

English First Additional Language Paper 2: Literature

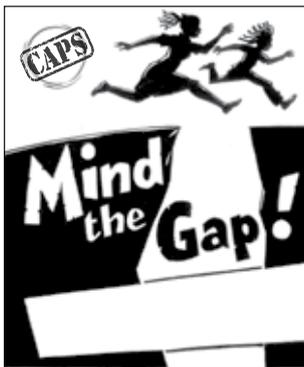
**Nothing But the Truth**  
Study Guide

Grade  
**12**



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



This content may not be sold or used for commercial purposes.

**Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grade 12 English First Additional Language Mind the Gap study guide for the play *Nothing But the Truth* by John Kani ISBN 978-1-4315-1945-3**

This publication has a **Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial Sharealike** license. You can use, modify, upload, download, and share content, but you must acknowledge the Department of Basic Education, the authors and contributors. If you make any changes to the content you must send the changes to the Department of Basic Education. This content may not be sold or used for commercial purposes. For more information about the terms of the license please see: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>.

Copyright © Department of Basic Education 2015  
222 Struben Street, Pretoria, South Africa  
Contact person: Dr Patricia Watson  
Email: [watson.p@dbe.gov.za](mailto:watson.p@dbe.gov.za)  
Tel: (012) 357 4502  
<http://www.education.gov.za>  
Call Centre: 0800202933

The first edition of the series published in 2012 for the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) Grade 12 Mind the Gap study guides for Accounting, Economics, Geography and Life Sciences; the second edition of the series, published in 2014, aligned these titles to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and added more titles to the series, including the CAPS Grade 12 English First Additional Language **Mind the Gap study guide for the play *Nothing But the Truth* by John Kani.**

### **Acknowledgement**

The extracts from the play are reproduced with the permission of Wits University Press. John Kani, *Nothing But the Truth*. Copyright John Kani. First published by Wits University Press in 2002. ISBN: 978 1 86814 389 4

### **Mind the Gap team**

**Series managing editor:** Dr Patricia Watson

**Production co-ordinators:** Gill McDowell, Radha Pillay and Rachel Adatia

**Authors:** Manya Gittel, Emmanuel Gomba, Melanie Jansen, Robert Maungedzo, Eugene Snayer and Mamorufe Tshikane

**Editor:** Julia Grey and Pat Tucker

**Expert readers:** Willem Ros, Bulara Monyaki and Roselet Netshilata

**Proof reader:** Pat Tucker

**Designer:** Adam Rumball

**Illustrators:** Michele Dean, Ivan Keir, Vusi Malindi, Khosi Pholosa and Kenneth Tekane

**Series cover illustration:** Alastair Findlay

**Onsite writers' workshop support:** Wayne Cussons

# Ministerial foreword

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has pleasure in releasing the second edition of the *Mind the Gap* study guides for Grade 12 learners. These study guides continue the innovative and committed attempt by the DBE to improve the academic performance of Grade 12 candidates in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination.

The study guides have been written by teams of experts comprising teachers, examiners, moderators, subject advisors and coordinators. Research, which began in 2012, has shown that the *Mind the Gap* series has, without doubt, had a positive impact on grades. It is my fervent wish that the *Mind the Gap* study guides take us all closer to ensuring that no learner is left behind, especially as we celebrate 20 years of democracy.

The second edition of *Mind the Gap* is aligned to the 2014 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). This means that the writers have considered the National Policy pertaining to the programme, promotion requirements and protocols for assessment of the National Curriculum Statement for Grade 12 in 2014.

The *Mind the Gap* CAPS study guides take their brief in part from the 2013 National Diagnostic report on learner performance and draw on the Grade 12 Examination Guidelines. Each of the *Mind the Gap* study guides defines key terminology and offers simple explanations and examples of the types of questions learners can expect to be asked in an exam. Marking memoranda are included to assist learners to build their understanding. Learners are also referred to specific questions from past national exam papers and examination memos that are available on the Department's website – [www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za).

