

# **Jump and Other Stories Study Guide**

## **Jump and Other Stories by Nadine Gordimer**

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# Plot Summary

Jump and Other Stories consists of sixteen pieces of short fiction. Most are set in The Republic of South Africa before the end of the Apartheid. Even those set elsewhere, such as fictional places or unnamed African nations, contain some references to racial inequality or political oppression of ethnic groups.

The first story and the one mentioned in the book's title, "Jump," tells of a former counter-revolutionary who has turned himself in to the authorities of the country where he was once considered a terrorist. Apparently over the years the man has had a change of conscience and wants to make amends for past wrongs. Other stories, such as "Home", also directly confront the inequalities of the Apartheid system. In "Home", a woman's mother, sister, and brother are arrested for suspected subversive activities, and they are held under a special law that keeps them from family and even lawyers.

Other stories mention the inequalities of a racial unjust system or make reference to economic hardships in less direct ways. In "The Moment Before the Gun Went Off", a white man accidentally shoots his black employee. In "Keeping Fit", a white man witnesses mob violence and has to take shelter in a shantytown, the kind of place that few whites other than police ever see.

While political topics play a large role in the plots of most of the sixteen stories, some also cover other human relationships like marriage. In "A Journey", a woman aboard an airplane sees a mother and two children, and she invents in her mind an entire story summarizing their lives. In "Home", which is mostly about political oppression, the story also covers familial relationships. The lead female character struggles with her worry over her mother who she has never had a good relationship with, and the lead male character begins to doubt his wife's fidelity. Marital infidelity is a major element of "Safe Houses", when a fugitive from the law uses an affair with a married woman as a means to hide from police.

Human's relationship with nature is another plot element in some of the stories. In "The Ultimate Safari", a group of refugees must cross a national park and wildlife refuge in order to escape violence and starvation. During one evening, the group is almost attacked by lions. In "Spoils", a group of weekend guests at a wildlife refuge witness some lions feeding on a zebra. The following day, in viewing the zebra carcass, they also learn an important lesson about conservation.

While the plot of most of the stories focuses on how individuals perceive the world around them, one story in particular stands apart. "Once Upon a Time" is a parable told in the fashion of a fairy tale by an author who professes never to write children's stories. In this tale, a family's paranoia and fear runs rampant until their efforts aimed at providing protection cause grave harm to a child. Like all fair tales, this story has a lesson, and it is a lesson that becomes terrifyingly vivid.

# Jump

## Jump Summary

The book *Jump and Other Stories* by Nadine Gordimer is a collection of short stories by one of the most renowned writers and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature. The book consists of sixteen fictional short stories set in a variety of locations. The first story in the collection is titled "Jump".

A man sits in a hotel room. The third person narrator describes how the man once dressed like a soldier but has changed his appearance and was placed in the hotel by others. Whoever placed the man in the hotel ensures that he has everything he wants, including liquor and food from room service. Whatever deal the man made was supposed to include a house and a car.

The man had often required to appear at press conferences. Many times he had to tell the same story. People rarely visit the man anymore, and there are no more press conferences. There is also no more talk of the house and car.

The man had been the child of white European immigrants to an African country. His parents had been low-ranking civil servants. He had not been expected to join the military or be concerned with political events. When the European colonial power was expelled from the African country and blacks came to power, the man's parents had hoped to continue to live in the country in the same manner as before the revolution. As a youth, the man had worked as an architect's apprentice, and he had two principle hobbies, parachuting and photography. Once when photographing seabirds, the man was accused of espionage. His camera was smashed and he was imprisoned. This led him to feel hatred for the blacks, and he joined a secret organization and received training in counter-revolution.

His parents have long since returned to Europe, but he calls his mother every third day. He cannot tell his mother that he once planned terrorist activity or that he gave that up in order to return to Africa. His mother sends letters blaming herself for being too lenient and allowing him to pursue activities that ruined many lives. He thinks about the atrocities committed, and he thinks about how his work helped finance those attacks.

The man replays the confessions he made regarding how he worked to destabilize the black government. He thinks about how being far away made the atrocities seem less real. A neighboring country with a white government gave aid and supplies to the rebels. The man returned to the African country with the black government so he could somehow atone for his past wrongs. He expects to give damaging information about the rebels or to be killed.

A woman wakes and emerges from the bedroom. He does not think she has been sent by those that provided the room, though he acknowledges that she could have been.



The woman tries to get the man to go for a swim. He does not speak. She dresses and goes without him.

The man stands at the hotel window and remembers parachuting.

## Jump Analysis

The story is presented by a third person narrator, and none of the characters have names. The narrative is told in the present tense.

The man in the hotel room has spent his life raising funds for a counter-revolutionary group opposed to the government of an African nation. The neighboring "white state" that the narrator refers to is most likely South Africa. Before the end of Apartheid, that nation provided aid to rebel groups working to undermine the black governments of other African nations. The one mentioned in this story could be the government of Mozambique. Readers interested in African political history can research South Africa's assistance to the Mozambique Resistance Movement.

The title "Jump" can refer to both the narrator's hobby of parachuting, but it likely has other implications in reference to the end of the story. As the narrator stands before the hotel window he contemplates suicide but decides to postpone the action. Perhaps he sees suicide as an attempt at atonement for the pain and suffering his counter-revolutionary activity caused.



# Once Upon a Time and The Ultimate Safari

## Once Upon a Time and The Ultimate Safari Summary

"Once Upon a Time"

The narrator has been invited to submit a story to an anthology for children. The narrator does not write stories for children. One night the narrator hears sounds and at first believes the sounds are those of an intruder. Later the narrator realizes that the noises are those of a creaking house. To keep calm, the narrator thinks of a story.

A man and a woman live in an affluent suburban neighborhood. The wife worries about the possibility of race riots, but the husband assures her that the race riots will never occur in their neighborhood. To calm the wife, the husband installs an electric gate. After several burglaries in the neighborhood, the wife wants bars on the windows. The couple also installs a burglar alarm, just as many other neighbors have done. Soon there are so many false burglar alarms that no one pays attention to them anymore.

Many of the servants in the neighborhood are no longer trusted, and they are released from employment. Many of them still hang around the neighborhood hoping for work. The couple continues to implement security measures, and during a walk around the neighborhood they compare others' methods, and they decided to install razor wire atop their own fence.

One day the couple's young son decides to pretend to storm a castle just like he has read about in fairy tales. He climbs the wall and gets entangled in the razor wire.

"The Ultimate Safari"

The narrator states that one day her mother left to purchase cooking oil and never returned. The narrator's father also vanished earlier. He fought in the war. The narrator is the middle child. She has an older brother and a younger brother. The day after their mother failed to return, the roof of the children's house burns, and they continue to hide in the house until their grandparents arrive the next day.

