

Six Feet of the Country

Short Story by NADINE GORDIMER



Comparing Literature of the World

Six Feet of the Country and *from* Writing as an Act of Hope

This lesson and the one that follows present an opportunity for comparing Nadine Gordimer's examination of the effects of South African apartheid with Isabel Allende's observations on the political unrest and economic hardship in Chile. Specific points of comparison in the Allende lesson will help you contrast the two writers' portrayals of the people and conditions in their homeland.

Connect to Your Life

Lip Service Have you ever encountered a situation in which a person claimed to understand and respect another race or culture but really showed little understanding or respect? Discuss your experiences and insights with your classmates.

Build Background

Separate but Unequal Nadine Gordimer writes about the people of her South African homeland and reveals how the system of apartheid has affected their lives. The term *apartheid*—which means “separateness” in Afrikaans, the language of the Dutch settlers of South Africa—refers to an official system of racial separation enforced by the South African government from 1948 to 1991. During the first 20 years of that period, laws were enacted that segregated education and housing, restricted the movement and voting rights of nonwhites, and gave the government far-reaching police powers to ensure compliance with apartheid. In 1961, South Africa withdrew from the United Nations after other member nations severely criticized its racial policies.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the government of South Africa, responding to years of national and international protest, began to repeal some apartheid laws and to open public facilities and transportation systems to all races. Many apartheid regulations remained, however, as did segregation of schools and neighborhoods. Finally, in 1991, the government granted full rights to nonwhites, repealing the last of the discriminatory laws that had formed the basis of apartheid. Although apartheid has now been officially dismantled, its economic and social effects are likely to linger for some time.

From the first days of apartheid, many white South Africans opposed the system for its inhumanity and lack of respect for people of other cultures. A few, like Nadine Gordimer, openly expressed their disapproval of the system. In “Six Feet of the Country,” first published in the 1950s, she examines the experiences and attitudes of a white British couple—a businessman and a former actress—who have moved to the South African countryside.

WORDS TO KNOW Vocabulary Preview

attenuated	inane
enamor	laconic
expostulate	stint
extraneous	submissive
imbue	untainted



LaserLinks: Background for Reading
Cultural/Historical Connection

Focus Your Reading

LITERARY ANALYSIS POINT OF VIEW

As you know, the term **point of view** refers to the narrative method used in a literary work. “Six Feet of the Country” is told from the **first-person point of view** of a narrator who is also the story’s **main character**. As you read, keep in mind that the events and other characters in the story are described from the main character’s personal perspective.

ACTIVE READING PREDICTING

When you make a **prediction**, you try to figure out what will happen next. Historical knowledge about a narrative’s subject and even the story’s title can help you make predictions. Use the information provided in the Build Background and the title “Six Feet of the Country” to predict what the story will be about.

READER'S NOTEBOOK Write your prediction about the story in your notebook. Then, at key moments in the story, continue to jot down your predictions about what will happen next.



Six Feet of the Country

Nadine Gordimer

My wife and I are not real farmers—not even Lerice, really. We bought our place, ten miles out of Johannesburg on one of the main roads, to change something in ourselves, I suppose; you seem to rattle about so much within a marriage like ours. You long to hear nothing but a deep, satisfying silence when you sound a marriage. The

farm hasn't managed that for us, of course, but it has done other things, unexpected, illogical. Lerice, who I thought would retire there in Chekhovian sadness for a month or two, and then leave the place to

the servants while she tried yet again to get a part she wanted and become the actress she would like to be, has sunk into the business of

running the farm with all the serious intensity with which she once imbued the shadows in a playwright's mind. I should have given it up long ago if it had not been for her. Her hands, once small and plain and well-kept—she was not the sort of actress who wears red paint and diamond rings—are hard as a dog's pads.