The CAPS editions include Accounting, Economics, Geography, Life Sciences, Mathematics, Mathematical Literacy and Physical Sciences. The series is produced in both English and Afrikaans. There are also nine English First Additional Language (EFAL) study guides. These include EFAL Paper 1 (Language in Context); EFAL Paper 3 (Writing) and a guide for each of the Grade 12 prescribed literature set works included in Paper 2. These are Short Stories, Poetry, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Grain of Wheat*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Nothing but the Truth* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Please remember when preparing for Paper 2 that you need only study the set works you did in your EFAL class at school.

The study guides have been designed to assist those learners who have been underperforming due to a lack of exposure to the content requirements of the curriculum and aim to mind-the-gap between failing and passing, by bridging the gap in learners' understanding of commonly tested concepts, thus helping candidates to pass.

All that is now required is for our Grade 12 learners to put in the hours required to prepare for the examinations. Learners, make us proud – study hard. We wish each and every one of you good luck for your Grade 12 examinations.



Matsie Angelina Motshekga, MP  
Minister of Basic Education  
January 2015



Matsie Angelina Motshekga, MP  
Minister of Basic Education



# Table of contents

Dear Grade 12 learner.....	vii
How to use this study guide .....	vii
Top 7 study tips.....	viii
On the exam day.....	ix
Overview of the English First Additional Language Paper 2: Literature Exam.....	x
What are the examiners looking for? .....	xi
Question words .....	xii
Vocabulary for <i>Nothing But the Truth</i> .....	xiv
<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1. The playwright .....	2
2. Background.....	2
3. Title.....	3
4. How the story is told .....	4
4.1 Setting .....	4
4.2 Characters.....	4
4.3 Structure and plot development.....	7
4.4 Themes.....	8
4.5 Symbols.....	9
5. Style.....	10
5.1 Diction and figurative language.....	10
5.2 Dialogue .....	10
5.3 Soliloquy.....	11
5.4 Dramatic elements.....	11
5.5 Tone and mood.....	12
<b>Scene by scene .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Act 1 .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Act 1, Scene 1 .....</b>	<b>15</b>
1. What happens and who is involved?.....	15
2. Themes .....	16
3. Style.....	17
4. Diction and figurative language.....	18
5. Tone and mood .....	18
Activity 1.....	19
<b>Act 1, Scene 2 .....</b>	<b>21</b>
1. What happens and who is involved?.....	22
2. Themes .....	23
3. Style.....	24
4. Diction and figurative language.....	26
5. Tone and mood .....	26
Activity 2.....	27
<b>Act 2 .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Act 2, Scene 1 .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Part 1.....</b>	<b>30</b>
1. What happens and who is involved?.....	31
2. Themes .....	33
3. Style.....	34
4. Diction and figurative language.....	34
5. Tone and mood .....	35
Activity 3.....	35

---

<b>Part 2: Act 2, Scene 1</b> .....	<b>37</b>
1. What happens and who is involved?.....	38
2. Themes .....	40
3. Style.....	42
4. Diction and figurative language.....	42
5. Tone and mood.....	42
Activity 4.....	43
Activity 5.....	45

# Dear Grade 12 learner

This *Mind the Gap* study guide helps you to prepare for the end-of-year Grade 12 English First Additional Language (EFAL).

EFAL has three exams: Paper 1: Language in Context; Paper 2: Literature; and Paper 3: Writing.

There are nine EFAL *Mind the Gap* study guides which cover Paper 1, 2 and 3.

Paper 2: Literature includes the study of novels; drama; short stories; and poetry. A *Mind the Gap* study guide is available for each of the prescribed literature titles. Choose the study guide for the pieces of literature you studied in your EFAL class at school.

This study guide focuses on John Kani's play, *Nothing But the Truth*, one of the set works in Paper 2: Literature.

## How to use this study guide

In the introduction to the guide (pages 1 to 12), you find out about the author and the current events that influenced him. There is also an overview of how the story is told.

