bring Thomas Stone back into Marion's life, as all readers likely suspected he would return. Marion is speechless and devastated, but knows he will fulfill Ghosh's final wish. When Ghosh dies a few weeks later, Genet does not return for his funeral, further highlighting her distance and cold shoulder for the family that loved and raised her.



Part Four: Chapters 38 - 42

Part Four: Chapters 38 - 42 Summary

Marion arrives in New York City after a harrowing journey out of Africa. He is surprised that no one rifles through his luggage or assumes he is a terrorist in America. It is not nearly as hostile as he expected. He makes his way from the airport to Our Lady of Perpetual Succor Hospital in the Bronx. He is expecting to visit the hospital for an interview, and is shocked when they hand him his contract. During his first surgery, he learns that Head Doctor, Popsy, will be scrubbing in. Marion is confused, then, when the scrub nurses and anesthesiologist insist that Marion immediately contaminate Popsy so he cannot operate. When Popsy arrives, Marion is too afraid to contaminate Popsy, and is aghast when he makes a sloppy slice through the patient, perforating the bowel. Popsy leaves in the middle of the surgery, leaving Marion to clean up the mess he made of the patient.

During one particularly difficult surgery, Chief Resident Deepak makes a brilliant save in front of a visiting doctor who has come to harvest organs from a dead patient. This doctor is impressed with Deepak's work and encourages him to visit Boston sometime, where he is working on a new study about liver transplants. Deepak is over the moon, thrilled to be recognized by such a successful and world-renown surgeon. When Marion asks who the doctor is, he is speechless when he learns that he just shared the operating room with none other than Dr. Thomas Stone.

Part Four: Chapters 38 - 42 Analysis

During his time at Our Lady of Perpetual Succor, Marion learns much about the hospital, further highlighting the author's arguments about healthcare in America. First, the reason why all the doctors who work at Our Lady are foreign is because none of the American medical students would dare work in such a dangerous neighborhood, particularly not when there are multiple highly-funded teaching hospitals in the area. These rich hospitals send helicopters to Our Lady to collect organs from dead gang bangers, but Our Lady makes no money, and receives no funding for this service. The hospital is under threat of being shut down if anyone learns that Popsy, the head doctor, has debilitating dementia, so the staff struggles to keep his disease under wraps. If the hospital loses what little funding it has, all of the doctors will have to restart their residencies at a new hospital, setting them back years of work.

Part Four: Chapters 42 - 48

Part Four: Chapters 42 - 48 Summary

Marion spends days prowling the library, learning everything he can about Stone and his medical career. He learns that Stone lives in Boston, and is world-renown for his work with liver transplants. In the weeks after his research about Stone, Marion makes a trip to Boston to see Stone in his element, and he is invited to sit-in on a seminar Stone is giving to the resident doctors. During the lecture, Marion raises his hand and answers a question, much to the dismay of the crowd. Stone looks intently at Marion, and Marion wonders if Stone has any idea who he is. Later, he finds Stone's apartment, breaks in, and trashes it. He leaves every door, window, cupboard, jar, box, and tube open. On the table, he leaves a bookmark with Sister Mary Praise's handwriting on it.

Two weeks later, Stone shows up at Marion's door. He is clearly distraught and uncomfortable, but this is nothing compared to Marion's overwhelming feelings of anger and abandonment. Stone awkwardly tries to make conversation with Marion, who wants nothing more than to make his father suffer. In an unexpected attempt to explain himself to his son, Stone tells Marion his life story. Throughout his life, Thomas battled with anxiety, depression, and alcoholism, although he is a brilliant surgeon. Many years after his mother died, he met Sister Mary Praise, and fell desperately in love with her, although he didn't know it until it was too late. And then she died at Stone's hand, and he fled from Africa, overwhelmed with grief and guilt. He has found it impossible to cope with his emotions, to process the devastation he had inflicted in his own life, which is why he had never returned to claim his children. A few months later, Stone returns to Marion's room and asks if he would join him for dinner. Marion hesitantly agrees. They dine at an Ethiopian restaurant in town, and Stone immediately cuts to the chase. The bookmark Marion left on Stone's table the day he trashed the apartment made mention of a letter Sister Mary had written to Stone. Neither man has ever seen the letter, and they don't know what happened to it.

Part Four: Chapters 42 - 48 Analysis

After Ghosh becomes ill, Marion stops wondering about Thomas Stone. He throws all of his energy into caring for the man he views to be his real father, Ghosh, so when Thomas Stone unexpectedly returns to Marion's life, he is blindsided and spends all his time researching who Thomas Stone is. Stone is world-renown, particularly for his study about transplant recipients' bodies recognizing foreign tissue from "self." To combat the shortage of donor organs, Stone has recently begun research to remove part of a living person's liver to donate to recipients. The work has only been performed on animals, but Stone is making progress toward experimenting with human organs soon. This information is critical foreshadowing to the way all three Stone doctors will be reunited in the operating theatre - when the twins' bodies must come together as one again, as



before their bodies had been separated. Just as at their birth, it must be Stone who brings them together again.