Their grandparents take them home, but there is no food. The grandmother decides the family must leave the area. They join other refugees on a long walk that will take them through Kruger National Park. The group's guide says they must take a longer route in order to avoid an electric fence. Once in the park some boys catch a turtle for food, but the guide says they cannot light a fire in the park or they will be detected and forced to return to their home country.

The group encounters much wildlife, including elephants. They must avoid the whites taking safari vacations, and they must also avoid the blacks who work in the park



because if the blacks assist the group, they will lose their jobs. One night the group must huddle together as a defense against lions.

Everyone is fatigued by hunger, and many are barely able to walk. After eating some wild fruit, many in the group become ill. The children's grandfather wanders away and never returns, and eventually the group must leave without him.

Eventually the group arrives at a giant tent that houses two hundred refugees. The children attend school in a nearby village, and the narrator turns eleven. Her grandmother is able to get work carrying bricks. One day a documentary filmmaker interviews refugees and asks the grandmother, "Do you hope to go back to Mozambique or your own country?" The grandmother says she will never return, but the narrator thinks she will return when the war is over because she believes her mother and grandfather will be waiting for her.

## **Once Upon a Time and The Ultimate Safari Analysis**

### "Once Upon a Time"

The story begins with a first person narrator and then switches to third person with the beginning of the bedtime story. The conditions that the narrator describes in the suburban neighborhood, particularly that of servants being allowed into the neighborhood only if they had employment in the area is the same as some practices under the Apartheid system in South Africa prior to 1990.

One possible moral or lesson of the bedtime story is that paranoia is a condition that feeds itself.

### "The Ultimate Safari"

The story is presented in first person by a young black girl. The conditions the girl describes that led what was left of her family to leave and try to find a more peaceful place to survive seems similar to conditions in Mozambique and Zimbabwe prior to the early 1990s. Mozambique is mentioned in the story, and Kruger National Park is adjacent to the border between South Africa and Mozambique.

The story's ending shows that despite the extreme hardships the narrator has witnessed, she still retains some of the naïve optimism of a child. She still believes there is a chance that her mother and grandfather are alive.



# A Find and My Father Leaves Home

## A Find and My Father Leaves Home Summary

### "A Find"

A man who has had two bad marriages decides to live alone. He takes a vacation alone, and his vacation destination is a seaside resort. On the beach the man sees thinly clad women everywhere. He spends a great deal of time swimming and sunbathing. One day while sunbathing, the man finds a woman's ring with diamonds and sapphires.

The man places an advertisement in the local newspaper. Many people call about the ring, but none are able to correctly describe it. Sometimes if the caller's voice sounds young and attractive the man invites them to his hotel room. The last visitor is a beautiful woman in her forties. She incorrectly describes the ring, but the man gives it to her anyway without mentioning that she did not describe it correctly. The ring does not fit on the first finger she attempts to place it on, so she quickly puts it on a smaller finger. The woman becomes the man's third wife.

### "My Father Leaves Home"

The story opens in a semi-rural setting. A third person narrator tells of a boy's preparation for leaving home. Among the items packed in the boy's belongings are the tools of a jeweler. A horse-drawn cart takes the boy to where he will catch a train. After the train journey the boy's father will find him work on an oceangoing ship.

The narrative switches to a first person account of a hunting trip and the hunter's journey on a train to the location of the hunt in some Eastern European country. The hunting party disembarks at a small unattended train station. No one from the hunting lodge is at the train station. Some of the members of the hunting party go to a nearby bar. When the hunting lodge manager arrives in a car, he says that the bar is not a safe place for foreigners.

The narrative reverts to the third person account of the boy's arrival in Africa. The boy takes a train to a mining region where a relative lives, but the relative is too poor to take in the boy. The boy begins repairing watches for white miners. The black miners are too poor to afford watches worthy of repair, so the boy begins selling inexpensive pocket watches. He also repairs watches, clocks, sells jewelry, and extends credit to the white miners. Over the years the business grows, and the boy, now a man, marries. His wife is English.

At the closing of the story, the narrator reveals that the hunting party takes place in the narrator's father's home country. The narrator realizes how little he knows about his father's history.





## A Find and My Father Leaves Home Analysis

### "A Find"

Though he is hurt by his most recent divorce and swears to live without women, the man immediately finds himself fixated on the women he sees around him. A beach resort is a poor place to choose for a vacation for a man who is trying to live alone without being married. Though he knows that the final caller about the ring is not its rightful owner, he gives her the ring and later marries her. He does this because of her beauty. The man has fallen back into his previous type of behavior that likely contributed to the failure of his two previous marriages.

### "My Father Leaves Home"

The story begins with a third person narrator, and the opening of the story, which tells of the father's departure from his home country, is presented in the present tense. Later the narrator switches to past tense for both the third person accounts of the father and the first person accounts of the hunting party.

Over the course of the story, the narrator gives clues to the father's point of origin. For instance, he had to learn English upon arrival in Africa, so he must have come from a non-English speaking country.

Some of the vague childhood memories indicate that racism and prejudice occurred not only outside the home between the whites and blacks but inside the home between the English wife and the Eastern European Jewish husband. In the end, the narrator realizes how little is known of the father's history.



# Some Are Born to Sweet Delight

## Some Are Born to Sweet Delight Summary

A family takes in a young man. The house has a policy of not allowing Irish people to rent lodging, but there is no discrimination against other nationalities. The new lodger is polite and tidy. The family's seventeen-year-old daughter, Vera, takes an interest in the lodger.

Once, after a night of partying with friends, Vera returns home drunk and sick. She is embarrassed that the lodger sees her in that condition, but the lodger helps her and never mentions the incident afterward. Vera sees the lodger in passing, and in one meeting she introduces herself, and the lodger says that his name is Rad.

One Sunday, Vera encounters the lodger in the garden, reading newspapers. She remains in the garden and has a conversation. Vera spends less time with her friends and more time with Rad. One day Rad cooks a meal for the family, and all the family members are pleased. Vera and Rad begin going for walks together, and then Vera invites Rad to see a movie together. During one of their long walks, they stop in a secluded area and have sex.

At night Vera goes to Rad's room. She believes her mother knows, though no one has spoken about it. Vera begins bringing Rad to dinner in the evenings, and the family does not object, but the father believes the mother should talk to Vera about what expectations Vera has for the relationship.

Vera discovers that she is pregnant. When she tells Rad, he shows no emotion, and Vera decides to get an abortion. Later, when she tells Rad that she has made arrangements with a doctor to have an abortion, Rad says that he intends to marry Vera and for Vera to have the baby. Vera is delighted, and she tells her parents. Her parents are worried, but they make an effort to conceal this from Vera.