From page 13 to 46, you can work through each act in the play to understand:

- The characters;
- The themes;
- The symbols; and
- Diction and figurative language used to tell the story.

You can test your understanding of each act by completing the activities, and using the answers to mark your own work. The activities are based on exam extracts.

Look out for these icons in the study guide.

	Pay special attention		Worked examples
	Hints to help you remember a concept or guide you in solving problems		Activities with questions for you to answer



## Top 7 study tips



1. Break your learning up into manageable sections. This will help your brain to focus. Take short breaks between studying one section and going onto the next.
2. Have all your materials ready before you begin studying a section – pencils, pens, highlighters, paper, glass of water, etc.
3. Be positive. It helps your brain hold on to the information.
4. Your brain learns well with colours and pictures. Try to use them whenever you can.
5. Repetition is the key to remembering information you have to learn. Keep going over the work until you can recall it with ease.
6. Teach what you are learning to anyone who will listen. It is definitely worth reading your revision notes aloud.
7. Sleeping for at least eight hours every night, eating healthy food and drinking plenty of water are all important things you need to do for your brain. Studying for exams is like exercise, so you must be prepared physically as well as mentally.



# On the exam day

- 1.** Make sure you bring pens that work, sharp pencils, a rubber and a sharpener. Make sure you bring your ID document and examination admission letter. Arrive at the exam venue at least an hour before the start of the exam.
- 2.** Go to the toilet before entering the exam room. You don't want to waste valuable time going to the toilet during the exam.
- 3.** You must know at the start of the exam which two out of the four sections of the Paper 2 Literature exam you will be answering. Use the 10 minutes' reading time to read the instructions carefully.
- 4.** Break each question down to make sure you understand what is being asked. If you don't answer the question properly you won't get any marks for it. Look for the key words in the question to know how to answer it. You will find a list of question words on page xii of this study guide.
- 5.** Manage your time carefully. Start with the question you think is the easiest. Check how many marks are allocated to each question so you give the right amount of information in your answer.
- 6.** Remain calm, even if the question seems difficult at first. It will be linked with something you have covered. If you feel stuck, move on and come back if time allows. Do try and answer as many questions as possible.
- 7.** Take care to write neatly so the examiners can read your answers easily.

# Overview of the English First Additional Language Paper 2: Literature Exam

In the **Paper 2 Literature** exam, you need to answer questions from two sections. Choose the two sections that you know best:

- Section A: Novel
- Section B: Drama
- Section C: Short stories
- Section D: Poetry

A total of **70 marks** is allocated for Paper 2, which means **35 marks for each section you choose**.

You will have **two hours** for this exam.

**Here is a summary of the Paper 2 Literature exam paper:**

Question number	Title of novel	Type of question	Number of marks
<b>Section A: Novel</b> <i>If you choose Section A, answer ONE question. Choose the question for the book you have learnt.</i>			
1	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	Contextual	35
2	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	Contextual	35
3	<i>A Grain of Wheat</i>	Contextual	35
<b>Section B: Drama</b> <i>If you choose Section B, answer ONE question. Choose the question for the play you have learnt.</i>			
4	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Contextual	35
5	<i>Nothing but the Truth</i>	Contextual	35
<b>Section C: Short stories</b> <i>If you choose Section C, answer BOTH questions. You will not know exactly which short stories are included until the exam. TWO stories will be set. Answer the questions set on BOTH short stories.</i>			
6.1	Short story	Contextual	17 or 18
6.2	Short story	Contextual	17 or 18
<b>Section D: Poetry</b> <i>If you choose Section D, answer BOTH questions. You will not know exactly which poems are included until the exam. TWO poems will be set. Answer the questions set on BOTH poems.</i>			
7.1	Poem 1	Contextual	17 or 18
7.2	Poem 2	Contextual	17 or 18



- You don't have to answer all the sections in Paper 2.
- Before the exam starts you must know which two sections you are going to answer.
- When the exam starts, find your two chosen sections.
- Make sure to number your answers correctly – according to the numbering system used in the exam paper – for the two sections you've chosen.
- Start each section on a new page.