When he was a child, Thomas was raised by an amazing and devoted mother who did her best to protect him from an alcoholic and abusive father. When Thomas was young, his mother contracted tuberculosis and syphilis from her unfaithful husband. She was sent away to a sanatorium. A few months later, Thomas followed, after he too contracted TB. There, he was able to reconnect with his mother, whom he loved desperately. Despite his care for her, Thomas' mother, Hilda, died when an aneurysm in her chest exploded, spraying the walls, and a terrified Thomas, with her blood. Thomas was never the same after that, and swore he would never love another woman lest he lose her too.

Stone has one fleeting memory of Mary, in which he is on his knees weeping on the floor. Mary is comforting him when her blouse, soaked with his tears, begins to unbutton. He can recall the sweetness of entering Mary, and how he cradled her body as they fell to sleep, but after that, there is nothing, no memory of physically being with her. It pains Stone deeply that he has an absence of memories about Mary, and that this one memory he has is seen through the film of alcohol. Throughout his story, Marion listens intently, his hatred slowly boiling away. When Thomas leaves, Marion feels a connection to his father, but they do not carry out a further relationship. The gift Stone gives to Marion is not only the truth about his mother's death, but a generous donation that saves Our Lady's surgical program, ensuring that Marion and his friends keep their jobs.

When Stone wants to know if Marion has had the letter all these years, Marion thinks Stone had the letter. In this moment, looking at Stone's disappointed face, Marion understands his father's grief. He promises to write to Shiva to find out if he has the letter, but he makes no promises. Marion phones home, but no one is there - neither Hema, Shiva, nor the Matron has ever seen the letter. He writes to Stone and tells him the letter is forever lost. Stone does not bother to write back. Four years pass, and Shiva's face shows up in the newspaper. He has become famous for his fistula research in Ethiopia, and Marion is overwhelmed with jealousy. He has not seen or spoken to Shiva since moving to America, and he feels that his brother continues to threaten him, even from a continent away.



Part Four: Chapters 49 - 54

Part Four: Chapters 49 - 54 Summary

While at the Ethiopian restaurant with his father, the waitress tells Marion about another Ethiopian restaurant in Boston where the food is incredibly authentic. When he passes his surgical boards, Marion decides to celebrate by travelling there for dinner. When he arrives, he is shocked to discover that the woman running the restaurant is none other than Tsige, the prostitute from Addis Ababa, with whom Marion had sat when her infant son died. Tsige bursts into tears and greets Marion like a king. In addition to running the restaurant, Tsige is also the first stop for many immigrants from Ethiopia. She has seen many members of their old community pass through her doors, including Genet. Marion is appalled to learn that Genet is in America. For the first time ever, Marion tells Tsige about Genet's betrayal with Shiva. He doesn't know why he feels so comfortable with Tsige, but he has never been able to hide anything from her. Tsige weeps with the story. After, Tsige offers herself sexually to Marion. He greedily accepts, but Tsige suddenly stops. She says that she will always be willing and waiting for Marion, but she cannot be his first. After saving himself for all these years, it should be Marion's decision to whom he gives his virginity. She sends him away.

A few months later, there is an unexpected knock at Marion's door. He isn't expecting anyone, and is shocked to find that the visitor is Genet. A murderous anger fills him and he drags Genet into the house, throwing her into a chair. She collapses in a fit of coughing. Unable to speak through his fury, Marion goes through the motion of making her tea, but doesn't understand why he hasn't yet killed her. Genet has just been released from prison and had had nowhere to turn but to Tsige. Tsige told Genet she wouldn't help her until she visited Marion and apologized. Marion is incensed, but cannot bring himself to beat Genet since she is clearly very ill. Instead, he draws her a bath and puts her in bed. She begs him to lie with her, and against his better judgement, he does. Lying next to her, anger, not at Genet but with the passage of time that robbed him of his dreams, overtakes him. He forcefully has sex with Genet, but she does not object; she simply winces. The next morning, he notices blood all over the sheets. Genet's circumcision scars had ripped open as he penetrated her. Despite the violent night before, Genet makes Marion breakfast and the two make love slowly. And then as quickly as she came, Genet is gone, leaving Marion feeling like a fool, tricked and abandoned by Genet a second time.

A few weeks after Genet leaves, Marion falls very ill. He hires a private detective to track Genet down, and this detective learns that Genet had been ill with tuberculosis in prison. Additionally, she has Hepatitis B, both of which Marion has contracted. Soon after, Marion collapses, delusional and then unconscious, due to his illness. Thomas Stone is summoned to his bedside. When he realizes the gravity of Marion's medical condition, he sends an urgent telegram to Hema. She and Shiva arrive in New York on the next possible flight. Because Marion is clearly on his deathbed, Hema does not have the strength to battle Stone, who she has not seen in over twenty-five years. Shiva



is nonplussed by his father's presence in the hospital room. Wordlessly, he climbs into bed with his estranged brother, and places his head delicately against Marion's. When it becomes clear that Marion will certainly die, Shiva concocts a plan to donate half his liver to Marion, a procedure that could save him. Stone is hesitant to perform the surgery since it has never been done on humans before, but after hours of arguing and negotiation, he decides to risk the surgery. The hospital and the news crews rejoice when they hear that the surgery is a success. Both Marion and Shiva survive and are reunited in Marion's hospital room. Because of the tubes in Marion's throat, the twins are unable to speak, but they grasp hands with tears streaming down their faces, and everything they would ever need to say to each other is communicated. Shortly after, Shiva collapses with unexpected bleeding in the brain. The vessels that had once attached his head to Marion's, making them one body, have exploded in aneurism due to the stress of the surgery. He dies shortly after with Marion at his side. After his brother's death, Marion returns to Ethiopia with Hema and takes up residence in Missing, knowing he will never leave.