One day Rad announces that he is sending Vera to his home country to meet his parents before he and Vera marry. Vera is delighted at the opportunity to travel, and her parents take Rad's decision as proof that he is serious about marrying Vera.

The day that Rad takes Vera to the airport he gives her an additional package to place in her carry-on bag.

The aircraft explodes over the ocean. A terrorist group takes credit for the bombing, and Rad is mentioned as one of the terrorists.

## **Some Are Born to Sweet Delight Analysis**

The story is told from a third person perspective by a narrator with limited omniscience. Rather than quotation marks, dialogue is set apart from the rest of the narrative with dashes.

The story could be a moral about the dangers of being too naïve and engaging in blind trust, but more likely it could be a tale of how even the most innocent of characters can be affected by the fanaticism that breeds terrorism. Vera is not all that different from the children of working class parents the world over. Her only error is that she is prone to the same human weakness as the rest of us. She falls in love with what she believes is a kind and exotic foreigner. He gave her no reason for suspicion.



# Comrades, Teraloyna, and The Moment Before the Gun Went Off

## Comrades, Teraloyna, and The Moment Before the Gun Went Off Summary

### "Comrades"

While Mrs. Telford gets in her car parked on a university campus, a group of four young black men ask for a ride. Though she is intending on going in the wrong direction for taking the youths into town, she agrees to take them to the nearest bus stop. While driving, Mrs. Telford learns that the youths have not eaten recently, so she invites them to her house for a meal before she takes them to the bus stop.

At Mrs. Telford's house, Mrs. Telford and her maid prepare sandwiches and coffee for the young men. While the young men eat, Mrs. Telford tries to make polite conversation, but she discovers that only one in the group speaks English.

### "Teraloyna"

A remote island is inhabited by survivors of a shipwreck. The island is not suitable for habitation by large numbers of humans, but it has a large population of goats. Eventually the goats destroy the island's vegetation. And eventually the residents of the island immigrate to other areas of the world. They intermarry and assimilate. Their Teraloynas roots are forgotten.

Left on their own, the goats eventually die of famine. The island holds no strategic value to any of the world's superpowers, so they give it to an African nation. The nation decides to build a weather station on the island, and one of the meteorologists brings two kittens to the island.

In time, descendants of the first two cats multiply, and the island is overrun by six hundred cats. The meteorologists try various unsuccessful means of eradication. Against protests, they decide to shoot all cats. White college students with military training are recruited to shoot all the cats. One of the recruited shooters is a descendant of the original Teraloynas, but he has no way of knowing of his heritage.

### "The Moment Before the Gun Went Off"

Marais Van der Vyver has accidentally shot one of his black servants, and he dreads what the newspapers will say. Van der Vyver knows that the newspapers, especially those outside of South Africa, will report the story as an instance of racial brutality. Van der Vyver reports the death to Police Captain Beetge.



In a shift back in time, Van der Vyver picks up Lucas, his servant, before embarking on a hunt for a kudu buck. Lucas rides standing in the back of the truck just behind the cab. When the truck hits a pothole, Van der Vyver's rifle fires and kills Lucas.

Van der Vyver pays for an expensive funeral. Lucas's widow and children attend. Van der Vyver knows that no one else can understand his pain over the incident because most people do not know that Lucas was his son.

## **Comrades, Teraloyna, and The Moment Before the Gun Went Off Analysis**

"Comrades"

More than halfway through the story, the narrative switches from past tense to present tense.

While she feeds the youths and tries to make polite conversation, Mrs. Telford realizes how differently economic and political circumstances have affected her life as compared to the youths. Though they are now advocates for the same political causes, the youths will one day stop using legal political means to affect change, and they will engage in violent attempts to force changes in government policies.

"Teraloyna"

The narrative begins in first person plural, but after the first section that concerns the life of the island residents, the narrative seems more like a third person account.

In some ways, the assimilation of the Teraloynas into other cultures with varying physical appearances shows the absurdity of racial prejudice. Certainly it shows the artificiality of racial categorization. One person can be black, and another person can be white, yet they both can share Teraloynas heritage.

The young men recruited to shoot the cats will use the same methods they would use if called to shoot at black protesters. They will not differentiate between innocent or active revolutionary. They simply shoot all blacks.

"The Moment Before the Gun Went Off"

Though the story is told in the third person, it comes entirely from the perspective of Marais Van der Vyver. The story could have taken place only in the time before the end of Apartheid. The story contains many subtle references to blacks as inferior, such as Van der Vyver's observation that "The young wife is pregnant (of course) . . ." Though Van der Vyver probably loves his illegitimate son, the system of Apartheid and the long held prejudices of the whites prevent him from admitting this or even that Lucas is indeed his son. This situation also prevents Van der Vyver from openly grieving.



# Home

## Home Summary

Nils arrives home, and his wife, Teresa, says that her mother and others have been arrested. While Teresa worries about her mother, Nils thinks about the differences in their respective races. Teresa is conflicted because she has always had a contentious relationship with her mother, but now she is worried about her mother's well-being. Teresa also worries about what her mother may say to the police. She and Nils are not politically active, but Teresa's brother, Robbie, is. Nils tries to console Teresa by saying that Robbie would not have told her mother anything, but Teresa is furious that Robbie went to her mother's house in the first place.

The next morning, Teresa does not go to work. Nils worries about Teresa, but he must go to work. When he returns home, Teresa is on the telephone, and she appears troubled. Teresa learns that her mother is being held under Section 29, which means that her mother cannot have any contact with lawyers or relatives. Teresa contacts many people, but she cannot find anything new.

Nils wakes to find that Teresa has already risen and gotten ready to leave. She intends to speak to a lawyer and find someone to stay in her mother's house. Teresa spends all of her free time meeting with lawyers and government officials. Nils is impressed with Teresa's drive, strategy, and ability to work with anyone who might be useful to her mother's situation. Nevertheless, Nils worries that if Teresa visits her mother's house she will be arrested. Teresa also worries what her mother and sister might say under interrogation, and Nils worries that Teresa might have something to hide from the Security Police. Nils forbids Teresa from visiting her mother's house, and Teresa agrees.

Teresa learns that Robbie is on a hunger strike, and her mother and sister have been moved to a different prison. Teresa takes a leave of absence from work in order to dedicate all of her time to helping her mother. Teresa is advised by knowledgeable people not to sleep at home in case the Security Police come looking for her. Nils remains at home at night while Teresa sleeps elsewhere.

Nils begins to worry that Teresa is being less than truthful. One morning he wakes to find a note from Teresa that says she is going away for a while. She provides no further explanation. Nils begins to wonder if Teresa is being unfaithful, and he even considers returning to Sweden. After three days, Teresa calls Nils at work. Nils goes home to meet Teresa, and he learns that she went to her mother's house. She did not tell him of her intention because she knew he would disapprove.

