Out of Africa Study Guide

Out of Africa by Karen Blixen

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BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Isak Dinesen's autobiographical novel, *Out of Africa,* recounts the years she spent on a coffee plantation in East Africa. Published in 1937, the book garnered critical and popular acclaim, especially in Britain and America. The award-winning 1985 film version, which won an Oscar for best picture, prompted a resurgence of interest in the book and helped place it on the best-seller list several years after her death.

Out of Africa is comprised of a series of Dinesen's observations of the African landscape and character sketches of the East Africans and transplanted Europeans she met there In her article in *The New York Times Book Review,* Katherine Woods maintains, "Africa lives through all this beautiful and heart-stirring book because of that simple and unsought-for fusion of the spirit, lying behind the skill which can put the sense of Africa's being into clear, right, simple words, through the things and people of the farm."

Yet *Out of Africa* is not just an account of what the author found in Africa, it is also the story of how an independent and courageous woman came to understand and define herself. Woods concludes that Dinesen "tells the story with quiet and noble beauty. And one knows that her wish for life as a whole has been fulfilled by Africa: she did not let it go until it blessed her."

Author Biography

On April 17, 1885, Dinesen was born Chris-tence Dinesen in Rungsted, Denmark. Her love of painting prompted her to study art at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, where she developed an eye for landscape details□a talent that would be reflected later in her writing.

She continued her studies in Oxford, Paris, and Rome and began to write short fiction and novels. In 1907 a literary magazine in Denmark published her short story, 'The Hermits," under the pseudonym Osceola.

After a failed love affair with her cousin, Hans Blixen-Finecke, Christentze (she preferred to be called Karen), announced to her family that she planned to many Hans's twin brother Bror, a big-game hunter and writer.

The couple married and moved to Kenya, where, with financial aid from her family, they purchased six thousand acres of land. Her marriage to Bror did not survive (they were divorced in 1921), but her love of the land and the people of Africa endured through the hardships she faced as a woman managing a coffee plantation on her own.

While in Africa, Dinesen wrote letters and composed stories that she would share with visiting friends. She left Africa in 1931 after financial problems forced her to sell the farm and returned to Denmark where she completed her first book. *Seven Gothic Tales* (1934).

In 1937 the memoirs of her time in Africa, *Out of Africa,* was published; she used the pseudonym Isak, which is Hebrew for the word "laughter." From 1931 until her death in Rungsted on September 7, 1962, this prolific author produced short story collections, essays, novels, poetry, plays, and memoirs written in both Danish and English.

Plot Summary

Part I: Kamante and Lulu

Out of Africa opens with a description of East Africa□of its views "immensely wide" and its "heroic and romantic air." From 1913-1931 Isak Dinesen (the pseudonym of Karen Christentze Dinesen Blixen) owned and operated a coffee plantation on the outskirts of what is now Nairobi, Kenya, until financial problems forced her to sell it and return to her home in Denmark. Her six thousand acres of land is used for different purposes: six hundred for the coffee beans and one thousand for the East African "squatters" who work the farm a set number of days for the right to live there. The remaining acres include a wide expanse of forest.

Dinesen finds it difficult to get to know the East Africans who work on her farm but eventually becomes friendly with them. Moreover, she is impressed with their courage, sincerity, and closeness to the land. She admits, 'The discovery of the dark races was to me a magnificent enlargement of all my world."

One day on the farm, she meets Kamanle. the nine-year-old son of one of her squatters. She tries to treat the sores covering his thin legs but is unsuccessful and so sends him to the Scotch Mission hospital where he stays for three months while his legs heal. Kamante is "a wild creature" when she first meets him, "so utterly isolated from the world, and, by a sort of firm deadly resignation, completely closed to all surrounding life."

After he returns from the Mission, he becomes one of Dinesen's trusted servants and friends. He helps her care for Lulu, a young antelope, who causes the house to become "one with the African landscape." In this section, Dinesen also introduces two other servants, Farah Aden and Ismail, and an old, eccentric Dane named Kmidson.

Part II: The Shooting Incident

One night Kabero, the seven-year-old son of an old squatter named Kaninu, accidentally shoots two boys. One soon dies while the other, whose lower jaw has been shot off, slowly recovers in the hospital. The old men on the farm decide to set a Kyama on the case, made up of an assembly of elders authorized by the government to settle disputes among the squatters. The men, however, have trouble resolving the case and after a long period of disruption among the families, which includes accusations of sorcery, Chief Kinanjui is called to pass judgment The matter is finally settled.

Part III: Big Dances

Native dances called Ngomas are held and soon become "the greatest social functions of the farm " One night, warriors from the neighboring Masai tribe attend the Ngoma and

fighting erupts. In order to keep the authorities out of the incident, Dinesen nurses the injured men back to health.

Foreign visitors to the farm include some of Farah's Indian friends, members of his wife's family, and Emmanuelson, a Swede who is befriended by the Masai. Dinesen enjoys the company of these guests as she learns of their culture and experiences

Two visitors who become great friends are British expatriates Barkeley Cole and Denys Finch-Hatton. They bring her fine wine, gramophone records, books, and good conversation about their African adventures. She in return offers them the comforts of home and recites the stories she has written for their entertainment. Both men help her get to know the people and the landscape of her new home

Part IV: The Wild Came to the Aid of the Wild

This section includes fragments of Dinesen's comments on her surroundings. In these brief tales and verbal snapshots, she reveals her appreciation of the independence, resilience, and beauty of the people and animals she observes. She also notes the harsh existence suffered by many

When World War I comes to East Africa, she travels the rough terrain bringing provisions and ammunition to the British troops on the border and forges a special bond with the Africans who accompany her. When Denys flies her in his plane over the landscape, she marvels at its beauty.

Part V: Farewell to the Farm

Seasons of drought and falling coffee prices force Dinesen to sell the farm. During the long departure process, she gradually disengages herself from the land and its people She sells most of the contents of the house and refuses to allow Chief Kinanjui to end his life at her farm, fearing the wrath of government officials. At this point Dinesen admits, "I had not got it in me any longer to stand up against the authorities of the world."

Her two closest friends have died□Barkeley of heart failure and Denys in a plane crash Yet she does fulfill two promises before she leaves: she buries Denys on a hill overlooking the farm and within view of Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya. Later, when she hears reports of lions standing or lying on his grave for long periods of time, she finds it "fit and decorous" that the lions should "make him an African monument."

When her squatters come to her with fears about their forced relocation after the farm is sold, she helps them find a place to live. She explains, "it is more than their land that you take away from the people, whose native land you take. It is their past as well, their roots and their identity " As she prepares to depart, her friend Ingnd Lindstrom and the women on the farm give her comfort She watches the landscape disappear from the window of her train out of Nairobi.

Chapters 1 - 4

Chapters 1 - 4 Summary

The Ngong Farm Summary

Written under the nom de plume, Isak Dinesen, Out of Africa is Karen Blixen's account of her time in Kenya. The story opens as she describes the land and environment around the Ngong Hills, at the base of which stood her farm, a coffee plantation of six hundred acres. In all, she had six thousand acres of land, part of which was native forest and about a thousand or so acres were accounted for by squatters. On this land, they eked out an existence by subsistence farming – growing maize and keeping livestock such as chickens, cows and goats. In return, they worked for the owners of the land a number of days each year. It takes four of five years for the coffee-plants to bear and once they do, the beans are harvested, dried in coffee-dryers and then hulled, graded, sorted and packed into sacks for shipment to London, where they are auctioned off.

Twelve miles from the farm is Nairobi, the capital of the country. The Government House and big central offices were found here, such as those of the High Court, The Native Affairs Department and the Veterinary Department. Karen remarks that since her arrival in the country, Nairobi had, over the years, changed a great deal.

The Swahili town was not well regarded, it being a dirty, gaudy place; while the Somali town, farther away from Nairobi, was home to the eponymous nomadic people who were primarily cattle-dealers and traders. The Somalis were comprised of a number of disparate tribes, and Karen's servant, Farah, belonged to the tribe of Habr Yunis. At one time, Karen recalls, there had been a fight in the Somali town, between the tribes of Dulba Hantis and Habr Chaolo. Ten or twelve people were killed before the government finally intervened. The Indian merchants, who dominated the big native business quarter of the Bazaar, kept villas outside of town. From the beginning, Karen felt great affection for the Natives, though she admits never to truly be able to understand them.

A Native Child Summary

Karen acted as a doctor of sorts to the local people and most mornings, from nine to ten, she would tend to the sick and injured in her house. She, by her own admission, had known little more than what is taught by a first-aid course, but through a series of chance cures, her renown had spread and the people had come to depend on her. One day, while riding across the plain of her farm, she came across Kamante, the child of one of her squatters and seeing his body wracked with sores, told him to come see her the next day, which he did. Over the course of his treatment, she got to know him as an insular, stoic child, isolated from the world around him.

Because he had never before said anything to her of his own accord, Karen remembers when, in trying a new treatment – she had accidentally put on the poultice too hot – he had then addressed her as Msabu, an Indian word that the natives used when addressing white women. She had been glad because it showed that a bond had formed between them; he expected suffering from everything around him, but he did not expect it from her.

Unable to cure him of the disease, she decided eventually to take him to the hospital of the Scotch Mission. Kamante had not wanted to go, but she delivered him there herself. The Church of Scotland Mission was situated twelve miles to the north-west of Karen's farm, and the French Roman Catholic Mission ten miles to the east. Even though amongst themselves they were not friendly, Karen was on good terms with both.

Kamante remained at the Scotch Mission for three months, during which time Karen had seen him only once; she had been riding toward the Kikuyu railway station and for a time the road ran alongside the hospital grounds. Kamante, by then well enough to run, and seeing Karen, ran along the fence for as long as he could, though he said nothing to her. As she rode away, she waved to him. At first, he did not respond, but then, just once, his arm went straight up into the air.

On the morning of Easter Sunday, Kamante visited Karen in her house, bringing with him a letter from the hospital saying that he was much better and that they thought they had cured him for good. All natives, Karen noted, had a flair for the dramatic, and Kamante had carefully tied old bandages around his legs (up to the knee), to arrange a surprise for her. He then unwound the bandages to reveal his legs, smooth and unmarked except for slight grey scars. Then he told her, 'I am like you,' meaning that he was a Christian. He returned to his mother's hut, where he told her of everything that had happened and after that returned to Karen's house, where he remained and served her until she left the country some twelve years later.

Though she did not know for sure, she guessed him to be about nine years old. He was, she felt, different, what in white people would be called highly eccentric. In the old storehouse of corrugated iron, she had an evening school for the people of the farm. Kamante would accompany her here, but always he would stand a little away from the others. Alone, however, she had witnessed him, copying from memory, the letters and figures he had seen on the blackboard during those nights.

Kamante had begun in Karen's service as a dog-toto and later became a medical assistant to her. After that, he was sent to be a cook's boy, and when Esa, Karen's old cook was murdered, it was Kamante who became her chef. In addition, it is here that Karen believes him to be something of a genius, remarking that had he been born in Europe and had a good teacher, might have been famous.

She sent him to the Muthaiga Club in Nairobi and to the cooks of her friends to learn new dishes, and after a time her house became known throughout the colony for the food served at dinner parties. In this, she took great pleasure though Kamante did not care in the least for the praise of others. Among her guests were Charles Bulpett, a

great traveler who had been all over the world; and the Prince of Wales himself. That had been the only time Kamante had been interested in the praise given to him.

The Savage in the Immigrant's House Summary

One year, the farm endured a great drought. They worked the fields in vain and in time the work slowed, and then stopped completely. The waterholes dried up and zebras would come in their hundreds searching for water. They had to be kept off the farm as much as possible, for the sake of the cattle. To keep her mind free of these troubles, Karen would, in the evenings, write stories – fairytales and romances. In time, she began to write in the mornings as well, putting off difficult decisions such as whether to plough and plant the maize field a second time or strip off the withering coffee berries to save the trees.

The natives and local herdboys were intrigued by her house, especially an ornate German cuckoo clock that hung in the dining room – an object of luxury in the African highlands. The children took great delight in watching the cuckoo appear every hour and Karen's houseboys laughed at them, for the young herdboys, who ranged in age from two to ten, believed the bird to be alive.

One night, Kamante came into the dining room and said that he did not believe Karen was capable of writing a book. Laying the *Odyssey* on the table, he commented how heavy and tightly bound it was, while her loose papers were scattered whenever the wind blew through the house. She tells him that the people in Europe will fix it together properly. He then asks her what is in books and she tells him a story and explains about books and her own writing.

Karen remembers the time when, at Christmas in the first year after Kamante had come to her house, she had wanted to take him with her to Mass. He wanted to go, but when he learnt that it was to the French mission she intended to go, he, having been indoctrinated against them at the Scottish Mission, said that he could not possibly attend. However, Karen promised Kamante her protection and so convinced him to come with her. It turned out to be the finest Christmas Mass ever held at the mission, and, once inside, Kamante forgot his scruples.

After Kamante had become a Christian, Karen reveals, he was then not afraid to touch a dead body – something the natives were terrified of doing. Over the course of the years on the farm, three people died: One was a young Kikuyu girl who had been run over by an oxcart, the other was a young Kikuyu killed while felling trees in the forest. The third and final death was that of an old blind Dane named Knudsen whom Karen had come across in Nairobi and who had asked her for a house on her land. He had ostensibly been one of the early pioneers in Africa, having owned a large fishing concern on Lake Victoria, which he lost during the war.

During the six months he spent on the farm, he and Karen spoke often in Danish, which she enjoyed greatly. By his own telling, he had been a great artist of fishing nets and on the farm made *kibokos*, whips fashioned from hippo hide. Knudsen, who referred to

himself in the third-person (as 'Old Knudsen') had at one time confided in Karen a plan to lift from the bottom of Lake Naivasha, the hundred thousand tons of guano dropped by the swimming-birds. This, he said, would make him a millionaire and shame all his enemies.

He considered farm life to be dull and would often disappear, for days or weeks at a time, coming back ill and worn out from his escapades. Sometimes it was with an old friend who had arrived in town but usually Karen did not know what he did. When he died, he had been gone a fortnight, and most everyone on the farm had not even realized that he had returned. He had been walking on a path from his bungalow to the main house when he collapsed and died of a heart attack. She and Kamante discovered him and carried him back to his bungalow.

A Gazelle Summary

There came a time when, after the mill on the farm had burnt down, Karen had to drive to Nairobi on a regular basis in order to get the insurance settled and paid out. One morning, on just such a drive, Karen came across a group of Kikuyu children along the Ngong road. As she drove past, she saw they were holding a small bushbuck, a fawn they had ostensibly found and now wanted to sell to her. She ignored them and continued to town. Coming back in the evening, she once again encountered the group, but having had a less than successful day in town, ignored them once more and continued.