Part Four: Chapters 49 - 54 Analysis

In this section, many of the characters' stories come full circle. Tsige is reintroduced and she brings Genet and Marion back together. The meeting of Genet and Marion is complex and confusing. It is unclear whether or not Genet spitefully and knowingly infected Marion with the diseases that would threaten his life, or if it is an unexpected and unfortunate side effect of his lifelong obsession. Marion's time with Genet is also disturbing because he essentially rapes Genet in his bed, forcefully having sex with her, ripping through her circumcision scars. He doesn't seem to care that Genet is bleeding all over his bed, or that he is hurting her, because he is finally claiming what he believes is his. Despite his violent reintroduction to Genet, Marion cannot stop the fantasy of being with Genet forever, even when he learns that Genet had been in prison for attacking her husband with a straight razor. After this, her child had been put up for adoption and Genet claims that she died inside. Marion is familiar with this emotion - as if nothing you do with your life will ever matter.

Unlike Genet's previous sexual actions which tore Marion's family apart, the side effects of these sexual exploits actually brought Marion's family back together. When he falls ill, Marion's family, including his birth father, rush to his bedside. Whereas Shiva had taken away everything of value from Marion in their teenage years, as adults, he is able to give back the most valuable gift: life. In doing so, Shiva has to sacrifice something of himself, and he makes the ultimate sacrifice for his brother: he gives up his own life so his brother can live. It is highly symbolic that the blood vessels that once connected Shiva and Marion as one body are the ones to explode, ultimately killing Shiva. After Shiva's death, however, Marion feels like order is restored, that he and Shiva truly are one body again, and he even begins using the word "we" instead of "I" in this first-person narration.



Characters

Marion Stone

Marion Stone is the protagonist and narrator of the novel. Marion Stone enters the world when his mother, Sister Mary Praise, unexpectedly goes into labor despite the fact that she is allegedly a celibate nun. Unbeknownst to Mary or the medical staff, Marion is a twin, conjoined at the head to his brother, Shiva. The labor and delivery are too much for Sister Mary Praise, and she dies in childbirth. Thomas Stone, the twins' father, is so distraught that he abandons the boys, and Africa altogether, leaving the infants to be raised by Hema and Ghosh, two highly-skilled surgeons at Missing Hospital.

As the twins age, they often wonder about their father, Thomas Stone, and why he abandoned them. They love their parents, Hema and Ghosh, but Marion in particular, daydreams about his real father returning. Marion spends most of his childhood obsessing over his best friend, Genet. He is desperately in love with her and fantasizes about marrying her, losing his virginity to her, and raising a family with her. Genet betrays him when she is sixteen and loses her virginity to Shiva, Marion's twin brother, instead. Marion is never able to forgive Shiva for this betrayal and their relationship is severely damaged. In medical school, Genet joins a rebel party that has plans to overthrow the government, and she hijacks an airplane. Somehow, Marion's name comes up in questioning and he is named as a suspect. Marion is forced to leave Africa forever and take up medical residence in America. He does not plan to ever see Genet again, and if he does, he plans to kill her. Shortly before Marion is forced to leave the country, Ghosh dies from leukemia and asks Marion, on his deathbed, to find Thomas Stone and tell him that Ghosh forgives him for his mistakes all those years ago. Marion is devastated by this final request, but knows he will fulfill Ghosh's wishes.

In America, Marion starts his residency at Our Lady of Perpetual Succor. There, he thrives under the influence of Chief Resident Deepak, whose calm manner and courageous spirit in the operating theatre creates buzz about his work. One of the surgeons who visits Deepak during surgery is none other than Thomas Stone, whose appearance throws Marion through an emotional loop. He tracks Stone down and then breaks into his apartment, trashing it. Realizing who the vandal was, Stone reaches out to Marion and the two meet for an awkward dinner where they discuss Sister Mary Praise. Stone proves to be a man in high distress who has never fully recovered from Sister Mary Praise's death. The two carry on a strained relationship for many years. During this time, Genet returns to Marion's life and the two finally sleep together. Marion contracts Hepatitis from her, and becomes terminally ill. Stone immediately sends for Hema and Shiva, who fly from Ethiopia. Marion hasn't seen either of them in over seven years. When it becomes clear that Marion will certainly die, Shiva proposes a risky surgery in which he donates half of his liver so Marion can survive. Although he is hesitating, Stone agrees to perform the surgery. Ultimately, Marion survives but Shiva dies.