## What is a contextual question?

In a contextual question, you are given an extract (about 25–30 lines) from the novel. You then have to answer questions based on the extract. Some answers you can find in the extract. Other questions will test your understanding of other parts of the novel: its story, characters, symbols and themes. Some questions ask for your own opinion about the novel.

## What are the examiners looking for?

Examiners will assess your answers to the contextual questions based on:

- Your understanding of the **literal** meaning of the play. You need to identify information that is clearly given in the play.
- Your ability to **reorganise** information in the play. For example, you may be asked to summarise key points, or state the similarities or differences between two characters.
- Your ability to provide information that may not be clearly stated in the text, using what you already know about the play. This process is called **inference**. This may include explaining how a figure of speech affects your understanding of the play, explaining themes or comparing the actions of different characters.
- Your ability to make judgements about aspects of the play, and make your own opinions based on information given in the play. This process is called **evaluation**. For example, you may be asked if you agree with a statement, or to discuss a character's motive for doing something.
- Your ability to respond to the characters in the play and how it is written on an emotional level. This is called **appreciation**. For example, you may be asked how you think a certain character feels, or what you would have done if you were in their situation. You may be asked to discuss how the writer's style helps to describe what a character is feeling.

# Question words

Here are examples of question types found in the exam.

Question type	What you need to do
<i>Literal: Questions about information that is clearly given in the text or extract from the text</i>	
<b>Name</b> characters/places/things ...	Write the specific names of characters, places, etc.
<b>State</b> the facts/reasons/ideas ...	Write down the information without any discussion or comments.
<b>Give</b> two reasons for/why ...	Write two reasons (this means the same as 'state').
<b>Identify</b> the character/reasons/theme ...	Write down the character's name, state the reasons.
<b>Describe</b> the place/character/what happens when ...	Write the main characteristics of something, for example: What does a place look/feel/smell like? Is a particular character kind/rude/aggressive ...
<b>What</b> does character x do when ...	Write what happened – what the character did.
<b>Why</b> did character x do ...	Given reasons for the character's action according to your knowledge of the plot.
<b>Who</b> is/did ...	Write the name of the character.
<b>To whom</b> does xx refer ...	Write the name of the relevant character/person.
<i>Reorganisation: Questions that need you to bring together different pieces of information in an organised way.</i>	
<b>Summarise</b> the main points/ideas ...	Write the main points, without a lot of detail.
<b>Group</b> the common elements ...	Join the same things together.
<b>Give</b> an outline of ....	Write the main points, without a lot of detail.
<i>Inference Questions that need you to interpret (make meaning of) the text using information that may not be clearly stated. This process involves thinking about what happened in different parts of the text; looking for clues that tell you more about a character, theme or symbol; and using your own knowledge to help you understand the text.</i>	
<b>Explain</b> how this idea links with the theme x ...	Identify the links to the theme.
<b>Compare</b> the attitudes/actions of character x with character y ...	Point out the similarities and differences.
<b>What</b> do the words ... suggest/reveal about /what does this situation tell you about ...	State what you think the meaning is, based on your understanding of the text.
<b>How</b> does character x react when .... <b>Describe how</b> something affected ... <b>State how</b> you know that character x is ...	Write down the character's reaction/what the character did/felt.
<b>What</b> did character x mean by the expression ...	Explain why the character used those particular words.
Is the following statement <b>true or false</b> ?	Write 'true' or 'false' next to the question number. You must give a reason for your answer.
<b>Choose</b> the correct answer to complete the following sentence (multiple choice question).	A list of answers is given, labelled A–D. Write only the letter (A, B, C or D) next to the question number.
<b>Complete</b> the following sentence by filling in the missing words ...	Write the missing word next to the question number.
<b>Quote</b> a line from the extract to prove your answer.	Write the relevant line of text using the same words and punctuation you see in the extract. Put quotation marks (" " inverted commas) around the quote.