## Home Analysis

In addition to the usual problems faced in any marriage, Teresa and Nils must face the barriers between two people of different races. Nils is Swedish, and Teresa is likely of a



mixed race. Under the Apartheid system of South Africa, people of any non-white race faced persecution from the government.

As the crisis drags on, Nils feels more and more as an outsider. In the absence of any new information, Nils's imagination begins to fill in his gaps in knowledge. He even begins to wonder if Teresa is having an affair. His insecurities are compounded by his feelings of being an outsider, a person that will always be a foreigner in Teresa's home country. Despite the extraordinary events that cause the crisis, in the end, Teresa's deceptive behavior and Nils's fears are the same as in any marriage where communication breaks down.

# A Journey

## A Journey Summary

The narrator is on board an airplane. The narrator watches a mother, her thirteen-year-old son, and an infant. The trio leave the plane in an African country that until recently has been experiencing a civil conflict. In the absence of the trio, the narrator's imagination takes over and sees things from the perspective of the teenage boy.

The boy thinks about having returned to Europe with his mother while she had the baby. The father remained in Africa as a diplomat. The boy remembers months earlier he noticed that his parents had become quieter, and his father took him on more men only outings. While the boy notices that his father is more affectionate toward him, he is still troubled by his parents' quietness when together. The boy notices the physical changes in his mother, and he notices that his father is present less than usual. While his mother gives birth, the boy waits with his grandmother. Once the doctor says the baby is healthy enough to travel, the boy helps his mother. They disembark from the plane and meet the boy's father at the airport.

The point of view shifts to third person from the perspective of the father. He thinks about his affairs. He also thinks about the time he returned from one of his affairs, had sex with his wife, and how she got pregnant. The father thinks about how he had tried to shield his son from the conflict between the parents, and he thinks about how his son is more like his mother. The father hopes he will be able to restore the relationship. He sees his wife, son, and new baby in the airport.

## A Journey Analysis

Almost the entire story is the product of the imagination of the narrator. Beyond seeing the mother, teenager, and infant on the airplane, nothing is factual, and all of the remaining story is entirely the construction on the narrator. The narrator even places herself in the story as a character. She imagines that the teenage boy sees her and thinks she is "only a lady with grey hair in the other window seat".

In the imagined story of the family's life, the father takes no joy in his wife's pregnancy. This is likely the result of his own feelings of guilt and his knowledge that the baby was conceived at a low point in the marriage. The father's feelings of being an outsider and not deserving membership in the family is also the result of his feelings of guilt, but his hope to repair the relationship ends the narrator's imagined portrayal of the family on a positive note.





# Spoils

## Spoils Summary

The story begins with first person narrative, and the narrator and a female companion, possibly a spouse, listen to the news. The narrator comments on something, and the female responds with, "Become a vegetarian then!" The narrator thinks about how he wants no part of the world.

The narrative switches to third person. A man and a woman are at a weekend outing at a game preserve with many other couples. The people come from all different professions, but all share a love of nature. The members of the outing nap after lunch, and later after dinner they discuss various wildlife, including bats. Some of the guests discuss the experiences of one particular guest who was once a political prisoner. The discussion of politics seems inappropriate to the larger group, and the conversation returns to wildlife.

Some guests hear unidentified sounds, and a game preserve employee, a black man, says that there are lions nearby hunting zebras. Many of the guests are intrigued, and the black man takes them on an expedition to see the feeding lions. They go in a large vehicle, and the black man tells them to remain in the vehicle at all times. After driving a short distance, they see the lions in the headlights, their faces covered in blood. They also see the zebra carcass. One young female member of the groups finds this disturbing, and the entire group returns to the lodge.

The following day is a Sunday, and the game preserve employee finds evidence that the lions have been near the lodge during the night. He offers to take a group of people in the daylight to see the remains of the lion's kill. They take the same vehicle and then walk a short distance. The game preserve employee shows the group where the lions hid the carcass from vultures so they could return and feed again during the night.

The guide begins cutting a section of meat from the carcass. The meat is for his personal consumption. When one member of the group asks why he takes only a small amount instead of all that he can carry, the man explains that the lions expect that he will take some meat for himself, and they permit this. If he gets greedy and takes too much, the lions will take one of his children.

## Spoils Analysis

The story begins in the familiar world of the city where people are surrounded by technological conveniences and saturated with news. People are bombarded with news and information so frequently that none of it matters to them.

After the switch in narrative point of view, people are in the wild. They claim to be lovers of nature, but to them nature has previously consisted of what they see on the



television. When faced with the brutality of nature, some are shocked, and others are intrigued. When one asks why the guide is taking only as much meat as he can use, that man is applying the modern practice of taking all one can, usually far more than needed, simply because it is available. The guide tries to explain that in the wild there must be balance. If one does something to upset the balance, nature will return the balance.



# Safe Houses

## Safe Houses Summary

A former political exile has returned to his home country, and he must be careful what events he attends. He cannot attend any events where others the government considers subversives might be present. The man never drives. He uses only public transportation to decrease the likelihood that he will come into contact with police. Daily he reads news reports about how his comrades are on trial, a trial from which he is the lone fugitive.

One day the man boards a bus with no particular destination in mind. He encounters a beautiful woman who also appears to be wealthy from her manner of dress. The woman starts a conversation with the man, and he learns that she is taking the bus because her car broke down. She explains that she is not accustomed to public transportation, and she asks if he will identify her stop. The man says that he happens to be getting off at the same stop.

The man and the woman get off at the same stop, and they say goodbye. As the man turns and starts to walk away, the woman invites him to her house for a drink. Once inside her home, she asks his profession. Though he has not prepared for such an inquiry, he is surprised at how easily he gives a detailed answer. He says that he is a construction engineer, and he often travels abroad for work. He takes the settings of such places as Libya and Tanzania where he underwent guerrilla training and modifies the stories to include tales of construction projects. The woman explains that her husband is away on business.

The woman offers her name, Sylvie, and the man says his name is Harry. After more conversation, Harry says he must leave. The woman wants to exchange telephone numbers, and the Harry tries to invent a reason he cannot give his. Sylvie gives her telephone number, and Harry writes it in ink on his arm. Sylvie encourages him to call or come by for another drink or a swim.

When Harry leaves he has no intention of ever calling Sylvie again. He washes away the number. Days later he finds that he is still thinking of Sylvie, and he calls. She seems happy to hear from him and asks that he come by for a swim. At Sylvie's house, Harry swims, and both he and Sylvie drink and talk. Sylvie says her husband is still away, and he is likely to remain away for a few more weeks. After a pleasant evening, Harry says he must leave, but Sylvie asks him to take a last swim. After the two swim they embrace, and this leads to an intimate encounter. Before morning, Sylvie wakes Harry and takes him to another room so the servants will not think they slept in the same bed.