Shiva Stone

Shiva Stone is Marion Stone's twin brother. At birth, the two had been conjoined by the head, a medical complication that nearly claimed Shiva's life. During the birth, Shiva attempted to come down the birth canal but got stuck in Sister Mary Praise's pelvis. Thomas Stone desperately tried to crush Shiva's skull but, ultimately, Shiva was spared. Later, he learns that his skull plates had overlapped, giving him an extra-strong forehead. Throughout his childhood, Shiva struggles with a variety of medical issues, such as sleep apnea and muteness. He is a shy, contemplative child, who seems only concerned with himself and his own success in life. He is clearly a genius, but refuses to attend school past A-levels. He trains to be a gynecologist with Hema while Genet and Marion attend proper medical school, and become world-renown scholars of vaginal fistulas, a medical complication that affects many child brides in Africa.

Although Shiva is successful in his professional life, his severe betrayal of Marion as a teenager forever damages his personal life. When he had been sixteen, Shiva had taken Genet's virginity despite the fact that Marion had been in love with her, and saving his virginity for her since childhood. Marion had never been able to forgive his brother, and has no relationship with him for the seven years that he lives in America. The pair is reunited when Marion becomes deathly ill with hepatitis. On Marion's deathbed, Shiva makes the decision to donate half his liver to save his twin brother. This is the first time in medical history for a live liver donor, and Thomas Stone performs the world-renown surgery, which is ultimately a success. Marion lives, but a brain aneurism suddenly claims Shiva's life. The stress of the surgery ruptures a tangle of blood vessels leftover from when Shiva and Marion had been connected by the head at birth. Before he dies, Shiva is able to visit Marion's recovery room and the two reconnect after their years of tension.

Sister Mary Praise

Sister Mary Praise is the mother of Shiva and Marion. At the opening of the novel, Sister Mary Praise is a nun sent to Africa to fulfill her nursing duties. While aboard the ship, typhus takes the life of Sister Anjali, leaving Mary Praise all alone except for the handsome doctor she meets and falls in love with - Doctor Stone. After being raped in Aden, Mary Praise makes her way to Missing Hospital where she knows Dr. Stone is stationed. For seven years she acts as Stone's assistant, and eventually, he fathers her twins although he does not know of their existence until the day they are born. The trauma of the delivery kills Sister Mary Praise and forever devastates Dr. Stone.

Dr. Thomas Stone

Dr. Thomas Stone is the skilled surgeon who meets Sister Mary Praise on a ship bound for Africa and impregnates her at Missing Hospital seven years later. When Sister Mary Praise is killed in childbirth, Dr. Stone never recovers from his grief and forever blames the twins, his children, for Mary's death. He runs from Africa after she dies, completely



abandoning his children, and resettles in New York City where he becomes a renowned liver surgeon. Many years later, Stone is reunited with his sons, and eventually performs the liver transplant that saves Marion's life but claims Shiva's.

Dr. Kelpana Hemlatha / Hema

Dr. Kelpana Hemlatha / Hema is the highly skilled obstetric surgeon who works at Missing Hospital. On the day of the twin's birth, Hema is making her way back to Africa from India, her homeland, but manages to intercede on the surgery in enough time to save the twins but not their mother. With Sister Mary Praise dead and Stone out of the country, Hema has no choice but to raise the twins as if they were her own. Hema loves her new role as mother and does a splendid job of raising her sons, who always consider her to be their true mother.

Dr. Ghosh

Dr. Ghosh is the general surgeon at Missing Hospital, although he comes to this role accidentally after Dr. Stone disappears. With no other surgeons to perform a risky surgery on General Mebratu, Ghosh steps in and succeeds. From that day forward, Ghosh does not leave the operating room of Missing Hospital. After years of pursuing Hema, his one true love, Ghosh eventually succeeds when the twins enter their lives, and he marries Hema and acts as the father to Shiva and Marion. As the boys grow older, Ghosh is desperate to impart all his knowledge on them, and he single-handedly teaches Marion to become an excellent surgeon. When the twins are in their early twenties, Ghosh succumbs to cancer and dies, but not before making a deathbed wish for Marion to reunite with his birth father, Dr. Stone, to deliver a message of love and forgiveness.

Sister Anjali

Sister Anjali is Mary Praise's best friend from the convent in India. While traveling to Africa for her missions, Sister Anjali falls ill with typhus and dies.

Almaz

Almaz is Ghosh's maid. She first comes to Missing Hospital as a patient showing all the signs of pregnancy, but she is really growing a benign tumor in her womb instead of a baby. She is so devastated by this news that she refuses to leave the Hospital. Eventually, Ghosh takes pity on her and hires her as his maid. Before he marries Hema, Ghosh occasionally has sex with Almaz, who views this act as a sort of duty to her boss.



Colonel Mebratu

Colonel Mebratu first arrives at Missing when he is being hunted by the Emperor for allegedly attempting to arrange a coup. Even though he had been instructed not to perform any medical interventions on this wanted man, Ghosh saves his life in surgery when a twisted bowel threatens to take Mebratu's life. Mebratu is forever grateful to Ghosh and the two remain close friends, even when Mebratu returns to the Emperor's good graces and is appointed as Colonel in the National Army. Later, Mebratu's initial plan to overthrow the Emperor comes to fruition, but fails. Mebratu is shot in the head by his own brother during Mebratu's subsequent attempt at escape, but survives. Three weeks later, he is hanged in the town square for treason.