That night in bed, however, she awakes with a terrible feeling of dread. She wakes up all the houseboys and demands, under threat of dismissal, that they find the fawn. Early the next morning, Juma brings her the fawn, a female that they named Lulu, Swahili for 'pearl.' Kamante brought her up on a sucking-bottle and so, as she grew older she took to him and followed him about. In time, she obtained a commanding position in the house and all treated her with respect.

In Africa, the only breed of dog Karen had ever kept was that of a Scotch deerhound. The first, Dusk, had been given to her as a wedding present, but he had been killed by a zebra some years later. At the time of Lulu's arrival, she had two of his sons on the farm. They were excellent hunting dogs, but even they understood Lulu's position in the house; she pushed them away from the milk-bowl and their favorite places by the fire.

One evening, she did not return to the house and they looked, unsuccessfully, for her for a week. Karen believed her to be dead, killed by a leopard, but when speaking of her fear to Kamante he simply told her that she was married, that she lived in the forest with her mate and that some mornings she still came to eat the crushed maize he laid out for her at the back of the kitchen.

At her orders, Kamante fetched Karen a few days later, just before sunrise. Before she could see Lulu, Karen heard the bell that had been tied to a rein around her neck. When she appeared, Lulu hesitated slightly at the sight of Karen, but then walked to the back

of the kitchen to feed as usual. Further back, at the outskirts of the forest, they saw the male bushbuck.

One day, on coming back from Nairobi, Kamante told Karen that Lulu had been to the farm with her Toto – her baby. Some days later, Karen saw the fawn for herself. Though she was not afraid of them, Lulu would not permit to be touched by anyone. She had lost her bell, too, and came and went in silence. It went this way for many years. Lulu returned, as did other bushbucks, though never a male. Hunters and naturalists took an interest in them, as did the game warden and a reporter, both of whom came out to see them.

The years in which Lulu visited the house, Karen recalls, were the happiest of her time in Africa. However, in her later years, she saw less and less of Lulu and her family and she wondered if Lulu ever thought of her as she did of Lulu. When she finally left Africa, she would, on occasion, receive letters from Kamante and the other houseboys. None of them could write, but they would dictate letters to the Indian or Native letter-writers outside the post offices. Kamante had, by then, been out of work for a long time, and in one of his letters wondered if Karen would ever return.

Chapters 1 – 4 Analysis

The African landscape features so predominantly in the book, that it can be seen almost as a character unto itself. Blixen takes great pains to attempt to convey the sense of majesty, awe and wonderment that the land inspired in her and at times speaks almost reverentially of it. The people and animals too, shaped her love of the country during her time there. During her stay she undergoes a number of changes, some subtle, while others are less so. For instance, upon first arriving on the continent, she herself admits that she had wanted to shoot and claim for a trophy one of every kind of animal, but over the years her views soften and she is content merely to observe the animals.

The book is very much an autobiographical recounting of Blixen's time in Africa, and as such is tinged with some very personal and introspective stories, some of which are rather esoteric. Her adventures are at times happy and at others tragic, but throughout it all is a tone of melancholy and regret. Blixen's departure from the continent is foreshadowed early in the novel and throughout her writing, there permeates a sadness that oscillates between subtlety and outright grief. One such example is the undercurrent of sadness evident in Karen's recollection of Lulu, who represented a time in Karen's life that had been her happiest in Africa. Even when she is happy, there seems to be a feeling that none of it will last, that everything will eventually come to an end. Of course, it does.

Although Africa is, quite literally, all around the farm, Lulu represents the one tangible link between the wild and the farm (and by association, Blixen). Although tenuous, theirs is a true relationship, unlike the co-inhabitant style of existence that man usually shares with nature. The metaphor of this beautiful creature that comes and goes as she pleases, and who could not be retained, speaks of Karen's own fleeting happiness. No

matter how much she desires it to remain, it is fated to slip from her grasp. Karen's love of the country and the continent is demonstrated unequivocally with the line, 'there is no world without Nairobi's streets.'

Religion (and therefore, God) and spirituality are other important themes woven throughout the narrative, almost unavoidably so given the clash between the belief system of the natives, many of whom were devout Mohammedans, and that of the occupying Europeans who brought with them their own Christian beliefs. The themes lend themselves well to the book, given that nature is so closely tied with God and all of Creation.

Chapters 5 - 9

Chapters 5 - 9 Summary

The Shooting Accident Summary

On the evening of the nineteenth of December, Karen is standing outside her house when she hears a single gunshot. Though disturbed as to why there had been only a single shot and not more, she ignores it and takes a book with her to bed. Two minutes later however, a motorcycle comes speeding to a stop before the house. It is Belknap, an American and her mill-manager, who quickly relates the incident to her: his cook had been given the day off, and, in his absence, the seven-year-old kitchen-toto, Kabero, had held a party. Late in the evening, Kabero had brought out the master's shotgun (used to frighten away hawks and serval-cats), and believing it to be empty, aimed it among his guests and pulled the trigger. Three had been slightly wounded; two were badly hurt or dead. Grabbing dressing and disinfectant, Karen, along with Farah and the other houseboys, ran through the forest to Belknap's house.

The kitchen was covered in blood and Karen slipped on it as she came in. She knew the children who had been shot: Wamai, who was unconscious and Wanyangerri, who had been the youngest at the party. His jaw had been taken clean off. With difficulty, (tilt his head too far back and he would drown in his own blood, too far forward and it is was difficult to get the bandage on without choking him), she bandaged the wound. She and Farah then lifted Wamai onto the table. He had taken the full charge of the gun in the throat and chest. Karen sent Farah to fetch the car, so they could take the children to hospital.

While they waited, Karen asked after Kabero and Belknap told her a queer story about how the boy had bought a pair of old shorts from him and owed him a rupee from his wages. After the shot was fired and Belknap came running into the kitchen, Kabero hastily pulled a rupee from his pocket, laid it on the table and ran out. They would find out later that he ran away; no one saw him again.

The drive to the Native hospital, which lay just before the town, seemed interminable. Farah had at first driven, but Karen, thinking he was deliberately going into the deep holes and wagon-tracks – the truth was, the road was in terrible condition – took over the wheel. Once there, they managed to wake up an old Goan doctor or doctor's assistant, but upon lifting Wamai out of the car, they discovered he was dead. Wanyangerri was still alive, however.

Belknap had followed behind on his motorcycle and suggested they report the incident to the police. No white police officer was present, so they all waited in the car while he was sent for. When at last he arrived, Belknap gave the officer the details of the night's events. The next morning, while still in bed, Karen heard outside, the low rumbling of the men who had gathered there. She knew they would want a *Kyama*, an assembly of

the Elders of the farm authorized by the government to settle local disputes. Not wishing to speak with them just then, Karen sends for her horse and rides off.

Riding in the Reserve Summary

Fifteen minutes after she set out, Karen rode into the Masai Reserve. She thinks again of the tragedy from the previous night and of the old men waiting outside her house. Because it was her land, she would often be asked to give judgment on matters and knowing nothing of their laws seemed callous and disinterested to the locals. Reparations, she knew, would have to be made for the events of the preceding night and remembers a time when Farah's little brother, who was then ten, had thrown a stone at a boy of a different tribe, knocking two of his teeth out.

Representatives from the two tribes had met on the floor of Farah's house and it was decided that penance would be fifty camels, which were bought and would be, in ten years time, added to the price of a Somali maiden in order to turn her eyes off the boy's missing teeth. So too, Karen remembers the time when a young girl named Wamboi had been killed under the wheels of a bullock cart. Karen had forbidden anyone from riding on the carts, but the drivers, unable to say no to the girls' requests, let them ride as far as the house at which point they had to jump off. Wamboi slipped and fell as she jumped and the wheels of the cart crushed her skull.

The parents had demanded compensation for their loss, but Karen had refused. They had decided to solicit, from the driver, reparation, but the Assistant District Commissioner, upon hearing the evidence, turned them away and no Kyama would be held after both he and Karen had turned them away. Karen mulls over her fate as arbiter in this latest case.

When at last she set off back toward the farm, she encountered three young men and a boy; Kabero's brothers. Karen asked about Kabero but they told her they had not seen him since the night before and were now out looking for him. They believe him to have committed suicide or to have been lost in the bush and eaten by the lions.

Wamai Summary

While making her way to the Kyama, Karen reflects on the fortunes of Kaninu, the father of Kabero; and Jogona, the father of Wamai. Kaninu was one of Karen's biggest squatters, owning thirty-five head of cattle, five wives and six goats. They had had squabbles in the past, Kaninu and Karen, because of his moving cattle into and out of her land at night while a quarantine was in effect for foot-and-mouth disease. Were they to be found on her land, the entire farm would have been quarantined. Conversely, Jogona was a poor man, having only one old wife and three goats. Karen knew him as well, because after a couple of murders in the area, he had, for a week, been stationed outside Karen's house as a night watchman.

At the Kyama, after considerable deliberation, Farah proposed a settlement of forty sheep, which was to be the basis for the negotiations going forward. After a week of

sittings of the Kyama, the final sum of forty sheep was agreed upon. A fortnight after the proceedings, however, three old Kikuyu arrived from Nyeri claiming that Wamai was not the son of Jogona but their late brother's son. They took up abode on the farm and threatened to bring the case before the District Commissioner.

Some days later, Jogona came to Karen to ask her to write down for him the account of his relations to the dead child and its family; he intended to take the report before the District Commissioner. In the account, it tells of how Jogona had, at the behest of his friend, Waweru Wamai, taken over his wife and child upon Waweru's death. Jogona would, in turn, ensure that the wife's father was paid the two remaining goats still owed him as part of her purchase price. The document served its purpose: having read it, the D.C. dismissed the appeal of the Nyeri people and the document quickly became Jogona's great treasure. He made a leather bag for it, embroidered with beads and hung it on a strap around his neck. From time to time, he would bring it to Karen so that she could read it to him again.

Wanyangerri Summary

When Karen first visited him in hospital, Wanyangerri was frightened and overcome with emotion, weeping and begging to be taken back to the farm. A week later, however, on her second visit, Karen found him calm and collected. The doctor treating him had been to the war in France and using a metal band and skin grafts, was able to fashion for Wanyangerri a new jaw. Although it took many months to complete, when it was done Wanyangerri was able to eat and speak almost normally, though, the latter he did with a slight lisp.

On one of her visits during this time, Karen sees three patients, a black man and two boys. One of the orderlies in the ward took pleasure in explaining the most intriguing cases to her and related the trio's story: They were Nubians in the band of the King's African Rifles, the black soldiers of Kenya. The man was a horn-player and the boys, drummers. One day, in a fit of rage, he fired his rifle over the barracks and then tried to cut the boys' throats and his own.

During Wanyangerri's recovery, a number of months after the accident, Farah told Karen that Kabero was not dead and was, in fact, living with the Masai. He had apparently almost been eaten by hyenas and he had spent all night in a tree, but he survived and now, Farah said, a rich old Masai who had no children wanted Kabero and was busy negotiating with Kaninu. When next she saw Kaninu, she questioned him about the boy, and told him to have him brought back to the farm. He would not be hanged, Karen said, but he must be brought to her when he returned.

One day, five years later, Kaninu appeared on the farm to tell Karen that Kabero had returned. By then, the government had introduced the *Kipanda*, requiring the registration of every Native. A police officer would have to be called to the farm and so, on the appointed day, long before the officer arrived, Kaninu brought Kabero to Karen. He looked from head-to-toe a Masai warrior. The policeman arrived and took great interest in the old case of the shooting accident, and had wanted to re-open the case,

but at length it was discovered that it was too old to do so and nothing more was done of it.

Before that time, however, a great many things happened on the farm. A few days after Wanyangerri's return, Karen had consented to allow his father, Wainaina, to be given a bottle of milk a day from her own cows to feed Wanyangerri, who could not yet chew maize. Three weeks later, Kaninu, in distress, had come to tell Karen that he had already given ten sheep to Wainaina, who now wanted a cow and a calf from him as well. When asked why, he would not say. Karen sent for Farah who told her why Kaninu was allowing himself to be blackmailed. Wainaina's mother was said to be a witch who had cast a spell upon Kaninu causing all his cows to go blind, which they now were. Karen decides to send for Kinanjui.

A Kikuyu Chief Summary

Kinanjui was a friend of Karen's who lived about nine miles northeast of the farm, and who had proven helpful to her on many occasions. She recounts an incident, some years before that had strengthened their friendship: Kinanjui had come to the house one day while Karen was lunching with a friend and while waiting, she knew, he would have expected a drink. Karen however, had little alcohol left in the house and so filled a tumbler with a concoction of all the strong liquids she could find, expecting it to keep Kinanjui occupied until her friend left and she could then see him.

However, after a brief sip he emptied the glass in single swallow. Half an hour later her houseboys informed her that Kinanjui was dead. She had wanted to send Farah to fetch a doctor but they were unable to get the car to start and so, at Kinanjui's people's behest, waited a little longer before doing anything. An hour later, Kinanjui simply got up and walked home. He believed Karen had run a great risk in giving him alcohol (you are not allowed to give Natives alcohol) to make him happy.

So now, she sent a runner to Kinanjui's village to tell him of the shooting accident and to ask for his help in resolving the matter. One afternoon, he arrives in a car he had just the day before purchased from the American Consul. He would not get out until Karen had seen him in it.

People from all over the farm, including Wainaina and his mother and Kinanu and his large family were present at the meeting and here Karen explained that the payment of a cow and calf would be the last made to Wainaina and that Kinanjui was here to certify the closing of the matter. However, when the two animals were brought out, Wainaina and his mother refused to accept them, saying that the cow was too old. At this, a great argument broke through the crowd. When the ruckus died down and everyone reluctantly agreed, Karen had them dip their thumbs in cart-grease and put their thumb-mark on a written agreement.

Chapters 5 – 9 Analysis

The extent of her relationship with the people on the farm is here shown in considerable detail. As the owner of the land, she is accorded enough respect by the local people to adjudicate in disputes and other matters of the farm. Throughout the book, Blixen goes to great lengths to illustrate and contrast the disparate view taken by the Natives and Europeans in many matters. Here, their sense of justice is juxtaposed. To the Natives, the issue of culpability is irrelevant. Whether the shooting was an accident or not was of little concern. What was important was that because of the outcome brought about, whether intentional or not, reparations now had to be made.

Blixen's attitude towards the Natives, although mostly one of respect, wavers at times between disbelief, admiration and exasperation at their queer mannerisms, ideals and attitudes. Blixen spends a considerable amount of exposition on the differences between Africans and Europeans and although not racist, her tone is somewhat condescending at times.. In addition, the constant juxtaposition of abject poverty and luxury is a recurring theme throughout the book. At the farm, people avail themselves of find food and drink and of luxuries such as the gramophone and cuckoo clock, while the living conditions of the squatters are considerably different. Of course, the Natives do not really see themselves as poor, as their value system is entirely different from that of the Europeans. As Blixen states, 'the richest amongst them lives as the poor.'