Harry returns to Sylvie's every night that week. Sometimes Sylvie seems to feel guilty about the affair, and other times she talks about her dissatisfaction in marriage. After a



week, Harry decides that it would be unwise to continue going to Sylvie's. He cannot follow the same routine too many days in a row. Harry continues to read newspaper accounts that mention his fugitive status. Some even mention his many aliases, though "Harry" is not among them.

When Harry has almost reached the house where he is currently staying, a child intercepts him. The child says that his father sent him, and Harry must not return to the house. The police have been there searching for him. Harry has no choice but to return to Sylvie's. After a night of intimacy, Harry notices several clues that indicate that Sylvie's husband is returning soon. When Harry leaves the following day, he decides to leave the city and go to a small town where he has a contact.

Harry is arrested in the small town, and returned to prison to await trial. Harry sees more newspaper reports, and some contain photographs of him. He wonders if Sylvie will ever learn his true identity, but he doubts it.

## Safe Houses Analysis

Both main characters, Harry and Sylvie, suffer from boredom, and there is something ironic about them being in a state of boredom. When most people think of being a wanted fugitive, the idea of boredom does not arise. Most would expect that the time spent evading the law would be full of stress and ever changing circumstances. But as Harry explains, the need to avoid routine becomes a routine in itself but with slightly changing geographical settings. Sylvie has all the freedom and money she could desire. She has a beautiful home staffed by servants that take care of any menial chores. She does not have to be involved in childcare because hers are away at boarding school. She would seem to want for nothing. Yet with all this wealth and privilege, Sylvie finds herself bored.

In multiple ways, both Sylvie and Harry provide the other with the perfect solution to boredom. Harry the construction engineer does not actually exist, so there is little chance her marital infidelities could ever be discovered. The authorities would never think of looking for their wanted fugitive, their revolutionary at the residence of one of the wealthy and powerful that his movement intends to overthrow.

In the end both got a much-needed respite from tedium, and no one suffered any negative consequences.



# What Were You Dreaming?

## What Were You Dreaming? Summary

The story begins in the first person point of view. The narrator is hitchhiking. He thinks about how bandits have made it difficult for hitchhikers to get rides. Motorists are afraid to pick up strangers. A car with two white people, a driver and a passenger, stop to pick up the narrator. The driver is male and seems to be English. The female passenger seems to be a local. The whites ask the narrator where he is from. He answers that he is from Cape Town, and the female passenger knows this means he was forced away from the area by the South African government. The whites, particularly the driver, are inquisitive. The narrator patiently answers all questions in hope that his friendliness will get him a ride to his final destination instead of just the next town. The narrator also goes into detail about his plight in hope that once in Pietersburg the whites will give him money.

The narrative switches to third person, and the previous narrator is asleep in the back seat. The driver wants to stop for every hitchhiker, and the passenger does not explain that picking up hitchhikers in that region is not customary. The driver believes that the sleeping hitchhiker is black, but the female passenger explains that he is actually considered a "Cape Colored," a mixed race individual. She also tries to explain some of the history and current political conditions of South Africa, particularly the laws pertaining to race under the Apartheid System.

The driver, the Englishman, is still curious about the plight of non-whites, and the woman tries to explain. While the hitchhiker sleeps, the driver tells the passenger he wonders how the hitchhiker lost his front teeth, and he wonders why he does not have them fixed. The passenger explains that in some circumstances people in South Africa intentionally have their front teeth removed.

The woman wakes the hitchhiker. He says he was dreaming vividly, and the driver asks what he was dreaming. The hitchhiker does not answer about what he was dreaming, but he says that the driver can let him out anywhere because he must find someone to give him money for food and a taxi. The hitchhiker gets out of the car, the woman gives him money, and the car drives away.

## What Were You Dreaming? Analysis

The narrator recognizes that the female passenger is sympathetic to the plight of non-whites, and he tailors his story to better exploit her sympathy. The woman, however, is not as gullible as she seems. Later in the story she makes the comment that "the bars are closed on Sunday". This indicates that she may have not believed all that the hitchhiker said, and she acknowledges the possibility that he may simply want money

for alcohol. Unfortunately, from a darker perspective, it may mean that she views all non-whites in a stereotypical manner.

Having the Englishman present has an interesting effect on the story. As a foreigner, he does not know all the laws of the system known as Apartheid, and his ignorance and surprise serve to remind the reader of what a bizarre and cruel system Apartheid was.



# Keeping Fit

## Keeping Fit Summary

A man is jogging and concentrating on his breathing rhythm. He prefers to jog early in the morning, when most people are still asleep. The jogger passes an area where people live in poverty, a shantytown, and he turns to jog the route back home. Suddenly a mob bursts from the shantytown, and they chase a single man. Members of the mob carry weapons, including knives and clubs. The jogger's route is cut off, and he veers into the shantytown to avoid coming in contact with the mob. The mob catches the fleeing man and kills him. Once in the Shantytown, the jogger realizes he might have made a grave mistake. He is a lone white man, and he stands out. As he runs aimlessly past shacks, a black woman steps outside one shack and orders him inside. She says the mob will kill anyone.

Once inside the home, the woman serves tea and explains that the mob has been sent by the police. She also lectures the jogger about how unwise it is for a lone white man to be in the area. After a while, the woman sends her son out to check on current conditions. When the son returns and says that the mob has dispersed, the woman tells the man to go but to go quickly. The man thanks the woman and runs from the shack.

Once back on the road where he usually jogs, the man cannot believe what just happened to him. He wishes he knew how to contact the woman at some safe place away from the Shantytown so he could reward her with cash for saving his life. The jogger wonders how he will tell others back in his world what happened to him. The more the jogger thinks about the incident, the more he realizes that he will not be able to explain the incident.

Back at home, the jogger sees his wife and children going about their usual morning routine. His wife notices that he appears more over-exerted than usual, and she criticizes him for pushing himself too hard. The jogger decides to rest for a while before going about his daily tasks. He hears a bird trapped in the house's rain gutter, and when he mentions it to his wife, she says that nothing can be done, and the bird will die. After hearing the bird struggle for a few more moments, the man bursts into a rage and says he must save the bird.

## Keeping Fit Analysis

The jogger witnesses first-hand the sort of things he reads about in the news but only a minority of whites ever see. During the event, he is shocked and concerned only with surviving the moment. Afterward, when he has time to think, he is shocked at how one moment a person can be going about a daily routine and the next can be in a horrifying situation. The jogger thinks about how the woman undoubtedly saved his life. He knows that he will never fully understand her motives, but her action leaves an impression on

him. Though he may not understand it at the time, he feels like all people should be more compassionate and look out for others. His rage over the other members of his family being willing to ignore a bird trapped in the rain gutter is a product of his newfound realization that one cannot sit idly by while others suffer.