Zemui

Zemui is Colonel Mebratu's faithful driver, who often drives a BMW motorcycle and parks it outside Missing Hospital. Although he is married with three children, Zemui is having an affair with Rosina, and is the father of Genet. Because he is illiterate, Zemui asks Marion to read and write all his correspondences, which Marion happily does until he learns about Zemui's relationship with Rosina and loses all respect for the man. Zemui dies during the rebel uprising to overthrow the Emperor, leaving Genet fatherless.

Tsige

Tsige is the prostitute who lives across the street from Missing Hospital throughout Marion's childhood. When Marion is a teenager, Tsige arrives at the hospital clutching her dying baby. Feeling a strange connection to her, Marion stays with Tsige, offering her support after her baby dies. Tsige never forgets Marion's kindness and prays for him every night. Later, when Marion reaches New York City, he is reunited with Tsige at The Queen of Sheba, the Ethiopian restaurant Tsige runs. At their reunification, Tsige offers to have sex with Marion, but recants her offer when she learns that Marion is still a virgin. It is Tsige who reintroduces Marion to Genet.

Rosina

Rosina is one of the nannies hired by Hema and Ghosh to help raise Shiva and Marion when they are infants. Although she does a wonderful job with them when they are young, Rosina, who is also Genet's mother, begins to lose her mind after her lover, Zemui, is killed in the coup. Eventually, Rosina succumbs to her guilt and depression and hangs herself in the bungalow.



Genet

Genet is Marion and Shiva's best friend when they are growing up and is practically their sister. Genet comes from a troubled and somewhat poor background of which she is ashamed in comparison to the twin's upbringing. When she learns that Zemui is her father, Genet is at first disgusted, but after Zemui dies, she feels a strong connection to him and the freedom for which he had been fighting. She dedicates her life to overthrowing the Emperor and even takes part in hijacking a plane. All throughout his life, Marion has been in love with Genet and saves his virginity for her even though she spites him at every turn. Genet loses her virginity to Shiva, the deepest wound she could inflict on Marion, and continues to torment him throughout his adult life. In New York, Genet seeks Marion out and he finally loses his virginity to her, contracting hepatitis from her in the process.

Genet had arrived in New York feeling as if she is better and more important than any other immigrant. Because of this mindset, she finds it very difficult to adjust to life in the city. She works as a dishwasher and eventually gets married. When she suspects that her husband is cheating on her, she attacks him with a razor and is sent to prison, losing both her children in the process. After this, Genet feels dead inside. It is unclear whether or not Genet had known she had tuberculosis and hepatitis both of which she passes to Marion during their sexual escapades in New York, or whether or not she has ever loved him. She is a complex and cruel character who eventually dies of tuberculosis complications in prison, finally freeing Marion from her grip.

The Nurse Practitioner

The Nurse Practitioner is the young nun at the opening of the novel who is sent to learn her nursing duties at Missing Hospital. She is very good at memorizing facts from books, but is terrible at relating that information to actual patient care. She is the nurse sent to check on Sister Mary Praise when she first begins her labor, and thus misses the signs of distress that could have saved Sister Mary's life. Also, when the twins are born, the nurse practitioner fails to notice that they are still alive, and forgets to check for their breathing, almost killing them as well. Later, when the twins are older, she offers to sleep with Marion as a way of asking for forgiveness for killing his mother. She accidentally sleeps with Shiva instead.



Objects/Places

Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa is the capital of Ethiopia, and the major setting of the novel. Throughout the course of the story, the government in Addis Ababa undergoes major political change as the Eritrean Liberation Movement struggles to overthrow the Emperor, to much political and personal devastation in the city.

Missing Hospital

Missing Hospital is the hospital where Marion and Shiva are born, and where they grow up. This hospital is the only hospital in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. There are only two doctors who work here, Dr. Hema and Dr. Ghosh, after Dr. Stone unexpectedly abandons the hospital in the wake of Sister Mary Praise's death.

The Calangute

The Calangute is the ship that Sister Mary Praise takes from India to Africa. It is aboard this ship that many passengers fall ill with typhus and die, including her best friend, Sister Anjali. It is also aboard this ship that Mary first meets Dr. Thomas Stone while nursing him back from near death from the typhus.

Aden

Aden is the city in Yemen where Sister Mary Praise had been meant to travel after leaving her convent in India. Upon arrival, Mary realizes that Aden is a city full of sin, and she feels extremely uncomfortable there. After an unknown amount of time, she leaves, bleeding from between her legs, and sets out to find Dr. Stone in Ethiopia.

The Expedient Operator

The Expedient Operator is the book about surgery that Dr. Stone pens while working in Ethiopia. He writes all the surgical guidelines while Sister Mary Praise, his constant partner, draws all the diagrams.

Tizita

Tizita is the song that Almaz sings to Marion when he is a toddler. He has very fond memories of this song, particularly because Almaz had been singing it as she held Marion on her hip and handed him her breast, which is the first gift Marion ever



remembers receiving. He carries this song with him, on cassette tape in various versions, wherever he goes in the world.