WORDS
TO
KNOW

imbue (ĩm-byoo') v. to fill with a quality; saturate

I, of course, am there only in the evenings and at week-ends. I am a partner in a luxury-travel agency, which is flourishing—needs to be, as I tell Lerice, in order to carry on the farm. Still, though I know we can't afford it, and though the sweetish smell of the fowls Lerice breeds sickens me, so that I avoid going past their runs, the farm is beautiful in a way I had almost forgotten—especially on a Sunday morning when I get up and go out into the paddock and see not the palm trees and fish pond and imitation-stone bird-bath of the suburbs but white ducks on the dam, the lucerne¹ field brilliant as window-dresser's grass, and the little, stocky, mean-eyed bull, lustful but bored, having his face tenderly licked by one of his ladies. Lerice comes out with her hair uncombed, in her hand a stick dripping with cattle-dip. She will stand and look dreamily for a moment, the way she would pretend to look sometimes in those plays. "They'll mate tomorrow," she will say. "This is their second day. Look how she loves him, my little Napoleon." So that when people come out to see us on Sunday afternoon, I am likely to hear myself saying, as I pour out the drinks, "When I drive back home from the city every day, past those rows of suburban houses, I wonder how the devil we ever did stand it. . . . Would you care to look around?" And there I am, taking some pretty girl and her young husband stumbling down to our river-bank, the girl catching her stockings on the mealie-stooks² and stepping over cow-turds humming with jewel-green flies while she says, ". . . the *tensions* of the damned city. And you're near enough to get into town to a show, too! I think it's wonderful. Why, you've got it both ways!"

And for a moment I accept the triumph as if I *had* managed it—the impossibility that I've been trying for all my life—just as if the truth was that you could get it "both ways," instead of finding yourself with not even one way or the other but a third, one you had not provided for at all.

But even in our saner moments, when I find Lerice's earthy enthusiasms just as irritating as I once found her histrionical³ ones, and she finds what she calls my "jealousy" of her capacity for enthusiasm as big a proof of my inadequacy for her as a mate as ever it was, we do believe that we have at least honestly escaped those tensions peculiar to the city about which our visitors speak. When Johannesburg people speak of "tension" they don't mean hurrying people in crowded streets, the struggle for money, or the general competitive character of city life. They mean the guns under the white men's pillows and the burglar bars on the white men's windows. They mean those strange moments on city pavements when a black man won't stand aside for a white man.

Out in the country, even ten miles out, life is better than that. In the country, there is a lingering remnant of the pretransitional stage; our relationship with the blacks is almost feudal.⁴ Wrong, I suppose, obsolete, but more comfortable all round. We have no burglar bars, no gun. Lerice's farm-boys have their wives and their piccanins⁵ living with them on the land. They brew their sour beer without the fear of police raids. In fact, we've always rather prided ourselves that the poor devils have nothing much to fear, being with us; Lerice even keeps an eye on their children, with all the competence of a woman who has never had a child of her own, and she certainly doctors

1. lucerne (lōō-sŭrn'): a British term for alfalfa.

2. mealie-stooks: a South African term for cornstalks.

3. histrionical: theatrical; dramatic.

4. feudal (fyōōd'l): characteristic of feudalism—the medieval European economic, political, and social system in which the serfs who worked the land were protected by, and owed allegiance to, their overlords.

5. piccanins (pŭk'ə-nŭnz'): in South Africa, a term (usually considered derogatory) for native African children.

them all—children and adults—like babies whenever they happen to be sick.

It was because of this that we were not particularly startled one night last winter when the boy Albert came knocking at our window long after we had gone to bed. I wasn't in our bed but sleeping in the little dressing-room-cum-linen room next door, because Lerice had annoyed me, and I didn't want to find myself softening toward her simply because of the sweet smell of the talcum powder on her flesh after her bath. She came and woke me up. "Albert says one of the boys is very sick," she said. "I think you'd better go down and see. He wouldn't get us up at this hour for nothing."

"What time is it?"

"What does it matter?" Lerice is maddeningly logical.

I got up awkwardly as she watched me—how is it I always feel a fool when I have deserted her bed? After all, I know from the way she never looks at me when she talks to me at breakfast the next day that she is hurt and humiliated at my not wanting her—and I went out, clumsy with sleep.