They, she believes are much closer to nature than anyone else and even says at one point that 'the umbilical cord of nature has, with them, not been quite cut through.' Blixen, because of the time she spent with them, had a much better understanding of them than many people had and often speaks of the trouble she foresees there will be between Europeans and the Natives. For all her analysis of the relationship between black and white, Blixen does not appear to take sides and never favors one over the other.

Blixen's recounting of her time on the farm does not take place sequentially. Rather, she refers to specific incidents and will leap forward and back through time as she attempts to give context and bearing to the incidents that comprised her life in Africa. In this, the first half of the book, the stories are mostly literal, while later Blixen's accounts assume a more poetic and symbolic nature.

The concept of aristocracy and everything that it implies is touched upon repeatedly in Out of Africa. Blixen, herself a baroness, is surrounded by either common people (i.e. the laborers on the farm) or other nobility such as Denys Finch-Hatton, Kinanjui the chief of the Kikuyus or the Prince of Wales. Similarly, she sees a form of majesty in nature as well, of which the lions can be said to be the kings.

Chapters 10 - 17

Chapters 10 - 17 Summary

Big Dances Summary

The greatest social functions held at the farm were the *Ngomas*, the big Native dances at which up to fifteen hundred or two thousand guests were entertained. The entertainment offered by Karen was modest – snuff for the women, sugar for the children and occasionally, with the D.C.'s permission, *tembu*, a drink made from sugar cane. However, the farm was highly thought of because it offered a great expanse of level ground on which the young dancers could perform and as such, the dances were always events of great importance and anticipation.

Held sometimes during the day and at other times, at night, these dances drew great crowds. The night Ngomas were held only in autumn, after the maize harvesting and below the full moon. During these night events, the dancers would gather in a dancing ring and perform around a fire. At one such Ngoma, a farewell feast given to Karen before going to Europe on a visit, a dramatic incident took place. The dance had been going on for a number of hours when a stir began to run through those assembled. The dancers slowed. The Masai were coming. Eventually, twelve Masai warriors arrived and for a while, it seemed they might join the dancing ring, but then attacked the group. A Masai and three Kikuyu had been badly injured in the ensuing fracas.

The next morning, Karen witnessed a number of young Kikuyu, under the direction of Wainaina's mother, leaping and poking sticks into the embers of the fire; they were making a spell to prevent the Masai from having success in love with the Kikuyu girls.

A Visit from Asia Summary

Choleim Hussein was a big Indian timber merchant in Nairobi with whom Karen had done many deals when first clearing her farmland. One day he asked for permission to bring a High Priest from India to visit. Although at first she had declined because of the various stipulations and rituals that needed to be observed, at seeing his and Farah's disappointment she eventually conceded.

On the day of the visit, Karen was out in the fields on the tractor when the High Priest and his entourage arrived. Upon meeting him, however, she discovered that she was to entertain him alone even though he could not speak English or Swahili and Karen did not speak his language. Nevertheless, they spent an amicable afternoon together and on leaving, he presented her with a gift of a ring with a pearl. She too, felt the need to give him something more than the sham gift of one hundred rupees Hussein had given her to give to him as part of the pageantry of his visit, and so had Farah bring a lion skin for the High Priest.

The Somali Women Summary

Here, Karen recounts the customs, beliefs and ways of the Somali women in Farah's family – his wife's mother and younger sister and a cousin – whom he had brought with to the farm from Somaliland. Later, Farah took in a motherless girl of the tribe. They and Karen had in time become well acquainted and together spoke of numerous things: they asked incredulously if it was true that in some nations in Europe, their maidens were given away to husbands for free and they also took an interest in the happenings on the farm and other local affairs.

Karen had even in time made it something of a habit of sitting with them, in Farah's house, at the end of the day. The Somali women were friendly and amiable with the white people who visited the farm like Berkeley Cole and Denys Finch-Hutton. Though Mohammedan, the girls had even accompanied Karen to the French Mission on occasion and were there in awe of the lofty building, the life-size statue of the Virgin Mary and the stained glass windows.

Old Knudsen Summary

Karen remembers, chief among the many drifters that had passed through the farm over the years, Old Knudsen. It was under his advice that they, at a time when the farm was particularly hard up, burnt charcoal to sell to the Indians in Nairobi. Though Karen remembers the charcoal burning as a pleasant task, they never made much money from it. During this time, she learnt much of his past life, of the shipwrecks, plagues, false friends and short successes that pockmarked his existence. Though he never made mention of any such person, Karen believed there to be a woman, wife, mother or school-dame – she did not know who – in his life from whom he had fled at one time or another.

During his time there, Old Knudsen had also helped to make a pond on the farm, something which was to be a great boon, for in Africa water is always short. They had had trouble with the dam, which upon completion was two hundred feet long, because after long dry periods the big rains would wash away parts of it. However, they managed to strengthen the earthwork by getting all the squatters' stock to stamp the structure when the herdboys led them down to the pond to drink. In time, the water reached up to seven feet deep in places, and the pond became the heart of the farm.

Later, two more ponds were created lower down from the first. After the first had been finished, however, Knudsen had wanted to put fish, a kind of perch, into it and Karen agreed that this would be a good idea. Getting them however, was not an easy prospect and Karen vetoed the idea when it became clear that Knudsen's plans for obtaining them were less than savory. Upon his death, she had had a number of heated arguments with the Nairobi municipality over the arrangements for his funeral. Some time after his death, Karen succeeded in setting perch into the pond.

A Fugitive Rests on the Farm Summary

There was, Karen recalls, a Swede by the name of Emmanuelson who held the position of maitre d'hotel at one of the hotels in Nairobi at which she sometimes lunched. He had at one time appeared on the farm asking for a loan so that he may go to Tanganyika, fearing that if he stayed he would be sent to jail. Shortly thereafter, he was arrested in Nairobi, but was never sent to jail.

Some time later, he again appeared on the farm early one evening and asked whether he could perhaps stay the night. He was, he said, on his way to Tanganyika but had lost his way and now sought food and shelter. Though disbelieving of his story, Karen allowed him to stay the night.

During their conversation he revealed that he is in fact, an actor and that, yes, he did intend to make his way to Tanganyika on foot; a treacherous journey of ninety miles because of the extreme temperatures and wild animals. The next morning Karen gave him money (she had no money in the house but got four rupees from Farah), a parcel of sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs and the remainder of the bottle of Chambertin 1906 they had shared the night before. She also gave him a lift for the first ten miles of his journey in her car.

Six months had passed when she received a letter sent from Dodoma. It was from Emmanuelson and contained the fifty rupees she had lent him the first time, the four rupees of Farah's and a letter detailing his exploits. He had obtained work as a bartender, but had only gotten as far as he did, he said, because of the Masai who found him along the road and who had shown him great hospitality and kindness. He traveled with them most of the way and entertained them so well that they were loath to let him leave.

Visits of Friends Summary

Karen remembers the parade of friends (from both near and far) that passed through the farm over the years; their visits had always been happy times in her life. Denys Finch-Hatton had undertaken numerous long safaris and brought Karen trophies from the hunts such as leopard and cheetah skins, snake and lizard skins and marabou feathers. Hugh Martin of the Land Office was a brilliant man well versed in rare literature who would come up from Nairobi to visit Karen. Gustav Mohr of Norway, a farm manager from the other side of Nairobi, had a propensity to complain about farming and the country but helped Karen with work on the farm more than any man in the country,.

Ingrid Linstrom was the daughter and wife of Swedish officers and had first come to the country with her family to make quick money on the burgeoning flax market, but the market bottomed out and she established a poultry farm and market garden to save the family. In time she too fell deeply in love with the land and its people. She and Karen were good friends.

A Mrs. Darrell Thompson of Njoro, whom Karen hardly knew, had come out to visit her upon being told by doctors that she had only a few months to live. After her death, a pony, Poor-box, arrived on the farm from Ireland, having been left to Karen by Mrs. Thompson. He won the jumping competition of Kabete held in honor of the Prince of Wales's visit. Poor-box died six months after that of horse-sickness.

In addition, there was also Old Mr. Bulpett, the very ideal of an English gentleman of the Victorian age, who was a great friend to Karen. He had once been La Belle Otéro's lover. Karen, Denys Finch-Hatton and he had gone for a picnic to the Ngong Hills on his seventy-seventh birthday.

The Noble Pioneer Summary

Karen remembers with fondness Berkeley Cole and Denys Finch-Hatton, who, though loved and admired by many in England and the colony, were outcasts simply because, in Karen's eyes, they were anachronisms of another age, of an earlier England. They had both considered Karen's house as something of a communist establishment, availing themselves of all it had to offer when they visited but also keeping it stocked with wine and tobacco and books and gramophone records.

Berkeley was a small, slight man with red hair and had been an early settler, a pioneer of the colony who could speak the Masai's language. When he stayed at the farm, Masai chiefs would often visit and sit with him. In addition, it was because of this friendship that an important ceremony once took place on the farm: for their aid in the Great War, the Masai were to be awarded medals, a dozen of which were to be, because of his affiliation with them, handed out by Berkeley.

Berkeley had possessed a great love for the ocean and had often fantasized that he and Karen, when they made money, buy a dhow and go trading to Mombasa, Lamu and Zanzibar. To cheer him up, Karen had purchased in a Copenhagen shop, a pair of heavy ship's lanterns which she hung on either side of the front door as if it were a ship of sorts. They even developed a kind of signaling system so that, when returning from the forest, he would know what kind of mood Karen was in.

At Karen's invitation, Berkeley had come to stay at the farm at a time when he took ill. She was due to go to Europe on holiday but offered to stay and look after him, an offer which he declined. While in Paris, she heard that he had died, having simply dropped dead outside his house. She and others in the area felt that with his death, an era had ended.

Wings Summary

Denys Finch-Hatton had at the time no other home in Africa other than Karen's farm, where he stayed between safaris. He loved to hear a good story, a trait Karen thought most rare and admirable. She often made up stories for him. He, in turn, taught her Latin, and to read the Bible and Greek Poets and gave her a gramophone.

Before sunrise on one New Year's morning, Karen and Denys were driving with great haste upon the new Narok road. He had lent a rifle to a friend of his and had forgotten to explain a certain trick to the rifle by which the trigger may malfunction and was now afraid that it could put his friend in harm's way. En route, they discover a dead giraffe bull – it is illegal to shoot giraffe – and would some time later have to defend themselves against the charge of having killed it. A lioness was feeding on the carcass and Denys did, however, shoot and kill her.

Two miles further ahead, the road was yet unfinished and so they had little choice but to leave Denys' friend's fate to chance. When he returned, he told them he had not even used the rifle. Upon returning to the carcasses of the giraffe and lioness, they discover a lion there. This time, Karen is the one to kill it. Denys and his servant Kanuthia skin the lions and afterwards they drink the claret and eat the raisins and almonds Karen had brought with her.

Before this event, in the early days of their friendship, Karen and Denys had had another adventure with lions: a pair of them had attacked and killed two of the oxen on the farm. Therefore, the next night she, as torchbearer, and he, armed with a rifle, found and killed the two young lions responsible.

Denys had also brought his Moth plane to Africa and in it, he and Karen flew to Lake Natron, ninety miles southeast of the farm. There they landed and lunched. While there, a group of Masai, curious about the plane, approached and struck up a conversation with them. From there they flew to Naivasha where they landed at the farm of a friend. At other times, they had simply taken shorter flights over the Ngong Hills, usually around sunset, where they would hope to see buffaloes.

Chapters 10 – 17 Analysis

This particular section of the novel introduces the various people who played, in their particular ways, an important role in Blixen's life. That her husband receives barely a mention in the book is indicative of their strained relationship. Partly due to his infidelities, the two separated in 1921 and the divorce was finalized four years later. Of them all, Denys Finch-Hatton plays the most significant role in Blixen's life and it is inferred, though never stated, that he is Blixen's lover. Whether their relationship was platonic or not, is not entirely evident. She speaks a great deal of the things they did together, and how, it would seem, luck and fate were always on their side when they did things together; how they had great luck with lions, for instance.

The farmhouse itself served as something of a haven, or an island, from the outside world and it is here that Blixen's many friends and acquaintances would seek solace or escape. She speaks of Berkeley Cole and Denys Finch-Hatton in reverential terms, but both are destined to be tragic heroes and her view of them as outcasts foreshadows their demise. To each of their deaths, she attributes great heartache and each is a defining event in not only her life, but of the colony, as well.

Her jaunts with Finch-Hatton in his plane she remembers as the most exciting of her time on the farm. This in itself is somewhat morbidly ironic because it is in that very plane that Finch-Hatton is killed and taken from Blixen forever. That which brought her great joy also removed him from her life.

Old Knudsen symbolizes romanticism and idealism. He is a creature of his own making and lives through the stories he told Blixen, none of which she would ever have been able to verify. He is a drifter, as well as a dreamer with numerous plans and 'get-rich-quick' schemes. Despite his many flaws (it would appear he is a drunk and unreliable), he leaves a lasting legacy on the farm in the form of the ponds which he helped conceive.

Chapters 18 - 49

Chapters 18 - 49 Summary

The Fireflies Summary

In the first week of June, after the long rains are over, there are fireflies in the woods. Karen marvels at the beauty of nature and of life and imagines children chasing them happily, frolicking in the woods.

The Roads of Life Summary

As a child, Karen remembers, she had been told the story of a man who had woken up one night at the sound of a terrible noise. Setting out to find the source of the noise, he followed the road to the pond not far from his house. Despite the obstacles he must overcome to get there and the meandering route he takes, he arrives and fixes the leak in the dam, the source of the noise. The next morning he sees a stork out in the pond and is glad. The tale is an allegory for determination and hard work.

The Wild Came to the Aid of the Wild Summary

During the war, Karen's farm manager had been buying up oxen for the army and down in the Masai Reserve had bought a number of young oxen that had been a mixture of Masai cattle and buffalo. One such animal was exceedingly hard to tame and continuously stormed the men and broke against its yoke. To break its spirit, the manager had its legs tied together and left in the bullocks' paddock. Karen awoke one night to a commotion. A leopard had got into the paddock and eaten the right hind-leg off the animal. The manager had no choice but to shoot and kill the ox.

Esa's Story Summary

Before Kamante, Karen had a cook named Esa. While in Nairobi one day, Karen was approached by an old lady who told her that Esa was her former cook and that she wanted him back. Her husband was a government official, she said and if he did not come back he would be assigned to the Carrier Corps to participate in the war. When Karen told him of this the next evening, so afraid of this threat was he that he left right away. He was away from the farm for nearly a year, during which time Karen saw him only occasionally when she was in Nairobi. The old woman worked him hard.

When at last the war ended, Esa returned to Karen of his own accord and brought her a present; a framed picture of a tree, upon the leaves of which were written words in Arabic he had had made by the old Mohammedan priest of Nairobi.