The BMW Motorcycle

The BMW motorcycle is what Sergeant Zemui drives to Missing Hospital while he is having an affair with Rosina. Marion has always admired the motorcycle and the man driving it, but his admiration wanes when he learns about the affair. After Sergeant Zemui dies, a rebel soldier comes to steal the motorcycle, threatening the family. Claiming that he is the only one who can drive the motorcycle, Marion gives the soldier driving instructions that trick him into driving off the cliff, killing him.

Corrigans Water Hammer Pulse

Corrigans Water Hammer Pulse is the first pulse that Marion feels as a teenager working in Missing Hospital. To him, it feels like water slapping against the skin. Feeling this pulse is what first starts Marion's lifelong love of medicine.

Kerchele

Kerchele is the jail where Ghosh is held during the uprising to overthrow the Emperor. The jail is named after the Italian word carcere or incarcerate, but it is poorly translated. Others in Ethiopia call the jail "Alem Bekagne," or "goodbye, cruel world."

The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF)

The Eritrean People's Liberation Front is the political party that Colonel Mebratu starts when he is organizing the coup to overthrow the Emperor. Zemui, Genet's father, is a member of this political party when he is killed. To honor him, Genet also joins the movement when she goes to medical school, and hijacks a plane in the organization's name.

Our Lady of Perpetual Succor

Our Lady of Perpetual Succor is the hospital at which Marion is stationed when he moves to New York City. This hospital receives very little funding from the government and is forced to pull international doctors because no American medical students will work there. Despite the danger and lack of funding, Marion feels a deep connection to the hospital and wants to spend the rest of his life working there.



Themes

Family Bonds

The theme of family bonds is particularly present in the relationship between Shiva and Marion. When the two are born, they are literally conjoined at the head, a connection that is abruptly severed by the cold, sterile operating scissors. Marion claims that this is his earliest memory - being separated from his twin. Throughout their childhood, the two sleep in the same bed, and always find themselves lying head-to-head. Despite the fact that the boys grow up to have very different personalities, Marion still feels connected to his brother. This bond is broken, however, when Shiva betrays Marion and sleeps with Genet. This betrayal is even more cutting than the operating room scissors, and Marion feels as if he will never forgive his brother. Verghese makes a point of saying that family bonds can never truly be broken, and when Marion falls ill and is on his death bed, Shiva arrives from Ethiopia and climbs into bed with his brother. Just as had happened when they were children, their heads mysteriously drift together, symbolizing the invisible bond that no surgeon could ever cut away. To show his brother his extreme love, and perhaps as a mode of apology, Shiva cuts away part of his own body, his liver, to spare his brother. In this way, the twins are connected again; they are literally of one body.

Shiva is not the only strong family bond that Marion mysteriously keeps. He also feels a very strong connection to his deceased mother, Sister Mary Praise. While Shiva finds it difficult to converse with his mother's spirit, Marion has always felt a strong connection to her, and even visits her office to "speak" with her when Ghosh is in prison. Marion seems to know that his mother always loved him and would look out for his best interest even though he never met her. Just as Marion hopes, Sister Mary Praise comes through for her son and helps guide Ghosh to freedom. Although the relationship between Marion and his mother is spiritual, not physical, Verghese seems to say that it doesn't matter. Family bonds and family love cross generations, continents, and even realities.

Obsessive Love

Obsessive love is everywhere in *Cutting for Stone* and it appears that no one in the novel is capable of loving another rationally. The most central obsessive love affair is between Marion and Genet. Marion loves Genet from the moment she is born and he cannot imagine himself with any other woman despite the fact that she abuses, betrays, and abandons him. Marion's unconditional, obsessive love for Genet is mirrored in Stone's love for Sister Mary Praise, although he doesn't realize that he loves her until it is far too late. After Mary Praise's death, Stone loses his mind, and is completely unable to reconnect with another human being, let alone another woman. This reaction is similar to Marion's reaction when he discovers that Genet has slept with Shiva. Neither man pursues another romantic relationship, and although both are technically "free" of



their obsessive loves, the reader wonders if either will truly move on - physically or emotionally.

Perhaps the healthiest of the obsessive loves in the novel is Ghosh's love for Hema. Like Stone and Marion, Ghosh loves Hema despite her flaws, despite the fact that she treats him poorly. In Ghosh's eyes, Hema can do no wrong and he knows that he will never leave her side. Ghosh toys with the idea of leaving Ethiopia for America, but the reader knows that he would never abandon Hema. Eventually, Ghosh is the only character that gets what he is after - reciprocated love.

Another, lesser form of obsessive love is the love that Tsige has for Marion. She carries this love with her throughout her years in Africa and America. Marion can do no wrong in her eyes and it is clear that she will never stop loving him. Despite this, however, Tsige is selfless in her love, refusing to have sex with Marion after she finds out that he is a virgin. The same could likely not be said about the other obsessive lovers: Thomas Stone sleeps with Sister Mary Praise even though she has given her celibacy to the Lord, and Marion forcefully sleeps with Genet in a mixed act of love and revenge. In a way, perhaps Stone and Sister Mary Praise's unhealthy love affair sets the stage for the way love is processed for the rest of the novel. Obsession seems to bleed from their hearts to their children's hearts, contaminating them forever.