"Which of the boys is it?" I asked Albert as we followed the dance of my torch.

"He's too sick. Very sick, *Baas*,"⁶ he said.

"But who? Franz?" I remembered Franz had had a bad cough for the past week.

Albert did not answer; he had given me the path, and was walking along beside me in the tall dead grass. When the light of the torch caught his face, I saw that he looked acutely embarrassed. "What's this all about?" I said.

He lowered his head under the glance of the light. "It's not me, *Baas*. I don't know. Petrus he send me."



Irritated, I hurried him along to the huts. And there, on Petrus's iron bedstead, with its brick stilts, was a young man, dead. On his forehead there was still a light, cold sweat; his body was warm. The boys stood around as they do in the kitchen when it is discovered that someone has broken a dish—uncooperative, silent. Somebody's

ACTIVE READING

PREDICT Who do you think the dead man is?

wife hung about in the shadows, her hands wrung together under her apron.

I had not seen a dead man since the war. This was very different. I felt like the others—extraneous, useless.

"What was the matter?" I asked.

The woman patted at her chest and shook her head to indicate the painful impossibility of breathing.

He must have died of pneumonia.

I turned to Petrus. "Who was this boy? What was he doing here?" The light of a candle on the floor showed that Petrus was weeping. He followed me out the door.

When we were outside, in the dark, I waited for him to speak. But he didn't. "Now come on, Petrus, you must tell me who this boy was. Was he a friend of yours?"

"He's my brother, *Baas*. He come from Rhodesia to look for work."

The story startled Lerice and me a little. The young boy had walked down from Rhodesia to look for work in Johannesburg, had caught a chill from sleeping out along the way, and had lain ill in his brother Petrus's hut since his arrival three days before. Our boys had been

6. *baas* (bās) *Afrikaans*: master; boss (formerly used as a term of address by black South Africans when speaking to a white man).

frightened to ask us for help for him because we had not been intended ever to know of his presence. Rhodesian natives are barred from entering the Union⁷ unless they have a permit; the young man was an illegal immigrant. No doubt our boys had managed the whole thing successfully several times before; a number of relatives must have walked the seven or eight hundred miles from poverty to the paradise of zoot suits,⁸ police raids, and black slum townships that is their *Egoli*,⁹ City of Gold—the Bantu name for Johannesburg. It was merely a matter of getting such a man to lie low on our farm until a job could be found with someone who would be glad to take the risk of prosecution for employing an illegal immigrant in exchange for the services of someone as yet untainted by the city.

Well, this was one who would never get up again.

“You would think they would have felt they could tell *us*,” said Lerice next morning. “Once the man was ill. You would have thought at least—” When she is getting intense over something, she has a way of standing in the middle of a room as people do when they are shortly to leave on a journey, looking searchingly about her at the most familiar objects as if she had never seen them before. I had noticed that in Petrus’s presence in the kitchen, earlier, she had the air of being almost offended with him, almost hurt.

In any case, I really haven’t the time or inclination any more to go into everything in our life that I know Lerice, from those alarmed and pressing eyes of hers, would like us to go into. She is the kind of woman who doesn’t mind if she looks plain, or odd; I don’t suppose she would even care if she knew how strange she looks when her whole face is out of proportion with urgent uncertainty. I said, “Now, I’m the one who’ll have to do all the dirty work, I suppose.”

She was still staring at me, trying me out with those eyes—wasting her time, if she only knew.

“I’ll have to notify the health authorities,” I said calmly. “They can’t just cart him off and bury him. After all, we don’t really know what he died of.”

She simply stood there, as if she had given up—simply ceased to see me at all.

I don’t know when I’ve been so irritated. “It might have been something contagious,” I said. “God knows?” There was no answer.

I am not enamored of holding conversations with myself. I went out to shout to one of the boys to open the garage and get the car ready for my morning drive to town.