# Amnesty

## Amnesty Summary

A female first person narrator hears that someone has been released, and she runs from one farm to another to spread the news. The person who has been released is her fiancé, and he has been released from prison. Nine years previously the young man had gone away for work, but he had come home for the holidays. At that time he asked the narrator's father for permission to marry. Soon after, the fiancé became involved in politics and was thrown in prison. While her fiancé awaited trial, the narrator was able to visit. During this time their daughter was born.

Her fiancé is sentenced to an island prison, and she usually gets one letter per month. After two years, the narrator and her fiancé's parents have saved enough money to make a journey to Cape Town and take a ferry to the island. While they are waiting in line for the ferry, a policeman informs them that they have not secured the proper permits, and they are denied permission to visit the island prison. Her fiancé's father dies while his son is in prison.

When her fiancé is released, the narrator expects him to return home. He does return home, but he constantly seems distracted. Often he travels to continue to engage in political activities. The narrator remembers when her fiancé came home and their daughter did not believe the man before her was really her father. The narrator too wonders when her fiancé will truly return home.

## Amnesty Analysis

The title of the story is "Amnesty", and the word means a pardon or forgiveness for past offenses. The narrator's fiancé is forgiven for past offenses and allowed to return home, but the man that returns home does not seem to be the same as the one who was taken away. In the nine years that have passed, the narrator's fiancé has continued to be involved in his political movement, and that seems to be his all-consuming passion. Just like the daughter cannot connect the man she sees to the one she has heard about for her entire life, the narrator cannot feel like the fiancé she has missed for nine years has actually returned home.



# Characters

## The Counter-revolutionary

This character appears in "Jump." The third person narrator never gives him a name, but through a detailed account of his past, the reader comes to know him better than perhaps any other character in the book. Currently the man is held in a hotel by government authorities, though the arrangement appears to be voluntary for both parties. He spent his adult life as part of a revolutionary group that worked to destabilize and hopefully overthrow the government of his home county.

The counter-revolutionary was the son of European immigrants to an African nation. At the time of his birth, the country was ruled by a white minority. Sometime prior or during his teen years, the government switched to the control of the black majority. His parents had high hopes for him and expected that he would find a career in some field that had nothing to do with the military or government. While still a young man and working as an architect's apprentice, the future counter-revolutionary had two favorite hobbies: parachuting and photography. Once while photographing wildlife, the young man was falsely accused of espionage and imprisoned. The experience embittered him toward the black authorities, and in time he joined secret organizations and received counter-revolutionary training.

For most of his adult life, the counter-revolutionary worked to secure funding for his organization that carried out terrorist attacks in the African nation. After many years, his conscience led him to think differently about the morality of his mission, and he made a deal with the government in his home country.

Though he has taken steps to make amends, the counter-revolutionary believes there is no redemption for his part in the acts of terrorism, and at the close of the story he contemplates what can be considered the most drastic act.

## The Girl Narrator

This character appears in "The Ultimate Safari". Like many other characters in the book, she is never assigned a name. At the opening of the story, the girl is ten years old, and she tells the tale through the eyes of a child.

The girl is a middle child. She has both an older and a younger brother. Civil war ravages her native country, and it claims the life of her father. One day the girl's mother leaves home in search of cooking oil and never returns. While the three children are alone, their village is attacked, and the roof of their house catches fire. In time, the children's grandparents arrive and take them to their home in a different village.

With no food available and the constant danger of more violence, the grandparents make the decision to leave in search of a safer place. They begin a long journey. In



time, they meet other refugees led by a guide, and they learn that they will have to walk across Kruger Park, a large wildlife refuge. The girl chronicles the many hardships, including lack of food and almost being attacked by lions. During the journey, the girl loses her grandfather.

Eventually, the girl and the rest of her group make it to a refugee camp. Once, when asked if she will return to her home country when the war is over, the girl says she will. She says she believes that her mother and grandfather will be waiting for her. Despite all the hardships, the girl has retained childish optimism.

## **Vera**

This character appears in "Some Are Born to Sweet Delight". She is a young and trusting girl who falls in love with a man of foreign origins who rents a room in her parents' house.

## **Rad**

This character appears in "Some Are Born to Sweet Delight". He is a young man living in a foreign country and renting a room from a family.

## **Mrs. Hattie Telford**

This character appears in "Comrades". She is an aging woman who supports liberal political causes. When she meets a group of young political activists and invites them to lunch, she realizes how different their lives are.

## **Marais Van der Vyver**

This character appears in "The Moment Before the Gun Went Off". He is a white farmer and rural South Africa, and he accidentally shoots one of his black farmhands.

## **Lucas**

This character appears in "The Moment Before the Gun Went Off". He is a black man who works on a rural South African farm.

## **Teresa**

This character appears in "Home". She is a mixed race person married to a man from Sweden.



## Nils

This character appears in "Home". He is a Swedish man living and working in South Africa. He is also married to a woman of mixed race.

## Sylvie

This character appears in "Safe Houses". She is a wealthy woman who initiates an affair with a man she meets on a bus.

## Harry

This character appears in "Safe Houses". He is a former political exile and current fugitive. He meets a wealthy and beautiful woman on a bus.



# Objects/Places

## Hotel Lebuvu

This place is mentioned in "Jump". It is the hotel where the authorities house the counter-revolutionary after he surrenders.

## Kruger Park

This large wildlife refuge is mentioned in "The Ultimate Safari". It borders South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. The refugees must walk through this park in order to reach safety.

## Soweto

This township is mentioned in "Comrades". This is an area in the city of Johannesburg. It has traditionally been an area for poor blacks under the Apartheid, and it was an important place in the struggle for equality.

## Afrikaner

This classification of person is mentioned in "The Moment Before the Gun Went Off". This is a white ethnic group of South Africa that speaks Afrikaans, a Germanic language derived from Dutch.

## Apartheid

Though not mentioned in name in any of the stories, this political regime is referred to in almost all of the stories. Apartheid was a political system in The Republic of South Africa from 1948-1994. It was notoriously known for its racial subjugation of non-whites.

## Section 29

This law is mentioned in "Home". Under this law, a person arrested could be deprived of visits from family and attorneys.

## Johannesburg

This city is mentioned in "Safe Houses" and in other stories. Johannesburg is the largest city in South Africa and an important economic center.



## **Security Police**

These types of police are mentioned in "Home". In the story, they are those that arrest political subversives.