Medicine

Medicine is a very important theme to the novel overall for many reasons. On the surface, medicine is important because most of the main characters in the novel are doctors, and the protagonists grow up in a hospital. Medicine also provides a second level of competition and jealousy in the relationship between Marion and Shiva. When Shiva begins to earn accolades for his work in fistula research, Marion is envious and angry with Shiva for invading American newspapers. Medicine is also an integral element in the reunification of the Stone family: without Thomas Stone's groundbreaking work with liver transplants, Marion would have died from hepatitis and would not have been given a chance to repair his fractured relationship with Shiva.

But medicine is an important theme in the novel on another, symbolic level. Despite the fact that the family is made up of doctors, fractures, betrayals, and injuries harm the familial relationships and no amount of medical attention can cure them. The reason why Tsige admires and loves Marion is not because of the medical interventions he provided for her dying son, but for the comfort and care he gave to her after the baby's death. The reason why Shiva's fistula research is first successful is not because of its medical advances - although that does come later - but because he is one of the first doctors to provide sympathetic bedside manner to these untouchable women. Finally, in the most important moment of medicine versus love, when Marion falls ill, it is not his father's groundbreaking surgery that saves him, it is the quiet moment of forgiveness with his brother, a moment without medication, that heals his heart.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of this novel is first-person, limited omniscience told in past tense narration through the perspective of Marion Stone. Because the novel spans many decades, including those in which Marion hasn't been born yet, he paraphrases the novel by saying that much of the information he has gathered about his mother comes from others' accounts of her life and that he is simply putting all that information together to form a narrative, to help him understand where he came from. Marion's point-of-view is completely reliable. As this novel is Marion's personal journey to understand the hidden histories in his family, he has no reason to twist the truth for the reader. He is plainly and openly honest about his fears, his insecurities, and his vulnerabilities throughout life. Although the novel is told in past tense from the perspective of an adult Marion, the emotional growth of his character is age-appropriate, meaning that the adult Marion rarely, if ever, weighs in on the experiences of the child Marion. This point of view is important to the novel since one of the most important themes in the novel is Marion's emotional growth, particularly in his relationship with his brother and Genet. There could not be the dramatic impact of this growth if not for the reader's peek into Marion's thoughts and emotions.

The novel is split evenly between exposition and dialogue. The exposition is important because it helps keep the reader focused closely on the main character, Marion. Because Marion spends much of the novel alone, moving from place to place, the reader would be lost if not privy to his thoughts. There are also chapters in which many years pass in a few paragraphs, which would have been difficult for the reader to comprehend if another type of narration were used.

Setting

The first half of the novel primarily takes place in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, but more specifically, in Missing Hospital. Addis Ababa is located in "the Horn of Africa, on the upper half, on the eastern coast - the part that looks like a rhino's head and points to India" (Page 51). In the preface of the novel, Missing Hospital is described as sitting on a verdant rise, "the irregular cluster of whitewashed one-and two-story buildings looking as if they were pushed up from the ground in the same geologic rumble that created the Entoto Mountains. Troughlike flowerbeds, fed by the runoff from the roof gutters, surrounded the squat buildings like a moat" (Page 3). Surrounding Missing Hospital is a cluster of thatched-roof bungalows, nearly overtaken by eucalyptus and pine trees, where the staff each live.

Later in the novel, when Marion is forced out of Africa by the lies of Genet's roommate, he relocates to New York City, the Bronx, specifically, where he takes up residency at Our Lady of Perpetual Succor Hospital. This hospital is a huge step up from Missing



Hospital, with many more patient rooms, an ICU, on-call rooms for the staff, and hospital quarters, but it had nowhere near the elegance of the other city hospitals because it was located in a "bad neighborhood" and therefore didn't receive as much public funding, despite the desperate need. Throughout the novel, it is clear that Marion only feels at home when he is in a hospital. There are far more descriptions of hospital walls than home walls.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel may be overwhelming for some readers. The text itself is over 500-pages, many of them long, descriptive passages of medical procedures and African landscape. Although somewhat intimidating, once the reader gets used to the style, it is not a hindrance to the comprehension of the novel. This language, in fact, adds a depth to the novel that allows the reader a glimpse into a world that is made believable through the language used by not only the characters but by the narrator as well. Through Verghese's descriptive style, the reader is transported to a complex and beautiful Africa, that wouldn't be as accessible without the rich layers of language used to create the landscape.

A lot of time tends to pass in short passages; therefore, it is important that the author is able to keep his narration streamlined and to the point. Additionally, because the majority of the novel takes place in various hospitals, with almost every character being a doctor or medical student, there are long passages filled with medical vocabulary that may be difficult for some readers to digest. Although Verghese does a good job of giving contextual clues to what the terms mean, struggling readers should be allowed to bypass some of the thick medical phrases. Doing so will not affect the reader's understanding of the plot, as much of this description seems to be added to create the appropriate medical atmosphere.

Structure

The novel consists of 54 chapters averaging roughly 15-pages each. Each chapter has a name that refers to some action or event within the novel that foreshadows what the reader is about to read. The chapters tend to be long and full of descriptive passages in which large amounts of time have a habit of passing in a few paragraphs.