The Iguana Summary

When in the Reserve, Karen had sometimes come upon iguanas and once had gotten it into her head to kill one to make 'pretty things' from its skin. Upon killing it, however, the color faded from the animal. She had 'shot an iguana' once again when, up at Meru she saw a young Native girl with a small embroidered bracelet that she thought truly beautiful and had Farah buy it from her. However, as soon as it came upon her own arm, it looked nothing at all as it should, for it was upon the Native's black arm that it found its exquisitely contrasting colors. Therefore, to the settlers of East Africa she advises, 'For the sake of your own eyes and heart, shoot not the iguana.'

Farah and the Merchant of Venice Summary

Upon receiving a letter from a friend back home, telling her of a new staging of the play, *The Merchant of Venice*, Karen recalled vividly the play and told Farah of it. He is incredulous that the Jew should have given up his claim to the pound of flesh, saying that he could have taken off very small bits, doing the man a great deal of harm while also making sure he took off exactly a pound of flesh.

The Elite of Bournemouth Summary

Karen had a neighbor who had worked as a doctor back in his homeland and once, when the wife of one her houseboys was about to die during childbirth, she had him called. He came, in the midst of a terrible storm, and saved the woman and child. Later he wrote to her to say that he had come on her appeal, but that she should never again ask him to do such a thing. He had after all, practiced on the elite of Bournemouth.

Of Pride Summary

Being in the neighborhood of the Game Reserve and the presence of the big game – they themselves being proud creatures – in and around the farm gave it a particular character. Here, Karen speaks of pride and its correlation to religion.

The Oxen Summary

Saturday afternoons were a blessed time on the farm, Karen felt. There would be no mail until Monday and everyone looked forward to Sunday when he or she could rest or play the whole day. The thought of the oxen, however, pleased Karen above all things. For the oxen, she said had carried the heavy load of the advance of European civilization in Africa.

Of the Two Races Summary

Here, Karen likens the white and black races to the two sexes, saying that neither is more important than the other is. She also says that that asserting that one played a greater role in the life of the other is incorrect.

A Wartime Safari Summary

When war broke out, Karen's husband and two Swedish assistants left her alone on the farm in order to volunteer for a provisional intelligence service at the German border. Shortly thereafter, she, along with a Swedish neighbor, went to Kijabe where they would be in charge of a camp to which runners from the border brought news and from which that news was relayed via telegraph to Nairobi.

At the behest of her husband, she had four ox-wagons loaded with provisions and ammunition sent to the border. On the eve of their departure, the South African man, Klapprott, who was to lead the team was arrested on suspicion of being a German (he was later cleared) and so it fell to Karen to take charge of the transport. In all, they were gone for three months, because upon completion of the first transport, Karen and her team were sent on numerous other errands; she got to know much about the Masai Reserve and learnt to speak a little Masai. It was, she recalls, an indescribably happy time for her.

During the time, the party had numerous strange encounters: while working at night to free a wagon's wheel from behind a large rock, a lion killed one of the spare oxen not a few yards from Karen herself. An ox once drank their entire supply of paraffin and died, leaving them without light until they could restock the paraffin; and she even had tea with Lord Delamere himself when, once, their path crossed very near to his camp.

The Swaheli Numeral System Summary

When she was still new in the country, a shy young Swedish dairyman taught her numbers in Swaheli, though, because the word for 'nine' had a dubious ring to it for Swedish ears, he would not repeat it and simply told Karen that the Swaheli Numeral System had no 'nine', nor 'nineteen, nor ninety and so on. She had thought it so until others later corrected her.

'I Will Not Let Thee Go Except Thou Bless Me' Summary

Sometimes, when the rainy season was finished, Karen would recall the time of the *marka mbaya*, the bad year, the time of drought. At those times, the herdboys would graze their cows near the house and one among them had on occasion played a short song on his flute. Whenever she heard it afterwards, it would recall that time and all the despair and anguish that came with it. The bad time blessed them and went away, and so too, Karen says about her life, 'I will not let you go except you bless me.'

The Eclipse of the Moon Summary

There was, one year in Kenya, an eclipse of the moon. Karen remembers a letter she received from an Indian stationmaster at Kikuyu in which he asked, in halting English, whether to leave his cows out to pasture or bring them into the stable during the eclipse.

Natives and Verse Summary

One evening out in the maize field, Karen had, simply to pass the time, spoken to the laborers in Swaheli verse – there was no sense in the verse, done simply as it was for the sake of rhyme alone. When next they asked her to do so, they would ask her to 'Speak like rain,' which she took to be a great compliment given that rain is always longed for and appreciated in Africa.

Kitosch's Story Summary

Kitosch was a young Native in the service of a young white settler in Molo. On a particular Wednesday in June, the settler had lent his horse to a friend and sent Kitosch to bring back the mare with instructions not to ride her but to lead her. He did ride her however and when the settler found out about it that Saturday, he had Kitosch flogged and tied up the following day in his store. It was here that Kitosch died.

When the case was brought before the High Court in Nakuru, it was argued by the defense that the beating had alone not been enough to kill Kitosch, but that his will to die, alone, was sufficient to kill him. In the end, the jury gave a verdict of Guilty of grievous hurt and a sentence imposed of two years R.I.

Some African Birds Summary

Karen here speaks of the many birds of Africa: the nightingale; the black and white storks who follow the swarms of locusts and feast upon them at their leisure; the crested cranes whose dance she imagines to be an almost sacred ritual; the greater hornbills that came to eat the fruits of the Cape-Chestnut tree; and the flamingos with their long legs and bizarre curves of their necks and bodies. She recalls a time when she traveled from Port Said to Marseilles in a French boat that had on board a hundred and fifty flamingos. Not made for such conditions, the rough weather would cause them to lose balance, break their legs and be trampled by the others in the cage. The keeper, who expected to lose at least twenty percent of them before the trip was over, would then, throw the dead birds overboard.

Pania Summary

Pania was Dusk the deerhound's son, and who, Karen believed, had acquired a sense of humor. While walking with him one day near the pond, he suddenly bolted towards a tree, came back and ran again, making Karen come with. In the tree was a serval-cat which she shot and killed. Some time after the incident, while walking again on the

same road, Pania flew once more towards the tree, barking. Karen, thinking it was a second serval-cat, went running up to the tree but on getting there discovered it to be only an ordinary black housecat.

Pania wagged his tail, whined, and jumped around as if to say in Pantomime, Karen believed, that he knew all along that it was just an ordinary cat, but had played a joke on her, laughing at how quickly she came running along at the thought of it being a serval-cat.

Esa's Death Summary

When he returned from the year away, it became clear that Esa was a changed man and had, after a time got it into his head to take a second wife. Though Karen attempted to dissuade him, he continued with his plans and in due course, he brought his new wife, Fatoma to the farm. She was a young girl however, and ran away frequently to the Native soldiers in the barracks of Nairobi. At first, he had simply forgiven her, but in time fetched her only as a matter of course; she was 'his property' after all. Eventually, Fatoma poisoned Esa and ran away.

The Earthquake Summary

Around Christmas one year, a light earthquake struck the area. It came in three shocks of a few seconds each but did only slight damage, overturning Native huts and the like. At the first shock, Karen had thought a leopard had gotten onto the roof of the house, at the second she thought she might die and by the third she was filled with joy at having experienced something she thought she never would have.

The next morning, Juma came to her to say that the King of England was dead. When asked how he knew he replied that because the earth had shook and tossed during the night. The King of England, however, Karen says, lived for many years after.

George Summary

While on a cargo-boat to Africa, Karen met a young boy named George. One day onboard, he had come to her to say that it was his sixth birthday the next day and his mother was inviting the English passengers to tea. Karen told him that she was not English (she was, in fact, Danish) and when he asked what she was, she jokingly replied that she was a Hottentot. He told her that he still wanted her to come and then walked back to his mother and aunt and announced: 'She is a Hottentot. But I want her.'

Kejiko Summary

Karen once had a riding-mule that she called Molly. The mule-sice, however, called her Kejiko, which means 'the spoon' because he believed that, that is what she looked like. Karen could not see the resemblance until one day, while in the driver's seat of the cart being pulled by Molly and three other mules, Karen sees that from above the mule did

look something like a spoon. 'He that cometh from above is above all, and what he hath seen that he testifieth.'

The Giraffes go to Hamburg Summary

While staying in Mombasa, in the house of Sheik Ali bin Salim, the Lewali of the coast, Karen one day sees, while passing by in a rowing boat, two giraffes onboard a German cargo-steamer. They were being transported to a traveling menagerie in Hamburg, Farah told her, and she secretly hopes that they will die before they get there so that they need not endure the ignoble existence thrust upon them. She wonders if they will dream of their lost country and thinks that someone would have to commit heinous transgressions against humans before we can ask the giraffes for their forgiveness.

In The Menagerie Summary

About a hundred years ago, Count Schimmelman, a Danish traveler to Hamburg, came across a small menagerie and while in Hamburg had come every day to visit it. There, one day, he engaged in conversation with the proprietor, who spoke of various things. While looking at the snakes, the proprietor, to amuse Count Schimmelman, took one out and it slithered slowly up his arm. To this Count Schimmelman remarked that were the proprietor in his employ, he would now be dismissed, reasoning that a fear of snakes is a sound human instinct and that the man who can caress a snake is capable of anything.

The proprietor replies that one must loves snakes, for every time we ask the Lord for a fish, he will instead give a serpent.

Fellow Travelers Summary

At the table on the boat to Africa, Karen had sat between a Belgian going to the Congo and an Englishman who had been to Mexico numerous times. One evening, he told them both of how in Mexico he had met an old Spanish lady on a farm in the mountains who asked him for news of the world. He told her that 'men fly now.' This she said she knew and had had many an argument with her priest about it. She asked, do men fly with their legs drawn up under them or stretched out behind them?

The Naturalist and the Monkeys Summary

Karen recalls the time a Swedish professor of Natural History had come to the farm to ask her to intervene with the Game Department on his behalf. He had come to Africa to study at what phase of the embryo, the monkey's foot begins to diverge from that of the human and to do so had applied for a license to kill fifteen hundred Colobus monkeys. Karen assisted him to send a second letter to which he was told the number of monkeys on his license would be raised from four to six. He was shocked and hurt at the news and left the farm without saying a word.

Karomenya Summary

Karomenya was a deaf and dumb nine-year-old boy who lived on the farm. He was, in spite of his handicap, a friendly person but also a thief who used to steal sugar and cigarettes to give to the other children. Karen had tried for a time to give him jobs in the kitchen or the house, but at these, he failed or quickly became bored. He was strong and liked to move things from one place to another.

The deepest impression, however, that Karen was able to make on the boy was when she gave him a dog whistle. Using it and discovering its effect of bringing the dogs to him filled him with surprise. Karomenya took a liking to the dogs and began walking them for Karen. She had observed him once, without him knowing she was there, letting the dogs run free and calling them back to him, repeating this three or four times. However, one day, he no longer had the whistle and Karen believed that perhaps he had thrown it away himself, unable to reconcile it with the other ideas of his life.

Pooran Singh Summary

Pooran Singh was the blacksmith on the farm and a man who worked at a superhuman pace. He was also the jack-of-all-trades on the farm and was to the people a carpenter, saddler and cabinet-maker. He worked there for many years, Karen recalls, but was an ascetic who sent most of his wages back home to his family in India.

A Strange Happening Summary

Karen remembers an event that occurred during the time in the Masai Reserve when she was doing transport work for the government. In the distance, they had seen a great herd of game coming towards them and she had at first thought them wildebeests but when they eventually drew nearer, she saw that they were in fact wild dogs. These are generally seen three or four at a time, and yet here came around five hundred of them. The Natives on the safari believed it a bad omen and when, afterwards, Karen had told the story to acquaintances and friends, none of them ever believed it.

The Parrot Summary

An old Danish ship-owner recalled his young days and of the time when, at the age of sixteen, he had spent a night in a brothel in Singapore. There, an old Chinese lady had a parrot ostensibly given to her by an English lover from her youth. The parrot was able to say sentences in many different languages, but there was one that no one had ever been able to understand. It was not Danish, but the man recognized it as classic Greek, and told her what it was: a verse from Sappho.

Chapters 18 – 49 Analysis

Comprised as it is of numerous short stories, allegories and other musings, this particular part of the novel moves away from a literal retelling of her life on the farm and into more metaphysical descriptions that in themselves reveal a great deal about Blixen's personality and ideals. The concept of a strong will to die is brought up in various guises, the most obvious of which is Kitosch's story, while another being that of the ox whose hind leg was eaten off by the leopard; nature would rather see it dead, than its spirit broken and tamed. This is indicative perhaps of Blixen's own feelings at the time and the thought that she could, if the farm's troubles ever got too much to bear, simply escape from it all by willing herself to death perhaps offered a form of hope, or at least peace, for her.

There are many stories too, of animals in captivity (the giraffes and flamingos) that Karen believes find escape in death rather than be held to lives that go so completely against their nature. Perhaps she saw the same in Denys Finch-Hatton, something of a wild animal that would never be 'caged' in London, but would rather roam free in Africa.

Esa's story can been seen as an indictment of the Europeans' presence in Africa and a foreshadowing of the problems to be encountered in the future. Esa had been at a time of a very gentle disposition, but after the year he spends away during the war, he returns a changed man, and is ultimately to his detriment because it is this new attitude that causes him to take a second wife who eventually kills him.

The Iguana is symbolic of how, in claiming something for ourselves, we ultimately destroy the beauty of the thing we covet. The beauty of nature for instance, when admired from far is everlasting, but once the hunters have shot and killed the animals, in death, their majesty and grace is gone, making the whole endeavor rather pointless. The oxen, in the story of the same name, represent the Natives of the land, who toil and work resignedly and upon whose backs the nation was built. 'Fellow Travelers' is indicative of the lack of tolerance that many Englishmen had for the Natives.

In these latter stories and anecdotes are represented Karen's tumultuous emotions, no doubt brought about through the fortunes of the farm and its people, as they played such a vital role in her life. These stories run the gamut from humorous to profound. One of the most telling is 'I Will Not Let Thee Go Except Thou Bless Me' in which Blixen shows that she will not give up on life until it has blessed her.

Chapters 50 - 54

Chapters 50 - 54 Summary

Hard Times Summary

Over the years, the problems took their toll. In a good year, the farm was able to produce eighty to ninety tons of coffee, but three times in its existence, the farm endured a year of drought that was disastrous to its fortunes. In two bad years, they had picked only fifteen and sixteen tons while at the same time coffee prices fell from around a hundred pounds per ton to sixty or seventy. Times grew hard on the farm and Karen, for her part, initiated numerous plans to save it.

With the aid of a Belgian refugee, she had one year tried to grow flax on the spare land, but she had tried to grow one hundred and fifty acres (to do less would have been a waste of time), when the refugee had said no more than ten was possible. In addition, the Kikuyu could not be taught to harvest it properly. It was not a success. Many farmers had tried similar ideas, and for some, like Ingrid Lindstrom who saved her farm by planting pyrethrum used in making insecticides, things turned out well.