As I had expected, it turned out to be quite a business. I had to notify the police as well as the health authorities, and answer a lot of tedious questions: How was it I was ignorant of the boy’s presence? If I did not supervise my native quarters, how did I know that that sort of thing didn’t go on all the time? Et cetera, et cetera. And when I flared up and told them that so long as my natives did their work, I didn’t think it my right or concern to poke my nose into their private lives, I got from the coarse, dull-witted police sergeant one of those looks that come not from any thinking process going on in the brain but from that faculty common to all who are possessed by the master-race theory—a look of insanely inane certainty. He grinned at me with a mixture of scorn and delight at my stupidity.

Then I had to explain to Petrus why the health authorities had to take away the body

7. **Union:** Union of South Africa—the South African state preceding the formation of the Republic of South Africa in 1961.

8. **zoot suits:** flashy men’s suits with broad padded shoulders and baggy trousers.

9. **Egoli** (ā-gō’lē).

for a post-mortem¹⁰—and, in fact, what a post-mortem was. When I telephoned the health department some days later to find out the result, I was told the cause of death was, as we had thought, pneumonia, and that the body had been suitably disposed of. I went out to where Petrus was mixing a mash for the fowls and told him that it was all right, there would be no trouble; his brother had died from that pain in his chest. Petrus put down the paraffin tin and said, “When can we go to fetch him, *Baas*?”

“To fetch him?”

“Will the *Baas* please ask them when we must come?”

I went back inside and called Lericé, all over the house. She came down the stairs from the spare bedrooms, and I said, “Now what am I going to do? When I told Petrus, he just asked calmly when they could go and fetch the body. They think they’re going to bury him themselves.”

“Well, go back and tell him,” said Lericé. “You must tell him. Why didn’t you tell him then?”

When I found Petrus again, he looked up politely. “Look, Petrus,” I said. “You can’t go to fetch your brother. They’ve done it already—they’ve *buried* him, you understand?”

“Where?” he said, slowly, dully, as if he thought that perhaps he was getting this wrong.

“You see, he was a stranger. They knew he wasn’t from here, and they didn’t know he had some of his people here, so they thought they must bury him.” It was difficult to make a pauper’s grave sound like a privilege.

“Please, *Baas*, the *Baas* must ask them?” But he did not mean that he wanted to know the burial-place. He simply ignored the incomprehensible machinery I told him had set to work on his dead brother; he wanted the brother back.

“But Petrus,” I said, “how can I? Your brother is buried already. I can’t ask them now.”

“Oh *Baas*!” he said. He stood with his bransmeared hands uncurled at his sides, one corner of his mouth twitching.

“Good God, Petrus, they won’t listen to me! They can’t, anyway. I’m sorry, but I can’t do it. You understand?”

He just kept on looking at me, out of his knowledge that white men have everything, can do anything; if they don’t, it is because they won’t.

And then, at dinner Lericé started. “You could at least phone,” she said.

“*Christ*, what d’you think I am? Am I supposed to bring the dead back to life?”

But I could not exaggerate my way out of this ridiculous responsibility that had been thrust on me. “Phone them up,” she went on. “And at least you’ll be able to tell him you’ve done it and they’ve explained that it’s impossible.”

She disappeared somewhere into the kitchen quarters after coffee. A little later she came back to tell me, “The old father’s coming down from Rhodesia to be at the funeral. He’s got a permit and he’s already on his way.”

Unfortunately, it was not impossible to get the body back. The authorities said that it was somewhat irregular, but that since the hygiene conditions had been fulfilled, they could not refuse permission for exhumation.¹¹ I found out that, with the undertaker’s charges, it would cost twenty pounds. Ah, I thought, that settles it. On five pounds a month, Petrus won’t have twenty pounds—and just as well, since it couldn’t do the dead any good. Certainly I should not offer it to him myself. Twenty pounds—or anything else within reason, for that matter—I would have spent without grudging it on doctors or medicines that might have helped the boy when he was alive. Once he was dead, I had no intention of encouraging Petrus to throw away, on a gesture, more than he spent to clothe his whole family in a year.