The plot is extremely rich and complicated, full of mysteries and subplots, which give the novel delicious scope and breadth. The main plot of the novel is Marion's obsessive love of Genet and the betrayal he feels when his twin brother steals Genet's virginity. This plot is set up with the backdrop of Ethiopia during its revolution, and bookended with the mystery surrounding the twin's entrance into the world, and the father who abandons them at birth. Despite its length, the novel has a very quick pace, perhaps due to the offshoots of plot and subplots. Mini conflicts arise throughout the novel and are quickly dispelled, giving the novel an overall feeling of momentum.



Quotes

"Few doctors will admit this, certainly not the young ones, but subconsciously, in entering the profession, we must believe that ministering to others will heal our woundedness. And it can. But it can also deepen the wound" (Page 6).

"She would see that her transformation actually took place over many months. However, it was only as she was falling out of the sky over the Bab al-Mandab that she understood that change had come" (Page 53).

"The sight of her wounds shamed him. There'd be no healing, no scars to form, harden, and fade on her body. He would bear the scar, he would carry it from the room" (Page 106).

"She remembered, too, how in her first days in Addis, when things had looked so bleak, so terrifying, so tragic with Melly's death - it was at those moments that God's grace came, and that God's plan was revealed, though it was revealed in His time" (Page 137).

"I wasn't the Invisible Man. I was the blind man who could see, who is forgiven his clumsiness by the other qualities the blindness brings out" (Page 214).

"I leaned on a hidden panel, and much like in the comics, I'd plunged through. The falling was unintentional, but now that I was on the other side I wanted to stay" (Page 219).

"My countrymen awake - history calls you. No more slavery, let freedom reign anew" (Page 237).

"If this was what brave felt like - numb, dumb, with eyes that could see no farther than my bloody fingers, and a heart that raced and pined for the girl who hugged me - then I suppose I was brave" (Page 266).

"They'd separated us, sliced through the stalk that made us one. Who's to say that Shiva's being so different, his circumscribed, self-contained inner world that asked nothing of others, didn't come from that separation, or that my restlessness, my sense of being incomplete, didn't originate at that moment? And in the end, we were still one, bound to each other whether we liked it or not" (Page 274).

"I could have killed Shiva that night. I thought about it. I decided it would solve nothing. My world was already destroyed. My arms were dead. My brain was numb. My love had been turned into a mockery of love, into shit. I had no reason, no desire, to do anything anymore" (Page 331).

"It seems we humans never learn. And so we relearn the lesson every generation and then want to write epistles. We proselytize to our friends and shake them by the shoulders ... Most of us can't go back and make restitution. We can't do a thing about



our should haves and our could haves ... He was teaching me how to die, just as he'd taught me how to live" (Page 346).

"In America, my initial impression was that death or the possibility of it always seemed to come as a surprise, as if we took it for granted that we were immortal, and that death was just an option" (Page 397).

"People change, you know. When you leave your country, you are like a plant taken out of soil. Some people turn hard, they can't flower again" (Page 475).

"There was a tiny part of me that wanted to say, You have me, Genet. But for once, I stopped to consider myself, to save myself. I felt compassion for her of a sort that I hadn't felt before: it was a feeling better than love, because it released me, it set me free of her" (Page 488).



Topics for Discussion

Describe Thomas Stone's relationship with his children throughout the novel. Initially, what do you think motivates his decision to abandon his children at birth? When you learn Stone's childhood back story, does that justify his behaviors? Why or why not? Be sure to use examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.

What does *Cutting for Stone* reveal about the emotional lives of doctors? Contrast the attitudes of Hema, Ghosh, Marion, Shiva, and Thomas Stone toward their work. What draws each of them to the practice of medicine? How are they affected, emotionally and otherwise, by the work they do?

As a doctor, Marion is able to view the medical systems in Ethiopia and America. First, describe the medical system in Ethiopia. Who receives good medical attention? At what cost? Then, compare / contrast that to the medical system in America. What is the same about the systems? What is different? What impact does this comparison have on Marion as a doctor?

Cutting for Stone is filled with stories of love and loss. Whose loss do you think is the greatest in the novel? Why? Then, explain which love and loss you think is most important to the novel's plot as a whole. Why do you think so? How does this loss affect not only the loving character, but those around them? Be sure to include examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.

How does the backdrop of the Ethiopian revolution affect the plot of the novel? How might the story be affected if it were set in modern day Ethiopia? Describe the basic timeline of the revolution as presented in the novel, and choose one moment that directly affects the main characters' lives. What impact does the revolution have on the main characters, first-hand?

The fact that Marion and Shiva are twins is integral to their struggles as characters and as brothers. First, describe the way the twins are born and the impact this birth has on them, both physically and emotionally. Then, explain how Marion and Shiva's characteristics and choices as twins reflect the story's themes of division, reconciliation, and unity. Be sure to include examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.

What do the lives of Hema, Matron, Rosina, Sister Mary Joseph Praise, Genet, and Tsige - as well as the many women who come to Missing seeking medical treatment - reveal about what life is like for women in Ethiopia? For the women who travel to America, how does life change for them on the new continent? Do you think this is the life they were expecting? Why or why not? Be sure to include examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.