## **Cape Town**

This city is mentioned in multiple stories, including "What Were You Dreaming?" and "Amnesty". It is the second most populated city in South Africa.

## **A.N.C.**

This political organization is mentioned in "Keeping Fit". The letters stand for African National Congress. It was one of the main voices of opposition during Apartheid, and since the end of Apartheid it has become the largest political party in South Africa.

# Themes

## The Madness of Racial Prejudice

Few of the tales in *Jump and Other Stories* are presented without the element of racial inequality due to racial prejudice. In some stories, such as "Home", "Jump", "Comrades", "The Moment Before the Gun Went Off", "What Were You Dreaming", "Amnesty", and most notably "Keeping Fit", it is a major element in the tale. In other selections it is simply present as a constant aspect of the modern lives presented in these tales.

However, it is important to note that in none of the stories is the subject of racial prejudice presented as anything other than destructive and perhaps insane. None of the characters advocate the practice, and even those that have engaged in it suffer severe regret later. In "Jump", the counter-revolutionary dedicated his life to clandestine efforts to harm the black government in his home country, but he later regrets his actions and surrenders himself to the government he has fought so long. In "The Moment Before the Gun Went Off", Marais Van der Vyver regrets the accidental killing of a black man, and his anguish is intensified because the victim was his illegitimate son.

In "Safe Houses", the hero, or at least the protagonist, who is a white man, is a wanted subversive for fighting against a government that subjugated all non-whites. And in portraying the irrational and even insane component to racism, no story in the collection is more vivid than "Once Upon a Time". It is fear of racially motivated crime that drove the couple to take the actions that ultimately harm the thing they care about most.

## Tales of Everyman

The vast majority of the readers of *Jump and Other Stories* will have never visited the continent of Africa, much less witnessed first hand the inequalities and cruelties of the Apartheid system, yet the stories all seem to have an Everyman feel. The term "Everyman" means that the characters themselves are in some ways not remarkable and certainly not unique. In case of characters specific to a time or circumstance, such as an unmarried mother of two that has waited nine years for an imprisoned fiancé or a counter-revolutionary that has been responsible for seeking funding for terrorist activities, even those characters display some traits that all readers can understand and relate to. In some ways, the events surrounding the characters in these sixteen stories are unusual, but the feelings of the characters are universal.

One trait common to many of the stories that adds to the Everyman quality is the absence of character names. Without names, the characters are sometimes nothing more than "a man" or "a woman". This makes it easier for readers to identify with characters. In "Once Upon a Time", the principle characters are simply a married



couple, their son, and a mother-in-law they refer to as "The Wise Old Witch". This is a feeling common among families regardless on which continent they reside.

Even in extreme situations, such as the arrest of relatives in "Home", most readers can identify with both Teresa and Nils. The majority of the readers will not be mixed race females from South Africa or Swedish men married to such women, but all readers can relate to the issues of worry and trust so vividly portrayed in the tale.

## Isolation

All of the characters included in the sixteen tales in *Jump and Other Stories* are isolated and alone. The characters are isolated to varying degrees, but the element of separation and loneliness is always present. Sometimes the isolation is physical, but most often it is emotional. These ever-present instances of emotional isolation occur regardless of how close in physical proximity a character may be to others.

One such character is perhaps as isolated as a human being can become in an emotional sense. He is also isolated to some degree in a physical sense. The counter-revolutionary that is the main character of "Jump" is physically isolated in a hotel room. From time to time, he has contact with others when the government parades him out for press conferences, and he does have a sort of consort that is likely provided by the government that houses him. It is the man's emotional isolation that is most pronounced. His years of working as a counter-revolutionary have alienated his family. His cooperation with the government of his home country has surely made him a traitor to his former counter-revolutionary comrades, and the government that hosts him will certainly never think kindly of him. Even his consort offers no connection. He has no more emotional connection to her than he does to the food and liquor provided by room service.

Some characters attempt to reach out to others only to learn they have nothing in common. Mrs. Hattie Telford of the story "Comrades" invites some young black political activists to lunch only to learn that she will never be able to comprehend their hardships, and in time they will be members of less peaceful organizations.



# Style

## Point of View

Being a collection of short stories, *Jump and Other Stories* contains a variety of points of view, but unlike most traditional stories, each story is not necessarily restricted to a single point of view. Many times, a story begins with one narrative perspective and during the tale switches to another.

The first time this occurs in the book is in the story "Once Upon a Time". The tale begins with a first person narrator who is also a well-known author describing a recent invitation to submit a selection to a collection of children's stories. The narrator does not write children's stories and at first thinks nothing about it. Later, the point of view switches to third person, and for the remainder of the tale, the third person narrator tells a chilling parable.

This pattern of beginning in first person and then switching to third person occurs in other stories. Another notable example occurs in "What Were You Dreaming?" A first person narrator begins the story, and then after he falls asleep, a third person narrator tells the rest of the story. "Spoils" presents yet another example of beginning with first person and then switching to third.

While having multiple narrators is more common in longer works of fiction, Gordimer manages to use this technique in these short stories to present a more comprehensive view of the tales. Having the story come from multiple perspectives produces a more well-rounded picture.

## Setting

The predominant physical setting of the stories is Africa, or more specifically, The Republic of South Africa. Though not all stories occur in South Africa, the majority does, and in even the ones that do not, some of the same issues, most notably racial inequality, are referred to in the bulk of the tales. In only a few examples does Gordimer or her many narrators give specific references, like the names of major cities, to South Africa, but other details make it clear that the setting is Africa. A good example of how South Africa is referred to but not named occurs in "Jump". The actual hotel where the narrator resides is not in South Africa, but he mentions a nearby nation ruled by whites that offered aid to the counter-revolutionary cause. With only the most basic knowledge of history, any reader can conclude that the nation offering aid is South Africa.

Some stories require more detailed analysis to pinpoint the physical setting. The story "My Father Leaves Home" takes place in a variety of locations. Some of the Eastern European locations are difficult to name, but references to both white and black miners in the land where the main character settles is a clear reference to South Africa.



In one story, finding the specific physical setting may be impossible. In "A Find", there simply are not enough definitive clues. In terms of the significance of the story, this does not matter. This is one of the few or only stories that do not have any elements of politics, particularly race relations. It is a story about how humans follow the same self-destructive patterns, so no definitive setting is necessary. It could have happened anywhere, and the meaning would be the same.

## Language and Meaning

With so many different narrators, *Jump and Other Stories* contains a variety of language, but in each story the language has one constant: it can be easily understood by any English speaker. In only a few cases does Gordimer employ regional words or accents. For the most part, the language is a generic form of English and cannot be classified as predominantly American or British or even South African, except in the case of a few British spelling variants. This generic brand of English adds to the Everyman quality of many of the characters and situations.