When I told him, in the kitchen that night, he said, “Twenty pounds?”

10. post-mortem: an examination of a corpse to determine the cause of death.

11. exhumation (ĕg’zyōō-mā’shən): the removal of a corpse from a grave.

I said, "Yes, that's right, twenty pounds."

For a moment, I had the feeling, from the look on his face, that he was calculating. But when he spoke again I thought I must have imagined it. "We must pay twenty pounds!" he said in the far-away voice in which a person speaks of something so unattainable that it does not bear thinking about.

"All right, Petrus," I said in dismissal, and went back to the living-room.

The next morning before I went to town, Petrus asked to see me. "Please *Baas*," he said, awkwardly handing me a bundle of notes. They're so seldom on the giving rather than the receiving side, poor devils, that they don't really know how to hand money to a white man. There it was, the twenty pounds, in ones and halves, some creased and folded until they were soft as dirty rags, others smooth and fairly new—Franz's money, I suppose, and Albert's, and Dora the cook's, and Jacob the gardener's, and God knows who else's besides, from all the farms and small holdings round about. I took it in irritation more than in astonishment, really—irritation at the waste, the uselessness of this sacrifice by people

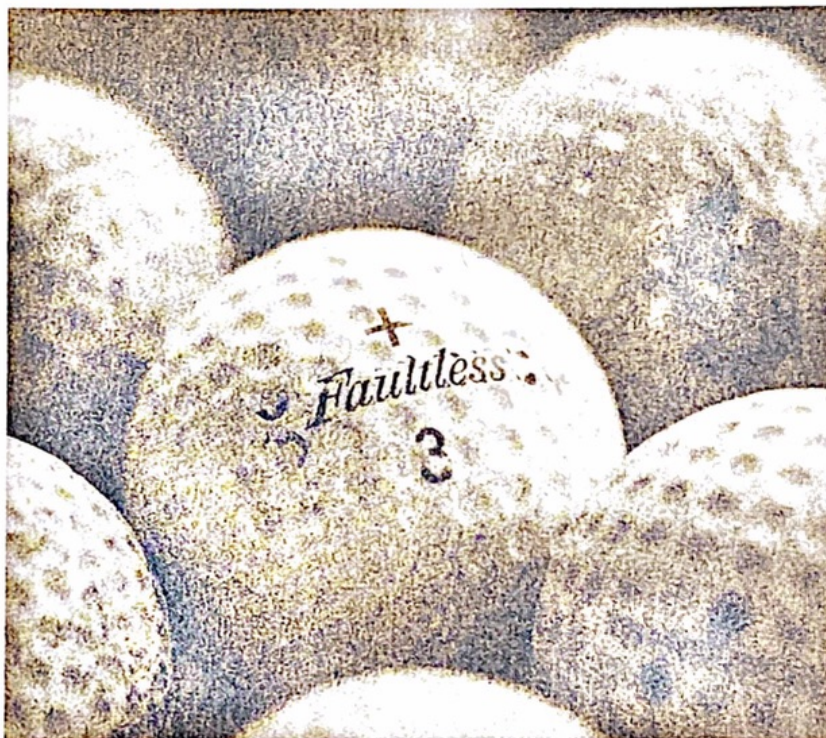
ACTIVE READING

CLARIFY Why is the narrator so surprised by the farm hands' efforts?

so poor. Just like the poor everywhere, I thought, who stint themselves the decencies of life in order to insure themselves the decencies of death. So incomprehensible to people like Lerice and me, who regard life as something to be spent extravagantly and, if we think about death at all, regard it as the final bankruptcy.