Karen tried to manure the fields, though this made no marked impact. Had the farm any capital and if they did not live hand-to-mouth, Karen would have liked to give up the coffee, cut down the trees and in their place plant forest trees, which would have been good for timber and firewood in the marketplace. When she could afford it, she planted eucalyptus trees but in that manner, it would have taken fifty years or more to plant sufficient quantities. Karen also had plans to keep cattle and start a dairy farm, but because the area was unclean (which meant there was East Coast Fever about) they would have had to dip the cattle and that would have made it difficult to compete with the cattle people up-country. Feeling the weight of the farm and all its peoples' troubles, Karen would, despite the threat of leopards, walk around the farm in the evening.

Two years before she left Africa for good, she returned from a visit in Europe and in Mombasa met Farah whom she asked about the harvest. At worst, she had expected sixty tons, but when at last she could bring herself to ask him, he said they had harvested only forty tons. At that, she knew they could not go on. Although distraught, she took solace in the fact that on her return at least her friends and people would be there.

That same year the grasshoppers came, having traveled south after two years of drought in Abyssinia. Rumors and tales of their arrival circulated, but even if they knew, there was little the farmers in the region could do but try to scare them away with fire, smoke and noise so that they moved to the next farm. When they did eventually come to the farm, they only stayed overnight and did little damage (they broke some big trees on the farm simply by sitting on them; such was their number). But the grasshoppers returned repeatedly over the next two or three months and although they did not do

much damage to the coffee-plantation, the leaves of the coffee trees being too hard to chew, ravished most everything else on the farm.

When at last Karen had no more money, she had to sell the farm; a big company in Nairobi bought it. They thought it too high up for coffee but intended to divide the land and lay out roads and in time, sell the land for building-plots. Until the most recent crop of coffee was harvested, Karen would remain on the farm to oversee its operation, but even then, she did not believe she would have to give up the farm. There was no reason to believe it, yet she believed she would remain in Africa until her death.

Death of Kinanjui Summary

That same year, the chief Kinanjui died. The quarantine regulations in the Masai Reserve had recently been suspended and he had personally gone to see to it that his cows were returned to him, together with the calves they had produced in exile. While there, he had been kicked in the thigh by a cow and the wound had gone gangrenous. He now lay dying in his hut and had sent for Karen. At the compound, she sees the car he had come to the farm in, now rusty and dilapidated.

Once there, she sits beside a prostrate Kinanjui and is told by one of his sons that a doctor from the mission had heard of his illness and was coming to fetch him (by now it was too late, he would die). He did not want to go to hospital and instead wanted Karen to take him back to her home before they came for him. She would have taken him, if she could, but the house was no longer hers. She also felt that he would likely die in her car or at the house and everyone who blame her for it. She left him there and he died that same night in the mission hospital.

The next afternoon two of his sons came to tell her the news and invite her to his funeral. The Kikuyu do not bury the dead but leave them out in the open to be picked clean by scavengers, but the government had taken great pains to get them to change their ways and so it was decided that there would be a funeral and it was, in all, a very European affair.

The Grave in the Hills Summary

Denys Finch-Hatton had come to stay for a while on the farm, but when Karen began packing, he went to stay in Hugh Martin's house in Nairobi. From there he drove everyday to dine with Karen and during those weeks, they went for short flights out over the Ngong Hills or the Game Reserve. Denys owned a piece of land down at the coast, thirty miles north of Mombasa on the Creek of Takaunga, on which he had built a small home. It is here that Karen stayed for a while, and although Denys had offered her the place permanently, she did not wish to stay there.

In May of the year Karen left Africa, Denys Finch-Hatton spent a week in Takaunga where he planned to build a larger house and grow mango trees. He went away in his plane with the intention to return home via Voi because there had been talk of elephants and a particularly large elephant bull and he wished to hunt them. Karen had asked to

go with him, but for the first time ever, he said no to her, reasoning that the journey was going to be too rough.

The following Thursday on which Denys was to have returned, Karen waited for him but when he did not come, she went into Nairobi to run some errands. Here, she sensed a deep sadness in the people, and was at first confused as to why her friends would not speak to her. She feels isolated and alone until Lady McMillan tells her that Denys had crashed his plane at Voi and died in the accident. The District Commissioner wrote to her some time later to reveal the exact details of the accident: Shortly after take-off, Denys had turned and was coming back quickly and low, two-hundred feet above the ground. The airplane swayed, began to spin, hit the ground and caught fire. Both Denys and the Native in the plane were killed.

Karen had his body brought up to Nairobi, in order to have him buried in the Ngong Hills, where she herself had thought she might be buried were she to die in Africa. The site had a great view of Mount Kenya and Kilimanjaro, and her house far away to the east. Much later, Karen and Farah would nail a white cloth to three tall poles behind Denys' gravesite so that she might be able to distinguish its exact location from her house. Still later, she took the whitewashed stones from her driveway and had them placed in a square to mark the grave so that it could never be lost in the undergrowth.

When Karen had left Africa, Denys' brother, Lord Winchilsea had an obelisk inscribed with the name of Denys' favorite poem (*The Ancient Mariner*) set on his grave. Moreover, back in England, his old schoolfellows built a stone bridge over a small stream between two fields in Eton in his memory.

Farah and I Sell Out Summary

By now the farm was no longer Karen's but the people who had purchased the land allowed her to remain as long as she liked, and for legal reasons charged her a shilling a day as occupational rent. She sold off her furniture and packed her belongings. She also had to deal with her dogs and horses, and she had initially thought she would shoot them, but after much deliberation gave them all to friends.

She had, some time before, wanted to give Pooran Singh a gift, and he declared that he would like a ring. She had no money for one and Denys would not have her give Singh the Abyssinian ring he himself had given her and had put it upon his own hand ostensibly until Singh was to have left. He died wearing it. By now, Karen had earned enough money from the sale of her furniture to buy him a ring and so she bought a heavy gold ring set with a big red stone in Nairobi.

A strange thing happened one morning on the farm: While outside, she saw Farah's white cock come upon a chameleon. Though frightened, the chameleon stood its ground and lashed its tongue at the cock, who snatched it in its beak and ripped the tongue out. Karen chased off the cock and smashed the chameleon with a rock, for it would not be able to live without its tongue. She was pleased she had been able to save

it from a slow, painful death and believed this act to be a sign of some sort that she had been seeking.

Although she herself was very busy on her own farm, Ingrid Lindstrom had come down to the farm to stay with Karen for a while. They would then walk about the farm and take mental stock of all the animals and vegetation on the farm, as though counting Karen's losses.

During all this, the fate of her squatters fell heavily on Karen's mind, for they would be turned off the land and could not, according to law, buy land of their own. They could go into the Kikuyu Reserve, but would not be guaranteed of finding enough land to keep all their livestock or remain together as a community. Therefore, it fell to Karen to petition the various government offices to get enough land for her squatters. It took considerable effort and much traveling back and forth to Nairobi, but eventually, Karen's application was successful. The government gave out a piece of the Dagoretti Forest Reserve to the squatters.

Farewell Summary

Before she left, the old men of the area had decided to hold an *Ngoma* for Karen, which she had never seen performed by such old people. It was, in effect, a great honor for the farm, though Karen herself was unaware that the government had prohibited these. Just when the dancers were about to begin, an Askari from Nairobi brought a letter to the house that informed them that the *Ngoma* should not take place. Kamante distributed the snuff that was to be dealt out after the dance and then everyone went away.

On the day she was to leave, Gustav Mohr came out in his car. After Karen said her goodbyes to her houseboys, they set off, but stopped for a while by the pond on the farm. At the train station, many of her friends came to say goodbye: Hugh Martin, Doctor Pangloss, Lord Delamere and many of the Somalis of Nairobi. The Somali women had even been there, but when they saw the men arrive, they lost heart and left before Karen arrived.

At Samburu station further down the train line, Karen sees the faint line of the Ngong Hills, now so far away as to be barely distinguishable.

Chapters 50 – 54 Analysis

The tone of this final part of the novel is expectedly downbeat being, as it is, one of resignation and defeat. Blixen's fate and that of the farm is all but decided and now everything moves slowly towards the inevitable conclusion. Everything also seems to be ending; the farm has been sold, Kikanjui is dead (his rusty, dilapidated car perhaps symbolic of the ruined state that everything in Karen's life seems to be in) as is Denys Finch-Hatton. Even in death, he seemed to possess a mythical quality; lions would often perch upon his gravesite.

That Blixen's time in Africa was to be ephemeral, that it would not last, is evident from the very beginning of the book, and here it happens even though she herself had never truly believed that she would not live out her days in Africa. However, even as she stands at the train station, it is as though 'her' Africa is no more. She can barely make out the Ngong Hills; they are distant and hazy like a memory.

Kinanjui and Finch-Hatton's death are both ignoble, contrary to their purported stature and nobility and this seems to echo a perverse sentiment in the latter stages of the book that everything seems to be going wrong. Even the Ngoma in Blixen's honor could not be held. It is almost as though the world as Blixen knows it has gone mad and that nothing will ever work out properly again.

At the conclusion of the novel, however, Karen does not seem to be as sad as she was in the months that preceded her departure. Perhaps because of the entire process of leaving having taken so long, that by the time it actually happened, she had come to terms with it. By the end of it all, Karen Blixen has changed remarkably as an individual. Her time in Africa has irrevocably altered her and it appears as though she has few regrets of her time there.

Characters

Farah Aden

Farah is Isak Dinesen's Somali servant. He remains with her the entire time she is in Africa and serves as her interpreter with the squatters.

Belknap

Belknap is Dinesen's American mill manager, an "exceptionally capable, inspired mechanic, but of an uneven mind." His mood swings are "a kind of emotional daily gymnastics to a lively temperament, much in need of exercise, and to which too little was happening."

Karen Blixen

See Isak Dinesen

Mr. Bulpett

Old Mr. Bulpett, also known as Uncle Charles, often comes to the farm for dinner. Dinesen regards him as an ideal English Victorian gentleman, noting he had swum the Hellespont, climbed the Matterhorn, and been romantically involved with a famous woman.

Barkeley Cole

Like Denys Finch-Hatton, Barkeley is a British expatriate who becomes good friends with Dinesen, From his neighboring farm on Mount Kenya, he brings her fine wine, books, and conversation while she offers him '"a chosen, comfortable corner of the world." Like Denys, he is an outcast.

A good judge of people, he harbors no illusions about life. Although he suffers from heart problems, he is also "a source of heat and fun." He dreams of running off with Dinesen to have adventures in foreign countries, but their lack of money keeps them in Africa. During his time in Africa, he became intimate with the Masai and so could speak with them "of the old days in their own tongue." Before Dinesen leaves the farm, he dies of heart disease.

hak Dinesen

Out of Africa is Dinesen's autobiography of her time in Kenya where she owns and operates a coffee plantation. She also acts as doctor, teacher, judge and friend to those who work for her and live on her land.

During her eighteen years on the farm, she develops a great love of the land and its people and forges strong friendships with them that last a lifetime. This love is evident in the stories, character sketches, and observations that she begins to record during lonely nights at the farm. After a series of financial setbacks, she is forced to sell the farm and leave her beloved Africa.

Emmanuelson

Emmanuelson is a gregarious Swede who works at a hotel in Nairobi. He asks Dinesen for a loan to help him journey to Tanganyika after losing his job. He explains he is an actor and hopes to find work there. She worries he wili perish in the hot sun or be attacked by lions and/or Masai warriors. Six months later a letter arrives with her money and the news that he reached Tanganyika, ironically, with the aid of the Masai.

Esa

Esa is a servant on the farm When his brother dies and leaves him a black cow, the once gentle and unassuming Esa determines "that from now fortune was going to smile on him" and so begins to develop "a terrible confidence in things." He decides to take a second wife, but she is young and headstrong and keeps running away from him. Eventually she poisons him and he dies.

Fathers

The fathers are a group of priests who live in the nearby French Roman Catholic Mission. When Dinesen attends Sunday mass, they provide news of the colony, "like a small lively group of brown, furry bees,□for they all grew long, thick beards." While showing keen interest in the life of the colony, they are "in their own French way exiles, patient and cheerful obeisants to some higher orders of a mysterious nature."

Denys Finch-Hatton

Finch-Hatton is an athlete, musician, art lover, and fine sportsman. When he decides to stay in East Africa, he moves in with Dinesen. He teaches her Latin, encourages her to read the Bible and the Greek poets, and brings her a gramophone that becomes "the voice of the farm." They enjoy the land together, whether on safari or from his plane.

The East Africans admire his "absolute lack of self-consciousness, or self-interest," and his "unconditional truthfulness."

After he dies in a plane crash, Dinesen notes that "he had watched and followed all the ways of the African Highlands, and better than any other white man, he had known their soil and seasons, the vegetation and the wild animals, the winds and smells ... their people. He had taken in the country, and in his eyes and his mind it had been changed, marked by his own individuality, and made part of him."

Ismail

Ismail is a strict Mohammedan Somali gun-bearer who works for Dinesen during her first years in Africa.

Kdbero

Kabero is the seven-year-old son of the old squatter Kaninu. While playing one day, Kabero accidentally shoots two boys and runs off to live with the Masai. When he returns, he is a young man, "a Masai from head to foot," with a "rigid, passive, and insolent bearing."

Kamante

Kamante is the nine-year-old son of one of her squatters. She toes to treat the scores covering his thin legs but is unsuccessful, subsequently, she sends him to the Scotch Mission hospital where he stays for three months. Kamante is "a wild creature" when she first meets him, "so utterly isolated from the world, and, by a sort of firm deadly resignation, completely closed to all surrounding life. . He had no wish for any sort of contact with the world round him, the contacts that he had known of had been too cruel for that."

When he returns from the hospital, he works as her servant for the next twelve years until she leaves the country. He takes care of her dogs, assists her doctoring, and becomes her cook.

Kaninu

Kaninu is Kabero's father.

Chief Kinanjui

Chief Kinanjui rules over more than one hundred thousand Kikuyus, the tribe that lives on the farm. He helps Dinesen settle disputes among the squatters.

Kitosch

Dinesen tells the story of this native man who dies after being flogged by his white master. After being tied up all mght, Kitosch had decided that he wanted to die, and shortly thereafter, did.

Old Knudson

An old blind Danish man, Knudson is allowed to remain on Dinesen's farm for six months until his death.

Ingrid Lindstrom

Ingrid is Dinesen's neighbor and friend. She comforts Dinesen during her final days in Africa, understanding "to the bottom of her heart, with great strength, with something of the strength of the elements themselves, what it is really like, when a woman farmer has to give up her farm, and leave it."

Themes

Search for Self

The predominant theme of *Out of Africa* is the search for self Soon after Dinesen relocates to East Africa, she finds herself alone in a foreign land with the enormous responsibility of trying to operate a successful coffee plantation. In order to accomplish this, she must get to know the land and the East Africans who work for and with her. In the process, she learns more about herself.