Within the language itself, the differing narrators offer a range of tones from the matter of fact to the poetic. One fine example of Gordimer's use of language rich in imagery occurs in "A Find". While the protagonist sits on a beach watching others and contemplating his resolve to live a life devoid of women, he looks out into the surf and sees the many young mothers and children. In this part the narrator says, "A shoal of young mothers carried their infants about in the shallows". In "The Ultimate Safari", the language is clearly that of a child as she goes into detailed explanations of some situations where an older narrator might skip over in the belief that the audience already understands. "What Were You Dreaming?" offers the perspective of an adult male who is intentionally using language to influence others and garner sympathy.

## Structure

The structure of the book as a whole is divided between its sixteen pieces of short fiction, but it is within these individual selections that the structure of *Jump and Other Stories* is worth examining. Some stories are presented as straightforward narrative prose, but others contain structural and mechanical peculiarities that affect their tone, mood, and perhaps meaning.

Many of the stories contain section breaks, extra spacing between paragraphs, despite none of the tales being exceptionally long for a short story and some being barely longer than a typical vignette. These section breaks can indicate the passage of time, a shift in topic, or even the change of narrative voice. In most, if not all cases, they draw more attention to the individual sections.

In the area of mechanics, the most distinct deviation from traditional prose occurs. Usually dialogue is not identified by quotations. Dashes are the most common way that dialogue is indicated. This might be simply an authorial preference, or it might have a greater significance. By using less intrusive means to identify dialogue and set it off

from the rest of the text, the author could be assisting the reader in staying focused on the plot. This, in turn, could help promote the Everyman quality of many of the stories.

In one story, "What Were You Dreaming?", different narrators use different means to handle dialogue. The first person narrator simply states what people have said and does not use special punctuation at all. After the narrative voice switches to third person, dialogue is indicated by quotation marks.



## Quotes

"The curtains are open upon the dark, at night. When he gets up in the morning he closes them. By now they are on fire with the sun. The day pressing to enter. But his back is turned; he is an echo in the chamber of what was once the hotel."

Jump, p. 3

"We were tired, so tired. My first-born brother and the man had to lift our grandfather from stone to stone where we found places to cross the rivers. Our grandmother is strong but her feet were bleeding. We could not carry the basket on our head any longer, we couldn't carry anything except my little brother. We left our things under a bush. As long as our bodies get there, our grandmother said."

The Ultimate Safari, p. 39

"He swam a great deal. far out in the calm bay between wind-surfers crucified against their gaudy sails, closer in shore where the surf trampled his head under hordes of white waters. A shoal of young mothers carried their infants about in the shallows."

A Find, p. 50

"The houses turn aside, lengthwise from the village street, to be private. But they're painted with flowery and fruity scrolls and garlands. Blossoming vines are strung like washing along the narrow porches' diminishing perspective. Tomatoes and daisies climb together behind picket fences."

My Father Leaves Home, p. 57

"She wept with love for this man who might never, never have come to her, never have found her from so far away. She wept because she was afraid it might so nearly never have happened. He wiped her tears, he dressed her with the comforting resignation to her emotion a mother shows with an over-excited child."

Some are Born to Sweet Delight, p. 79

"Exogamous marriage made their descendants' hair frizzier or straighter, their skin darker or lighter, depending on whether they attached themselves this way to black people, white people, or those already singled out and named as partly both. The raw-faced, blue-eyed ones, of course, disappeared among the whites; and sometimes shaded black in the next generation, to a darker colour and category—already there were categories, laws that decreed what colour and degree of colour could live where."

Teraloyna, p. 102

"Marais Van der Vyver left his house at three in the afternoon to cull a buck from the family of kudu he protects in the bush areas of his farm. He is interested in wildlife and sees it as the farmers' sacred duty to raise game as well as cattle. As usual, he called at his shed workshop to pick up Lucas, a twenty-year-old farmhand who had shown mechanical aptitude and whom Van der Vyver himself had taught to maintain tractors and other farm machinery."

The Moment Before the Gun Went Off, p. 113



"If it turned out that Teresa's family were held under Section 29 they would have no access to lawyers and relatives. Between his colleagues expressions of sympathy and support were (he saw) the regarding silences shared by them: they could have predicted this sort of disaster, inconceivable in their own lives, as a consequence of his kind of marriage."

Home, p. 127

"Her whole face trembled. He suffered with her. He was aware that it is a common occurrence that people talk with love about the one they have despised and resented, once that person is dead. And to be in prison under Section 29, no one knows where, was to be dead to the world where one did not deserve to be loved."

Home, p. 129

"The Malay slaves brought by the Dutch East India Company to their supply station, on the route to India, at the Cape in the seventeenth century; the Khoikhoi who were the indigenous inhabitants of that part of Africa; add Dutch, French, English, German settlers whose back-yard progeniture with these and other blacks began a people who are all the people in the country mingled in one bloodstream."

What Were You Dreaming? p. 219

"So he was free to transform his experience of guerilla training camps in Tanzania and Libya, his presence in the offices of an exiled High Command in cities deadened by northern snows or tropical heat, to provide exotic backdrops for his skyscrapers. Anecdotes of bar encounters in such places—he merely changed the subjects discussed, not the characters—entertained her."

Safe Houses, p. 191

"I sit on a warm stone in the late afternoon, high up, and the whole valley is a path between the hills. It's the Boer's farm but that's not true, it belongs to nobody. The cattle don't know that anyone says that he owns it, the sheep—they are grey stones, and then they become a thick grey snake moving—don't know."

Amnesty, pp. 256-257



## Topics for Discussion

Often the narrative contains elements not found in traditional prose, particularly the practice of switching narrators in mid story and even switching tense. Did you find these practices hard to follow, or did you think that they gave the stories a unique and enjoyable flavor?

Some stories have a clear moral, such as "Once Upon a Time." Other stories present less readily identifiable lessons. Discuss the clear moral in "Once Upon a Time" and compare it to the underlying message of "Some Are Born to Sweet Delight".

The title of the first short story in the collection, "Jump", might contain more than a single meaning. What are the possible meanings of this title?

Racial prejudice plays a major role in most of the stories. In which stories was this element least present?

Sometimes nations are not named, and in a few instances no major cities are named. Analyze the story "Jump" and use the clues in the text to make some guesses about what countries are being depicted.

Discuss the meaning of the title "Some Are Born to Sweet Delight" and discuss the meaning of the lines taken from a William Blake poem, "Some are Born to sweet delight,/Some are Born to Endless Night".

In several stories in this collection, characters are not assigned names. What effect did this have on the story? Did you feel distant and unable to relate to the characters, or did the omission of names make the stories seem more universal?