The servants don't work on Saturday afternoon anyway, so it was a good day for the

funeral. Petrus and his father had borrowed our donkey-cart to fetch the coffin from the city, where, Petrus told Lerice on their return, everything was "nice"—the coffin waiting for them, already sealed up to save them from what must have been a rather unpleasant sight after two weeks' interment. (It had taken all that time for the authorities and the undertaker to make



the final arrangements for moving the body.) All morning, the coffin lay in Petrus's hut, awaiting the trip to the little old burial-ground, just outside the eastern boundary of our farm, that was a relic of the days when this was a real farming district rather than a fashionable rural estate. It was pure chance that I happened to be down there near the fence when the procession came past; once again Lerice had forgotten her promise to me and had made the house uninhabitable on a Saturday afternoon. I had come home and been infuriated to find her in a pair of filthy old slacks and with her hair uncombed since the night before, having all the varnish scraped off the living-room floor, if you

WORDS
TO
KNOW

stint (stĭnt) *v.* to limit to a small amount; give sparingly

please. So I had taken my No. 8 iron and gone off to practice my approach shots. In my annoyance I had forgotten about the funeral, and was reminded only when I saw the procession coming up the path along the outside of the fence toward me; from where I was standing, you can see the graves quite clearly, and that day the sun glistened on bits of broken pottery, a lopsided homemade cross, and jam-jars brown with rain-water and dead flowers.

I felt a little awkward, and did not know whether to go on hitting my golf ball or stop at least until the whole gathering was decently past. The donkey-cart creaks and screeches with every revolution of the wheels and it came along in a slow, halting fashion somehow peculiarly suited to the two donkeys who drew it, their little potbellies rubbed and rough, their heads sunk between the

shafts, and their ears flattened back with an air submissive and down-cast; peculiarly suited, too, to the group of men and women who came along slowly behind. The patient ass. Watching, I thought, you can see now why the creature became a Biblical symbol. Then the procession drew level with me and stopped, so I had to put down my club. The coffin was taken down off the cart—it was a shiny, yellow-varnished wood, like cheap furniture—and the donkeys twitched their ears against the flies. Petrus, Franz, Albert and the old father from Rhodesia hoisted it on



Funeral Procession (1940), Ellis Wilson. Armistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

their shoulders and the procession moved on, on foot. It was really a very awkward moment. I stood there rather foolishly at the fence, quite still, and slowly they filed past, not looking up, the four men bent beneath the shiny wooden box, and the straggling troop of mourners. All of them were servants or neighbors' servants whom I knew as casual, easygoing gossipers about our lands or kitchen. I heard the old man's breathing.

I had just bent to pick up my club again when there was a sort of jar in the flowing solemnity of their processional mood; I felt it at once, like a wave of heat along the air, or one of those sudden currents of cold catching at your legs in a placid stream. The old man's voice was muttering

ACTIVE READING

QUESTION Why does the narrator feel awkward as the funeral passes?

WORDS
TO
KNOW

submissive (səb-mĭs'ĭv) *adj.* yielding to the control of another

something, and they bumped into one another, some pressing to go on, others hissing at them to be still. I could see that they were embarrassed, but they could not ignore the voice; it was much the way that the mumblings of a prophet, though not clear at first, arrest the mind. The corner of the coffin the old man carried was sagging at an angle; he seemed to be trying to get out from under the weight of it. Now Petrus expostulated with him.

The little boy who had been left to watch the donkeys dropped the reins and ran to see. I don't know why—unless it was for the same reason people crowd round someone who has fainted in a cinema—but I parted the wires of the fence and went through, after him.

Petrus lifted his eyes to me—to anybody—with distress and horror. The old man from Rhodesia had let go of the coffin entirely, and the three others, unable to support it on their own, had laid it on the ground, in the pathway. Already there was a film of dust lightly wavering up its shiny sides. I did not understand what the old man was saying; I hesitated to interfere. But now the whole seething group turned on my silence. The old man himself came over to me, with his hands outspread and shaking, and spoke directly to me, saying something that I could tell from the tone, without understanding the words, was shocking and extraordinary.

"What is it, Petrus? What's wrong?" I appealed.

Petrus threw up his hands, bowed his head in a series of hysterical shakes, then thrust his face up at me suddenly.

"He says, 'My son was not so heavy.'"