During her time in Africa, Dinesen transforms from a Danish aristocrat to a woman who forges a spiritual union with her new home. At one point she asks: "If I know a song of Africa . of the Giraffe, and the African new moon lying on her back, of the ploughs in the fields, and the sweaty faces of the coffee-pickers, does Africa know a song of me?"

Later, she answers that question when she acknowledges "The grass was me, and the air, the distant invisible mountains were me, the tired oxen were me. I breathed with the slight wind in the thorntrees."

Individual vs. Nature

One way Dinesen explores her self-identity is through her relationship with the land, which she finds challenging yet beautiful. She learns to stand her ground with lions and to cross a desert. When she decides to take provisions to British troops on the border at the outbreak of World War I, she travels for three months through rough terrain with a caravan of East Africans. She remembers, 'The air of the African highlands went to my head like wine, I was all the time slightly drunk with it, and the joy of these months was indescribable."

She also found incredible grace in the landscape. When a young antelope she names Lulu decides to take up residence at her farmhouse, she determines that "Lulu came in from the wild world to show that we were on good terms with it, and she made my house one with the African landscape, so that nobody could tell where the one stopped and the other began."

She later maintains that "the years in which Lulu and her people came round to my house were the happiest of my life in Africa. For that reason, I came to look upon my acquaintance with the forest antelopes as ... a token of friendship from Africa."

Freedom

Dinesen finds "infinite freedom" in Africa, explaining that "it is there that things are going on, destinies are made round you, there is activity to all sides, and it is none of your concern." While on the farm, she experiences a kind of freedom not usually allowed a

woman at that time. Through her interactions with the land and the people of Africa, Dinesen acts a farmer, a doctor, a teacher, a judge, a storyteller, and a friend.

Courage

To live and flourish in Africa, Dinesen exhibited much courage. She deals with lonely nights on the farm by composing stories that she later relates to friends who visit. She learns how to survive the harsh environment and shoots game when necessary. She also shows courage when she accepts her failure to keep the farm and her departure from the land that she has grown to love.

Culture Clash

In *Out of Africa,* Dinesen records the clash between the European settlers and the East Africans, which involve issues of class conflict and prejudice In fact, she compares the treatment of the Africans to the treatment of oxen: "the oxen in Africa have earned the heavy load of the advance of European civilization ... all of that we have taken away from the oxen, and in reward we have claimed their existence for ourselves."

Unlike most of her fellow Europeans, Dinesen embraces the differences she finds between herself and the East Africans and often adopts their customs and attitudes. Her relationship with them evolves into friendship.

Style

Point of View

Dinesen□or Karen Blixen as she identifies herself in the work□serves as narrator/storyteller throughout *Out of Africa.* This narrative method brings not only the African people and landscape to life; it also provides a chronicle of the narrator's journey of self-discovery.

Setting

One of the work's focal points is the harmonious relationship the African people have with the land. Dinesen also comes to enjoy this type of connection, as evident in the following passage from the book:

The plains with the thorntrees on them were already quite dark, but the air was filled with clarity to grow big and radiant in the course of the night was now just visible, like a silver point in the sky of citrine topaz. The air was cold to the lungs, the long grass dripping wet, and the herbs on it gave out their spiced astringent scent. In a little while on the sides the cicada would begin to sing The grass was me, and the air, the distant invisible mountains were me, the tired oxen were me I breathed with the slight wind m the thorntrees.

Dinesen's details about Africa create a mythic vision of the land. By the end of the book, the setting becomes a reflection of her mood. As she prepares to leave, she insists "the attitude of the landscape towards me changed. Till then I had been part of it ... Now the country disengaged itself from me, and stood back a little, in order that I should see it clearly and as a whole." This final vision is symbolic of all she feels she is leaving behind

Structure

Out of Africa's unique structure contains fragmented yet interrelated stories, character sketches, and observations of Africa and its people.

Symbolism

Dmesen's story fragments and character sketches, as well as her setting details, are often symbolic. In one story she writes of a time when her manager, while trying to break an ox for the farm, tied it up for the night. The next morning they discovered that a leopard had attacked it and so the ox had to be destroyed. When Dinesen concludes, "he would not be yoked now," she alludes to the strong desire for freedom that she found everywhere in Afnca.

In another episode, she explains that she once shot an iguana, thinking that its multicolored skm would make "pretty things" for her. She discovered, however, that once dead, all the color had drained from it. Later she bought an embroidered bracelet from a native that looked lifeless when she put it on her own arm. These incidents show her the importance of the individual spark of life and of preserving that uniqueness.

Historical Context

British East Africa

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, European countries, especially Britain and Germany, began to colonize an area of British East Africa that is now called Kenya. The Europeans realized that the sparsely populated land promised political and economic opportunities.

In 1887 the Imperial British East Africa Company, a trading organization under government control, rented the land from the sultan of Zanzibar, who ruled over the area. By 1895 the influence of the British government in the East Africa increased when it established a "Protectorate," a system often established in colonized countries. A protectorate established an official relationship between the colonizers, usually powerful Europeans, and then colonized in an area that had not yet established a political system of its own.

In an effort to secure political and economic control of the land, the British planned the construction of an extensive rail system. When the costs of the project began to mount, the government encouraged settlers from other countries to buy large parcels of East African land. The British had a difficult time, though, convincing Europeans to travel such a long distance and settle in a foreign land under harsh conditions.

Some settlers did come, especially middle- and upper-class Europeans who could afford to set up a comfortable lifestyle and to take financial losses as they learned new farming techniques. These settlers maintained a distance from the East Africans and relegated them to an inferior, servant status. The number of settlers increased dramatically in the early part of the twentieth century from approximately six hundred in 1905 to more than five thousand in 1914. Farmers made up the largest part of this population, followed by government officials and missionaries.

Kikuyu

The Kikuyu people lived in the area of East Africa where Karen Blixen had her farm. Marshall S. Clough in *Fighting Two Sides: Kenyan Chiefs and Politicians, 1918-1940* observed that the Kikuyu's customs were influenced by the mountainous African landscape. He maintains that "the first pioneers settled the land ridge by ridge Kikuyu families staking their claims and others moving on to stake theirsand the ridges, easily defended and dangerous to assault, developed into self-sufficient little communities."

This lack of central government helped the European colonizers set up their own system. Settlers were able to take over East African land from the Kikuyu with the aid of the British Protectorate. After suffering a wave of smallpox, drought, and insects that destroyed their crops, the Kikuyu put up little resistance, holding onto the false assumption that the presence of the Europeans would be temporary.

Nairobi

In the nineteenth century, the Uganda Railroad made Nairobi an important trade center and the center of British East Africa. The city offered relatively comfortable accommodations for European settlers, who had brought many of their customs with them While they enjoyed betting at the racetrack and relaxing at the Muthaiga Club, where they could play polo, golf, and tennis, impoverished East Africans and Indian immigrants lived in shacks on the edge of the town.

Dinesen recounts in *Out of Africa:* "During all my time, Nairobi was a medley place, with some fine new stone buildings, and whole quarters of old corrugated iron shops, offices, and bungalows, laid out with long rows of eucalyptus trees along the bare dusty streets .. And it was a live place, in movement like running water, and in growth like a young thing, it changed from year to year, and while you were away on a shooting safari."

Critical Overview

Isak Dmesen gained worldwide acclaim for her literary achievements. The autobiographical *Out of Africa* enjoyed popular and critical success, especially in the United States and Britain Most reviewers applauded her lyrical style

Kathenne Woods, in her 1938 article for *The New York Times Book Review,* finds Dinesen's prose in *Out of Africa* "without redundancies, bared to its lines of strength and beauty. There was no fat on it, and no luxuriance anywhere, she says of her African landscape; so in the book there is no sentimentality, no elaboration."

As a result, Woods concludes that Dinesen presents a clear vision of Africa, which "lives through all this beautiful and heart-stirring book because of that simple and unsought-for fusion of the spirit, lying behind the skill which can put the sense of Africa's being into clear, right, simple words, through the things and people of the farm."

Furthermore, Woods asserts.

In this personal record out of Africa, so sincere and natural, so direct and clear, there is that penetration, restraint, simplicity and precision which, together, mark the highly civilized mind, and that compassion, courage and dignity which mark civilization, in the best sense, in the human heart This writing is poignant and exquisite, it has an echoing reticence, it is swift in profundity or insight or tenderness or irony And no description of this book, highly as it may praise its solid substance, can in itself do justice to its effortless, expressive, wholly individual beauty of form, or even list the evocations and suggestions that he within, or are touched by, its very simplicity

In his article in the *Saturday Review of Literature,* Hassoldt Davis describes her style "as ca-denced, constrained, and graceful as we have today." In the same review, however, Davis finds fault with the book's structure, insisting that "the tale of increasing tragedy which fills the latter half of the book seems not quite so successful as her earlier chapters."

Another criticism of the book is that it presents a romantic colonialist portrait of Africa and its people. However, some critics disagree. Anthony Burgess contends that the novel "never fails in grace, sharpness, and humanity." In fact, most commentators find the book expresses a genuine *joie de vivre* and contend Woods' claim that it is "something rare and lovely, to read again and again."

Dinesen's literary success continued after the publication of *Out of Africa,* but none of her works became as popular. Her highly regarded body of work and standing as a masterful storyteller earned her two Nobel Prize nominations.

When Ernest Hemingway received his Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954, he stated that it should have been awarded to her Dinesen recognized her gift, as quoted by Donald Hannah, when she wrote:

I belong to an ancient, idle, wild and useless tribe, perhaps I am even one of the last members of It, who, for many thousands of years, in all countries and parts of the world, has, now and again, stayed for a time among hard-working honest people in real life, and sometimes has thus been fortunate enough to create another sort of reality for them, which in some way or another, has satisfied them. I am a storyteller.

Criticism

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Critical Essay #1

Wendy Perkins, an Associate Professor of English at Prince George's Community College in Maryland, has published articles on several twentieth-century authors In this essay she focuses on Dinesen's portrait of herself as an independent, nontraditional woman in Out of Africa.

The firm version of *Out of Africa* presents Karen Blixen as a courageous woman who can shoot lions alongside her lover Denys Finch-Hat-ton and withstand the long separations from her husband Baron Bror Blixen The film portrays Blixen/Dmesen to be an independent woman, but one who has had that independence thrust on her after first her husband's then her lover's desertion, leaving her to fend for herself on her African coffee plantation. Several scenes show her pleading with one or the other to stay and help her adapt to her new home.

In her autobiographical novel, however, Dinesen refuses to define herself through her relationships with the men in her life. In Africa she takes on a very nontraditional female role during the early part of the twentieth century, finding her identity not through romantic relationships, but through her relationship with the land and its people.

The screenplay was adapted from several of Dinesen's works including *Letters from Africa,* which provides details about her relationship with her husband and Fmch-Hatton The film portrays her difficult relationship with her husband including a bout with syphilis, which she contracted from him. During the Baron's frequent absences, Dinesen began an affair with Finch-Hatton.

Yet the Hollywood version of the romance between the two overshadows the romance Dinesen records in her autobiography□with the people and land of Africa In the book, she mentions her husband only in passing and provides no details of their relationship. She writes of a strong friendship between herself and Finch-Hatton. The depth of her feeling for him becomes evident only at the end of the book when her sorrow over his death intermingles with her sorrow over leaving Afnca

Unlike the film version, Dinesen's autobiography is a selected, perhaps idealized, memory of her life in Africa, constructed as a portrait of a woman who strips off her traditional feminine identity so she can more fully become part of her experience there.

Dinesen's love affair with the land becomes evident from the first pages of the book. She describes the landscape as having "no fat on it and no luxuriance anywhere." Its "tall solitary trees" and "views immensely wide" gave "a heroic and romantic air." She writes, "everything that you saw made for greatness and freedom." She found "infinite freedom" in the African night, claiming "it is there that things are going on, destinies are made round you, there is activity to all sides, and it is none of your concern."

As she interacts with the land, she discovers her own sense of freedom. Her independent spirit, denied European woman during that period, emerges as she adopts

traditionally male roles Dinesen hunts big game along side Finch-Hatton, manages a coffee plantation, and transports arms and supplies across harsh terrain to border troops. Of this last experience she writes, The air of the African highlands went to my head like wine, I was all the time slightly drunk with it, and the joy of these months was indescribable I had been out on a shooting Safari before, but I had not till now been out alone with Africans."

At one point, she struggles with her own identity in her new world, asking, "If I know a song of Africa, of the Giraffe, and the African new moon lying on her back, of the ploughs in the fields, and the sweaty faces of the coffee-pickers, does Africa know a song of me?" After living and working on the land, however, she was able to define herself in relation to it:

The plains with the thorntrees on them were already quite dark, but the air was filled with clarity and over our heads, to the west, a single star which was to grow big and radiant in the course of the night was now just visible, like a silver point in the sky of citrine topaz The air was cold to the lungs, the long grass dripping wet, and the herbs on it gave out their spiced astringent scent In a little while on the sides the cicada would begin to smg. The grass was me, and the air, the distant invisible mountains were me, the tired oxen were me. I breathed with the slight wind in the thorntrees

More evidence of her growing relationship with the land emerges in her story of Lulu, a young antelope that became "a member of the household." Dinesen notes:

The free union between my house and the antelope was a rare, honourable thing Lulu came in from the wild world to show that we were on good terms with it, and she made my house one with the African landscape, so that nobody could tell where the one stopped and the other began The years in which Lulu and her people came round to my house were the happiest of my life in Africa. For that reason, I came to look upon my acquaintance with the forest antelopes as . a token of friendship from Africa

Dinesen's relations with the East Africans also helped define her nontraditional identity. As she interacts with them, she becomes a teacher, a doctor, an employer, a judge, and a friend. Sidonie Smith, m "The Other Woman and the Racial Politics of Gender: Isak Dinesen and Beryl Markham in Kenya," argues that "figuring herself as honorable, resourceful, courageous, dependable, hardworking, and socially responsible, [Dinesen] identifies herself as a hybrid of 'manliness' and 'womanliness.'"

In "Isak Dinesen: An Appreciation," Janet Lewis concludes that in *Out of Africa* Dinesen views the "world through the eyes of the other" and thus is able to define herself in relation to it. Lewis writes, "I don't know whether her deep understanding and empathy□if we hesitate to call it sympathy□with the Kikuyu was a natural thing to her, and a part of her own disposition and training, but I have a feeling that she learned some of this fortitude and gallantry from the Natives of Afnca "

Smith adds, "Learning from the Africans how to live in accordance with [the landscape], this white woman represents herself as being as one with Africa in a powerful commingling of subjectivity and place." Thus as she opened herself to the experience of learning from them, she embarked on a journey of self-discovery.

Only at the end of the book does Dinesen identify her feminine qualities. Of her last weeks on the farm when her friend Ingnd Lmdstrom came to spend time with her, Dinesen writes:

Ingnd understood and realized to the bottom of her heart, with great strength, with something of the strength of the elements themselves, what it is really like, when a woman farmer has to give up her farm, and leave it . We closed our two mmds round the disaster of the hour We walked together from the one thing on the farm to the other, naming them as we passed them, one by one, as if we were taking mental stock of my loss, or as if Ingnd were, on my behalf, collecting material for a book of complaints to be laid before destiny Ingnd knew well enough from her own experience that there is no such book, but all the same the idea of it forms part of the livelihood of women.

At this point, Dinesen expresses a strong connection with the women who worked the land with her and who were the most sorry to see her go. Unlike with her friend Ingrid, however, she identifies with them in nontraditional ways. She describes them as having "a hard life" and becoming "flint-hard under it... wilder than the men.... They were afraid of nothing" Her portrait suggests these women found similar qualities in her, for they had "always been friends."

As Dinesen prepares to leave Africa, she seems to lose a sense of herself as she started to break her connections with the land and the people. She admits: "When I first began to make terms with fate, and the negotiations about the sale of the farm were taken up, the attitude of the landscape towards me changed. Till then I had been part of it.... Now the country disengaged itself from me, and stood back a little, in order that I should see it clearly and as a whole."

She also "disengaged" from the people. When she fears legal repercussions over allowing Chief Kinanjui to die in her home, she refuses his request. Yet she could not disengage herself completely from Africa. During the Ngoma held in her honor during her last days on the farm, she realizes that "the people were with me, and I with the people, well content."

In her record of her observations of the people and landscape of Africa, Dinesen defines herself in relation to what she sees. Ironically she gains a sense of individuality as she became part of the landscape.

Out of Africa omits the details of her life during her years on the farm that identify her in traditional ways and instead foregrounds her independent spirit. The resulting work creates a poetic portrait of her relationship with Africa and its people and an idealized, but perhaps truer, vision of self

Source: Wendy Perkins, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 2000.

Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt from an essay in which he discusses both Out of Africa *and Saul Friedlan-der's memoir of the Holocaust,* When Memory Comes *(1978), Foster examines the ways in which Dinesen's autobiographical persona represents an amalgamation of the cultures she experienced: her native Danish culture, the British colonial culture in East Africa, and the native African cultures.*

The phrase "cultural multiplicity" in my title is a deliberate variation on "imilticulturalism," whose core meaning raises issues of curricular choice, educational philosophy, and public policy. "Cultural multiplicity," by contrast and for the purpose of this essay, refers to a more intimately personal cultural site- to the conflicts, the feelings of tension, the revelations of affinity, or the sense of triumph that can come from living among several cultural traditions and to some degree internalizing their diversity. Though this condition of multiplicity is not limited to border regions, states of exile, or diasporas, it is obviously one that has flourished at such points of cross-cultural contact. But multiplicity, I should stress, can only arise when more than two cultures meet at once, so that binary strategies of either polarization or synthesis must yield to more complex processes of negotiation, shifting alliances, and interplay.

Autobiography, and especially modern autobiography, provides fertile ground for exploring the varying ways people experience cultural multiplicity. As we all know, the twentieth century has witnessed a vast number of cultural migrations and displacements. The life story of someone who has undergone such large-scale change, even if seen as just the retrospective account of a personality formed by several cultures, can already reveal a great deal about multiplicity But such an autobiography should not be read merely for the author's explicit thesis or conclusions. In particular, the writer's delight in transcribing certain memories can lead to a saturation effect, to an excess of detail about the past that can ultimately convey more than the author is willing to state outright.

At the same time, moreover, no autobiography concerns itself solely with the past events that are its ostensible subject matter. Unlike other forms of life-writing, such as letters or a diary, an autobiography has been composed at a certain temporal remove from the events it records, so that the author's present self can deeply influence such elements of the narrative as point of view, choice of events, and style. Some theorists of autobiography even hold that in the last analysis the genre deals with the authorial present more than the remembered past. As a result the texture of the writing can act as a gauge of the author's *current* state of multiplicity, at least to the extent that one's cultural identity is registered in words, as opposed to gestures, clothing, eating habits, and the like. Readers of autobiography thus gain access to a realm suspended between the written past and the writing present, a realm that ambiguously interweaves the story of an experience that the author views as formative with a provisional settling of accounts at the time of writing.

For an example of how saturation and temporal ambiguity can combine to reveal cultural multiplicity, let me turn to Vladimir Nabokov, whose work first alerted me to these issues and thus helped guide my approach to the two books I shall be discussing in this essay, Saul Friedlander's *When Memory Comes* and Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa* At one point in his autobiography, *Speak, Memory,* Nabokov recalls the bedtime ritual of his pre-World War I Russian boyhood, which in his multilingual family culminated with prayers recited not in Russian but in English. Then, as the remembered scene sharpens in the telling, and thus becomes "saturated," some pictures come to mind. Nabokov recalls an icon above his bed, then the nearby wa-tercolor of an "eerily dense European beechwood." This memory, in turn, reminds him of the English fairy tale of a boy who actually entered such a picture, and Nabokov rounds off the scene by stating that in time he too visited that enchanted beech-wood.

In cultural terms, what is most striking about this passage is the infusion of English elements into a Russian childhood. Beyond this documentary element, Nabokov has located a retrospective basis for his switch in the late thirties from writing in Russian to writing in English, as shown by the very fact that a decade later he composed most of *Speak, Memory* in English. Yet the detail of the European beechwood lingers as a mysterious third term. As the book develops, aspects of this motif will reappear to complicate the Anglo-Russian dualism in several ways. As a beechwood in Vermont, it calls attention to Nabokov's glide from a British to an American sense of English, while as an explicitly European setting it foreshadows his exile in Germany and France in the twenties and thirties. As a visual artifact, finally (and here we should note that in Russian the words for icon and image are the same), it implies that European as well as Russian models have guided Nabokov's interest in image-making throughout his literary career.

The dense texruality of this passage thus conveys both the cultural multiplicity of a certain childhood moment and the even more complex outcome known to the author as he writes. Nabokov's basic attitude in reviewing his life story deserves attention as well. It is emphatically triumphant, with the mature writer now realizing that he has indeed earned the fairy-tale privilege of entering an enchanted picture□one (hat permits unexpected new developments and rich juxtapositions in the cultural realm. As we turn to Friedlander's and Dinesen's autobiographies, we shall encounter similar experiences of cultural multiplicity, which nonetheless contrast with Nabokov's in two key respects. First, Friedlander's dramatic religious odyssey and Dinesen's two decades among the peoples of East Africa involve more drastic cultural challenges than even Nabokov's passage from Russia through western Europe into the English-speaking world. And second, although Nabokov's cultural multiplicity depends upon his being a refugee from Lenin and then Hitler, *When Memory Comes* and *Out of Africa* both grow out of and bear more immediate witness to even harsher historical conflicts□to the Jewish Holocaust and to African colonialism. Still, both books address the reader in ways that recall a major border-crossing built into the very words on the page of *Speak, Memory.* Neither the original French of Friedlander's autobiography nor the English that Dinesen used to compose one version of hers is the language spoken at the time of writing by those authors in their intimate, everyday lives....

Cross-cultural interaction [leads to] complex negotiations in Dinesen, but let me begin by acknowledging a certain falsity to her position in East Africa, where the British colonial regime was then seeking to create an area of exclusive European settlement in the Kenyan highlands. Thus the unintended irony of an ad recently cited in *Public Culture,* under the heading "Out of Africa 1906": "Between the years 1906 and 1939, a trickle, then a light rainfall, then a downpour of Englishmen, Germans, Scots, and some remarkable women began to fall upon the immense gorgeous plateau of East Africa" *[Public Culture,* Vol. 6, No. 1, Fall, 1993]. Such prose raises troubling questions about the popular reception of Dinesen's book, or at least about the movie that borrowed its title. But if the ad undercuts the justification of Dinesen's very presence in Africa as well as some of her romantic attitudes about the landscape, her life story also includes situations whose rich cultural multiplicity points in a very different direction.

In fact, if we bracket the overarching colonial dichotomy which (as her autobiography makes clear) Dinesen herself learned to question, the multiplicity in *Out of Africa* surpasses even the triadic patterns in *Speak, Memory* and *When Memory Comes.* Thus in one key passage Dinesen reviews the great variety of cultures that mingled in East Africa in the 1920s, then concludes that "[a]s far as receptivity of ideas goes, the Native is more a man of the world than the suburban or provincial settler or missionary, who has grown up in a uniform community and with a set of stable ideas". The third of her book's five units, called "Visitors to the Farm," clearly identifies with this East African responsiveness to diversity, for she arranges her experiences in a broad panorama that includes the Kikuyu, the Masai, Asian Indians, So-malis, Scandinavians, and British, to name only the leading groups And if the progression among these peoples seems to replicate the colonial hierarchy, it should be noted that when this unit closes by evoking the thrill of flying in the early days of aircraft, it circles back to an old Kikuyu, whose skepticism about the enterprise gets the last word.

Perhaps because Dinesen wrote this autobiography some years after the failure of her coffee farm in 1931 forced her back to Denmark, she can imagine herself as "out of Africa" in a sense quite different from that title's main implication of a direct, documentary account. Thus she knows that alongside the colonial order, and never totally displaced by it, there exist the cultural orders of the East African tribes, who have other interpretations for her presence in Kenya. In the unit called "A Shooting Accident on the Farm," in which the Kikuyu request her help in an inquiry into damages, she realizes that she also functions as part of *their* cultural system, in a process she calls "brass-serpenting." "They can turn you into a symbol," she remarks, then concludes, "in spite of all our activities in the land, of the scientific and mechanical progress there, and of Pax Britannica itself, this is the only practical use that the Natives have ever had of us." As this episode continues, however, Dinesen discovers that beyond accepting this passive role in the Kikuyu system of justice, she cannot help taking a more active part as well. Thus a key insight about the dispute flashes on her in Swaheli, and she takes steps which help settle the case. In a book the very existence of which depends upon the author's bihngualism in Danish and English, this further crossing of linguistic boundaries must be seen as a key token of cultural multiplicity.

One might be tempted to simplify Dinesen's East Africa by speaking of three main groups□the Europeans, the Muslims, and the local Africans. Certainly the community which forms on her coffee farm suggests as much, since it consists of Dinesen's British and Scandinavian friends, of her major-domo Farah and his Somali relatives, and of the so-called Kikuyu "squatters," led by their chief Kinanjui. But such a scheme overlooks both some gaps in Dinesen's coverage and the strong tensions *within* two of these groups. Regarding the gaps, though she clearly knew Arab, Indian, and local African Muslims, she gives far more attention to the Somalis, an interest which might repay closer study than is possible here. Such a discussion would have to consider the chapter on Farah in *Shadows on the Grass* (1960), a second African memoir written more than twenty years later.

My purpose, however, is to consider tensions within the European and African groups. The bearing of these tensions on cultural multiplicity can be hard to see, given Dinesen's reticence about herself in *Out of Africa,* which is emphatically *not* an autobiography in the confessional mode. Thus, though she does show conflicts among different groups, she does not explain their personal relevance, except through saturated details whose connection with her personal life remains deeply encoded. This relative silence follows the narrative logic suggested by her portrait of old Knudsen, a fellow Dane who normally told grand stones about himself in the third person, but who only admitted "I am very sick" on the single occasion that he spoke in the first person. As a result, though *Out of Africa* describes the multicultural variety of East Africa with much zest, it obscures how Dinesen identifies with or negotiates among these traditions while coping with personal experiences of isolation, illness, and distress. The route to interpreting her cultural multiplicity, though finally rewarding, is thus a tortuous one.

Dinesen alludes to her problems as a Scandinavian in a British colony at the very end of her narrative. The occasion is the day when everyone in Nairobi avoided her because her lover Denys Finch-Hatton had just died in a plane crash, and she was the only person who did not know. Dinesen gets a nightmarish feeling that "I myself was somehow on the wrong side, and therefore was regarded with distrust and fear by everyone." She explains that this mood recalled her experiences some twenty years before, at the start of World War I, when she was mistakenly considered pro-German.

What she does not say is that her later feeling of separation probably included separation from Denys himself. Her book has already indicated that when visiting her farm he liked to hear her retell the stones she was then writing, thus he acquired a certain responsibility for Dinesen's crucial transition from writing in Danish to writing in English.

But subsequently, when her money problems had decisively worsened, he recited a poem that shows his unwillingness to get too closely involved: "You must turn your mournful ditty / To a merry measure, /1 will never come for pity, /1 will come for pleasure." This is the most explicit trace in the book of what Dmesen's biographer Judith Thurman says probably happened, that Dinesen and Fmch-Hatton had ended their affair just before his death [see Thurman, *Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller,* 1982]. But rather than giving a direct account of their relationship, *Out of Africa* acts this story

out on a literary plane: Denys[1] gift of English in the storytelling sessions ironically turns into the medium for a warning to "come no closer." This revelation of aloofness is then mirrored in the British who avoid Dinesen in Nairobi after her lover's death just as they shunned her in World War I.

A pointed answer to Denys' poem of disengagement appears in a final scene from *Out of Africa,* where Dinesen "cites back" at the British. Her farm has gone bankrupt and she must sell; but then she discovers that the Kikuyu squatters have no legal rights to the land. Not only will they lose their homes, but they will be resettled piecemeal, with no regard for their standing as a community When she pleads for some compromise (which comes at the last minute, but only as an unprecedented exception to colonial policy), she thinks of Shakespeare. "You can class people according to how they may be imagined behaving to King Lear," she reflects, and, to the officials who cannot understand why the community should be preserved, she inwardly protests, "Oh reason not the need." Yet unlike Lear with his daughters, she suddenly realizes, "the African Native has not handed over his country to the white man in a magnificent gesture." Only when she has lost her own land, and with the added irony that it is the very land she is now disputing on behalf of the Africans, does Dinesen reconsider a vaunted achievement of the English, so that instead of offering an alibi for the civilizing mission of colonialism, she attacks the whole enterprise.

A Scandinavian counterweight to Dinesen's disillusionment with the British appears in the chapter describing the Swede Emmanuelson in "Visitors to the Farm." Dinesen overcomes her dislike for this former waiter at a Nairobi hotel when she learns that he was once a tragic actor and that he plans to walk to Tanganyika, a week-long journey through the harsh lands of the Masai. His passionate love of tragic drama implicitly sets him apart from the emotionally neutral British, and she also admires his affinity with the Masai, with whom he can communicate only by pantomime but who, it turns out, still show him "great kindness and hospitality." In fact, Emmanuelson clearly functions as an alter ego for Dinesen, not just because his isolation amidst a group of Africans echoes her isolation in World War I, but also because one of his favorite tragic texts is Ibsen's *Ghosts,* This saturated detail looks ahead to Dinesen's situation while writing *Out of Africa,* when she learned that the syphilis she had contracted from her womanizing husband had not, as she had once thought, been cured, but had become her fate, thus mirroring Ibsen's Osvald Alving, who similarly returned to Scandinavia after a long period abroad

Dinesen does not write of her illness or of her husband in *Out of Africa,* but traces of this painful experience do mark her treatment of the two African tribes she knew best. In general she draws distinct contrasts□the proud Masai warriors versus the humbler Kikuyu agriculturalists, the slave takers versus the victims in the Arab slave trade. But despite strong tensions between the tribes in the past, the Masai have begun to intermarry with the Kikuyu, since, as Dinesen puts it, "the Masai women have no children and the prolific young Kikuyu girls are in demand." It is here that Dmesen's personal situation comes closest to the surface For, as Thurman tells us, the Masai were infertile due to widespread syphilis, and it was from a Masai woman that Dinesen's husband probably got the disease that he then passed on to her. This history, I think,

underlies and helps explain the evolution of Dinesen's sympathies for the local Africans, from a rather facile admiration for Masai warriors to a deeper identification with old Kikuyu women.