Silence. I could hear the old man breathing; he kept his mouth a little open as old people do.

"My son was young and thin," he said, at last, in English.

Again silence. Then babble broke out. The old man thundered against everybody; his teeth were yellowed and few, and he had one of those fine, grizzled, sweeping moustaches that one doesn't

often see nowadays, which must have been grown in emulation of early Empire builders.¹² It seemed to frame all his utterances with a special validity, perhaps merely because it was the symbol of the traditional wisdom of age—an idea so fearfully rooted that it carries still something awesome beyond reason. He shocked them; they thought he was mad, but they had to listen to him. With his own hands he began to prise the lid off the coffin and three of the men came forward to help him. Then he sat down on the ground; very old, very weak, and unable to speak, he merely lifted a trembling hand toward what was there. He abdicated, he handed it over to them; he was no good any more.

They crowded round to look (and so did I), and now they forgot the nature of this surprise and the occasion of grief to which it belonged, and for a few minutes were carried up in the astonishment of the surprise itself. They gasped and flared noisily with excitement. I even noticed the little boy who had held the donkeys jumping up and down, almost weeping with rage because the backs of the grown-ups crowded him out of his view.

In the coffin was someone no one had ever seen before: a heavily built, rather light-skinned native with a neatly stitched scar on his forehead—perhaps from a blow in a brawl that had also dealt him some other, slower-working injury which had killed him.

I wrangled with the authorities for a week over that body. I had the feeling that they were shocked, in a laconic fashion, by their own mistake, but that in the confusion of their anonymous dead they were helpless to put it right. They said to me, "We are trying to find out," and "We are still making enquiries." It was as if at any moment they might conduct me into their mortuary and say, "There! Lift up the sheets; look for him—your poultry boy's brother. There are so many black faces—surely one will do?"

12. Empire builders: British colonizers.

And every evening when I got home Petrus was waiting in the kitchen. "Well, they're trying. They're still looking. The *Baas* is seeing to it for you, Petrus," I would tell him. "God, half the time I should be in the office I'm driving around the back end of town chasing after this affair," I added aside, to Lerice, one night.

She and Petrus both kept their eyes turned on me as I spoke, and, oddly, for those moments they looked exactly alike, though it sounds impossible: my wife, with her high, white forehead and her attenuated Englishwoman's body, and the poultry boy, with his horny bare feet below khaki trousers tied at the knee with string

and the peculiar rankness of his nervous sweat coming from his skin.

"What makes you so indignant, so determined about this now?" said

ACTIVE READING

QUESTION Why do Lerice and Petrus look alike to the narrator at this point?

Lerice suddenly.

I stared at her. "It's a matter of principle. Why should they get away with a swindle? It's time these officials had a jolt from someone who'll bother to take the trouble."

She said, "Oh." And as Petrus slowly opened the kitchen door to leave, sensing that the talk had gone beyond him, she turned away too.

I continued to pass on assurances to Petrus

every evening, but although what I said was the same, and the voice in which I said it was the same, every evening it sounded weaker. At last, it became clear that we would never get Petrus's brother back, because nobody really knew where he was. Somewhere in a graveyard as uniform as a housing scheme, somewhere under a number that didn't belong to him, or in the medical school, perhaps, laboriously reduced to layers of muscles and strings of nerves? Goodness knows. He had no identity in this world anyway.

It was only then, and in a voice of shame, that Petrus asked me to try and get the money back.

"From the way he asks, you'd think he was robbing his dead brother," I said to Lerice later. But as I've said, Lerice had got so intense about this business that she couldn't even appreciate a little ironic smile.

I tried to get the money; Lerice tried. We both telephoned and wrote and argued, but nothing came of it. It appeared that the main expense had been the undertaker, and, after all, he had done his job. So the whole thing was a complete waste, even more of a waste for the poor devils than I had thought it would be.

The old man from Rhodesia was about Lerice's father's size, so she gave him one of her father's old suits and he went back home rather better off, for the winter, than he had come. ❖