On the one hand, the young Dinesen was greatly taken with her Swedish husband's noble title Though he is banished from her book, she nonetheless calls herself "Baroness Blixen" in a key passage, and once even indicated in a letter to her brother that the title was worth a case of syphilis. In her identification with the Africans, she sees this aristocratic mystique embodied in the Masai men Their "rigid, passive, and insolent bearing" gives them the look of "creatures trained through hard discipline to the height of rapacious-ness, greed, and gluttony," and, m a less lurid passage, their sense of freedom is said to be so strong that they cannot survive three months in prison.

However, the older Dinesen, who has lost her land and writes with the knowledge that she suffers from an incurable case of spinal syphilis, prefers to identify with the old Kikuyu women. Early in *Out of Africa* she pays tribute to these women, "who have mixed blood with Fate, and recognize her irony, wherever they meet it, with sympathy, as if it were that of a sister." Read hastily in the context of Dinesen's status as mistress of a coffee plantation, these words may seem condescending; what gives them a deeper resonance is the temporal ambiguity implied by the image of "mixing blood with Fate," which surely reflects the author's awareness of her illness as she wrote the autobiography in Denmark.

Somewhat later in the book, in a naming scene that contrasts "Baroness Blixen" with another, quite different Dinesen persona, the old women call her "Jambo Jerie " But this phrase, once spoken, will remain an enigma until much later: writing of her departure from Africa, Dinesen explains that "whenever a girl is born to a Kikuyu family a long time after her brothers and sisters, she is named Jene." Dinesen clearly prizes this acknowledgment of honorary kinship from her elders. Not only did it give her the strength to face the distress of involuntary displacement□one of her last African memories is of an old Kikuyu woman carrying part of her dismantled house on her back□but even now, as she writes, it steels her against the arrival of old age. Her tribute is too long to quote in full, but here are some key phrases: "The old Kikuyu women have had a hard life, and have themselves become flint-hard ... they were afraid of nothing. They carried loads ... of three hundred pounds ..., they worked in the hard ground ... from the early morning til late in the evening.... And they had a stock of energy in them still; they radiated vitality.... This strength ... to me seemed ... glorious and bewitching." In a set of cross-cultural exchanges that began when her husband consorted with a Masai woman, Dinesen's narrative suppresses this all-too-painful personal event only to highlight another symptom of the same situation, the syphilis-enforced intermarriages between the Masai and the Kikuyu. Identifying with both tribes, she thrills at first to the aristocratic warrior ethic of the Masai but settles in the end for the toughness of her self-described sisters, the old Kikuyu women.

Thus in *Out of Africa,* for all its studied reticence, as well as in the more directly confessional When Memory Comes, the upheavals of twentieth-century history thrust the autobiographer into situations where it becomes possible to take part in three or

more cultures. Saul Friedlander as boy and youth experienced central-European secular, French Catholic, and Israeli Jewish cultures; Isak Dinesen as an adult woman experienced Scandinavian, British, and East African cultures, with East Africa opening up to reveal both the Kikuyu and the Masai. In each case, as the autobiography develops, the author comes to occupy a complex multicultural site where the binary logic of simple bi-culturalism no longer applies, where even the two-dimensional concept of boundary lines may appear inadequate.

Instead, as the autobiographical persona passes through these worlds, the multicultural vision of external diversity turns inward, leading to what I call cultural multiplicity. In the intimacy of such questions as "Who do I admire?" or "What do I believe?" or "Where do I belong⁹"□questions which, amid the flux of experience, challenge and sometimes alter or widen one's deepest cultural affiliations□the autobiographer identifies with and assimilates certain specific traits of the multicultural world that he or she portrays. The result is an autobiographical text which projects a polycentric field of cultural forces, forces which interrelate across a spectrum of options from tension to negotiation, from conflict to triumphant resolution. Such an autobiography, moreover, communicates these possibilities to its readers, who as they read learn to share to some extent in the author's multiplicity At our present moment, with its heightened and often polarized sense of cultural identity, this kind of cultural literacy seems well worth cultivating; for rather than associating identity with certain monolithic, unchanging traits, it acknowledges both the many-sidedness of experience and the capacity of that experience to stir complex sympathies.

Source: John Burt Foster Jr , "Cultural Multiplicity in Two Modem Autobiographies: Fnedlander's *When Memory Comes* and Dinesen's *Out of Africa,"* m *Southern Humanities Review,* Vol. XXIX, No. 3, Summer, 1995, pp. 205-18

Critical Essay #3

In the following review, Woods enthusiastically praises Out of Africa.

The book *[Out of Africa*] which Isak Dinesen has made from her life on an African farm is a surprising piece of writing to come from the author of *Seven Gothic Tales.* After dazzling the public with what Dorothy Canfield called "the strange slanting beauty and controlled fantasy" of the first book, this amazing Danish master of English prose has stepped now into the clearest reality, the utmost classic simplicity, the most direct□yet the most exquisitely restrained□truth. But it is an incandescent simplicity; the reality is of the spirit as well as of object and event; the truth is a cry from the heart. And after all the books that we have had out of Africa, I think this is the one we have been waiting for.

Like the Ngong hills□which are amongst the most beautiful in the world□this writing is without redundancies, bared to its lines of strength and beauty. "There was no fat on it, and no luxuriance anywhere," she says of her African landscape; so in the book there is no sentimentality no elaboration It is an autobiographical book: in one sense, only partly an autobiography; in another sense doubly autobiographical. This is not a chronological record; and until close to the end it touches almost casually the course of the author's life It is peopled with other characters, every one of them alive. And the author knows how the hills look just before the rains come; and how the bleak wind runs over the land and the scents and colors die when the rains fail, and how often the bright air will bring illusion, as if one were walking on the bottom of the sea. She can make a sudden parable of the resignation of the oxen, and understand the tragedy of the captured giraffes, so proud and innocent; and the ancient African forest, she says, is like an old tapestry She knows the practical details, the hard work, of this farm life, too.

But before one has read many pages m her book one realizes how, in a deeper sense than that of mere chronicle, these clear objective details from a farm in Kenya are themselves wholly personal Once, looking back on an evening errand in wartime in the Masai Reserve, she shows the reason.

The plains with the thorntrees on them were already quite dark, but the air was filled with clarity□and over our heads, to the west, a single star which was to grow big and radiant m the course of the night was now just visible, like a silver point in the sky of citrine topaz The air was cold to the lungs, the long grass dripping wet, and the herbs on it gave out their spiced astringent scent In a little while on the sides the cicada would begin to sing The grass was me, and the air, the distant invisible mountains were me, the tired oxen were me. I breathed with the slight wind in the thorntrees

This is more than mere understanding. And Africa lives through all this beautiful and heart-stirring book because of that simple and unsought-for fusion of the spirit, lying behind the skill which can put the sense of Africa's being into clear, right, simple words, through the things and people of the farm.

The farm was a coffee plantation, but much of it was grass land and part was primeval forest, and native squatters lived, by law and custom, on 1,000 of its 6,000 acres and had their own gardens and herds there Across the river was the country of the Masai, a proud people who had been great Fighters but were now a dying race. Hunting country was roundabout, and two missions were a few miles away (in opposite directions), and it was not a long drive to Nairobi, even in the early days by cart Other Europeans came and went, and some lived in these same hills That complex scene, that unpredictable cast of characters, of the European colony in Africa, can be found in this book. But Baroness Blixen (not yet known under her pen-name of Isak Dinesen) was very close to the native peoples and to all the immemorial life of the African wild. It was not easy to get to know the natives, she says, they understood her better than she understood them; but she felt a great affection for them, from the first.

She used to doctor them, from her simple knowledge She had an evening school for them, with a native schoolmaster She studied their language, and told them stones to which they loved to listen. They came to her□even the Masai across the river□to complain when a lion was taking their cows, and she would go out and shoot it; one night she and Denys Finch-Hatton shot two of these marauding lions, and the children came out from their school near by and sang a little song of triumph, which ended "in an intoxicated refrain, 'A-B-C-D,' because they came straight from the school and had their heads filled with wisdom." And the little herd-boys brought their sheep to graze on her lawns. She was the friend of the Kikuyu chief, and he sent for her to come to him when he was dying. And once when a serious dispute among the Kikuyu on the farm had gone beyond the power of her peace-making, she asked the chief to render judgment for her on the important matter of cows and witchcraft; for she was a sort of judge among them, too; the Elders held their council meetings before her house, and used to ask her for final decisions.

So, as the years went by, she came to know them- their justice which is so different from the white man's justice; their untroubled acceptance of life's uncertainties which is so different from the white man's shrinking from risk; their courage, which is "unadulterated liking for danger"; their strange dancing imagination, and their stillness and their hardness and their mocking mirth; the way, too, in which they could be "unreliable and yet in the grand manner sincere." And she came to know how the African natives will make of some certain European, for some certain reason, a symbol□a brass serpent lifted up in the wilderness□and even to see that she had become such a symbol, herself. In these and other ways she knew the African peoples among whom she lived, and whose friend she was. And unforgettably, through her book, she draws the portraits, and tells or suggests the stones of individuals□natives, Europeans, animals.

In this personal record out of Africa, so sincere and natural, so direct and clear, there is that penetration, restraint, simplicity and precision which, together, mark the highly civilized mind, and that compassion, courage and dignity which mark civilization, in the best sense, in the human heart. This writing is poignant and exquisite, it has an echoing reticence, it is swift in profundity or insight or tenderness or irony. And no description of this book, highly as it may praise its solid substance, can in itself do justice to its effortless, expressive, wholly individual beauty of form, or even list the evocations and

suggestions that he within, or are touched by, its very simplicity. *Out of Africa* is something rare and lovely, to read again and again.

At the last, it tears the heart with its disaster and its simple gallantry. Isak Dinesen had planted her own deep roots in this soil, long years before. And the roots were broken at last. She had to sell the farm, and leave Africa. After tedious effort she was able to assure her villages being kept together, when she had gone. But the farm was lost and divided. She tells the story with quiet and noble beauty. And one knows that her wish for life as a whole has been fulfilled by Africa: she did not let it go until it blessed her.

Source: Kathenne Woods, "Isak Dinesen's Fine Record of Life on an African Farm," in *The New York Times Book Review,* May 6, 1938, p. 3.

Adaptations

Out of Africa was adapted as a film by Kurt Luedtke and based on Dinesen's autobiography and her *Letters from Africa.* Sydney Pollack directed and Meryl Streep and Robert Redford (as Denys Finch-Hatton) starred. It is available from MCA/Universal Home Video

The book was recorded in an audio version read by Julie Harris, West Audio, May 1988.

Topics for Further Study

Research the colonization of Kenya. Discuss how East Africans were treated during the first part of the twentieth century. How has the situation changed?

Read Dinesen's *Letters from Africa,* and compare it to *Out of Africa.* What details did Dinesen omit from the latter work? Why do you think she omitted them?

Investigate the culture of the Masai and of the Kikuyu. How does your research compare to Dinesen's characterizations of these tribes in *Out of Africa?*

Some critics find examples of racism in Dinesen' s autobiographical novel. Summarize their arguments and defend or refute them.

Compare and Contrast

1895: The British government establishes the East Africa Protectorate, which controls the political and economic life of the people of what is now called Kenya.

1963: Kenya gains independence.

Today: Kenya remains an independent republic with a parliamentary form of government.

Late 1890s: The Uganda Railroad makes Nairobi an important trade center and the center of British East Africa. The city offers relatively comfortable accommodations for Euro-pean settlers, who bring many of their customs with them.

Today: Nairobi is the capital of Kenya with a population of approximately 1.5 people.

1910s: In the patriarchal cultures of Europe and America, women's roles are strictly limited; they have few legal rights. In Dinesen's case, as a settler in British East Africa, women are afforded more freedom and opportunity.

Today: As a result of the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, women in the Western world have more freedom, legal options, and opportunities

What Do I Read Next?

Anecdotes of Destiny, a 1985 collection of short stones by Dinesen, includes "Babette's Feast," a tale of a woman's struggle to define herself in a new and harsh landscape.

Ernest Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa* (1935) is a stirring account of a safan he and his wife joined in 1933. In the work, Hemingway reveals what the expenence taught him about Africa and about himself.

In *Letters from Africa* (1981) Dinesen provides more details about her life on her farm in Africa. Both works were used as source material for the successful film version of *Out of Africa.*

Beryl Markham's *West with the Night,* published in 1942, chronicles her exciting life as an African bush pilot in the 1930s.

Further Study

Thorkild Bjornvig, "Who Am *P* The Story of Isak Dinesen's Identity," in *Scandinavian Studies,* Vol. 57, No 4, Autumn, 1985, pp 363-78

Bjornvig examines the relationship between identityand animals in Dinesen's work.

Louise Bogan, "Isak Dinesen," in *A Poet's Alphabet,* McGraw-Hill, 1970, pp 104-06

Explores the autobiography's main themes and compares them to her other works.

John Davenport, "A Noble Pnde: The Art of Karen Blixen," in *The Twentieth Century,* Vol. CLIX, No 949, March 1956, pp 264-74.

This essay explores the autobiographical aspects of her works

Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Lynn Davis, in *Wonders of the African World,* Knopf, 1999, 275 p.

Traces Gates's journey through contemporary Africa, from Ethiopia to the lost city of Timbuktu and the fabled University of Sankore.

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Anthony Burgess, in a review in *The Observer Review,* September 6, 1981, p. 29

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Donald Hannah, *"Isak Dinesen" and Karen Blixen- The Mask and the Reality,* Putnam, 1971.

Janet Lewis, "Isak Dinesen: An Appreciation," in *The Southern Review,Vol.* 2, No. 2, March, 1966, pp. 297-314.

Sidome Smith, "The Other Woman and the Racial Politics of Gender: Isak Dinesen and Beryl Markham in Kenya," in *De/Colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography,* edited by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, University of Minnesota Press, 1992, pp. 410-35.

Katherine Woods, "Isak Dinesen's Fine Record of Life on an Afhca Farm," in *The New York Times Book Review,* May 6, 1938, p 3.

BOOKRAGS

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Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

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Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

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Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Novels for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535