<b>Evaluation</b> Questions that require you to make a judgement based on your knowledge and understanding of the text and your own experience.	
<b>Discuss</b> your view/a character's feelings/a theme ...	Consider all the information and reach a conclusion.
<b>Do you think that ...</b>	There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a reason for your opinion based on information given in the text.
<b>Do you agree with ...</b>	
<b>In your opinion, what ...</b>	
<b>Give your views on ...</b>	
<b>Appreciation</b> Questions that ask about your emotional response to what happens, the characters and how it is written.	
<b>How would you feel if you were</b> character x when ...	There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a reason for your opinion based on information given in the text.
<b>Discuss your response to ...</b>	
<b>Do you feel sorry for ...</b>	
<b>Discuss the use of the writer's style, diction and figurative language, dialogue ...</b>	To answer this type of question, ask yourself: Does the style help me to feel/imagine what is happening/what a character is feeling? Why/why not? Give a reason for your answer.

## words to know

### Vocabulary for *Nothing But the Truth*

You need to know all the words in the lists below. Learn them well! The word lists include:

- Vocabulary you need to understand plays in general;
- Vocabulary used in the play; and
- Vocabulary you need to understand the background of the play.

#### Vocabulary to understand plays in general

**Acts:** Parts of a play

**antagonist:** The character the main character (protagonist) struggles with or competes with

**anti-climax:** A disappointing end

**director:** The person who supervises the actors, tells them what to do and makes sure that all the parts of the play, like the acting and the lighting, come to together properly

**drama:** A play for theatre, radio or television

**cast:** A group of actors performing in a play or film

**central, main character:** The person the play is mostly about

**characters:** The people the play is about

**characterisation:** The description of a character or the way the actors portray the character they are playing

**climax:** The crisis point, the most exciting part, a turning point in the story

**conflict:** Disagreement

**costume:** What a character wears

**dialogue:** The characters' speech

**dramatic effect:** Something that happens on stage and grabs the audience's attention

**dramatic purpose:** A scene has dramatic purpose when it adds to the audience's or reader's knowledge about the play and the characters

**dramatic irony:** When the audience or reader knows more about the situation and what is going on than the characters on stage

**dramatic structure:** The way the play is put together

**euphemism:** A polite word or expression used instead of a more direct one to avoid shocking or upsetting someone

**exposition:** The beginning of the story

**falling action:** The problem or conflict begins to be resolved

**figurative language:** The use of words in an imaginative or unusual way, to express an idea indirectly or to create a special effect

**irony:** When a statement or situation has an underlying meaning that is different from the literal meaning

**literally:** Exactly

**main characters:** The most important people in the play

**main plot:** The most important story the play tells us

**metaphor:** A figure of speech that uses one thing to describe another in a figurative way

**minor characters:** The less important people in the play

**mood:** Atmosphere or emotion; it shows the feeling or the frame of mind of the characters

**playwright:** A person who writes a play

**plot:** The main events that take place in the play

**preceded by their names:** The name comes before the speech

**problem drama:** A play in which social issues are compared

## words to know

**props:** Short for 'properties', the property of the character who uses them on stage

**protagonist:** The main character in a drama

**resolution:** The play's ending or conclusion

**rising action:** The conflict, complication or problem arises

**sarcasm:** The use of irony to mock or show contempt

**Scenes:** A division of an act in a play during which the action takes place in a single place without a break in time

**set:** Arrangement of scenery and props to represent the place where a play (or a film) is taking place

**setting:** Where and when the drama takes place

**soliloquy:** When the character speaks his/her thoughts aloud so the audience hears these thoughts, but the other characters don't

**sub-plot:** An event or story that is told alongside the main story

**symbol:** Something that stands for or represents something else

**stage directions:** Instruction written into the script of a play showing the way the actors should move or what they should do or their emotions when they say something

**themes:** The main ideas in the play

**tone:** The attitude of the playwright to a specific character, place, or development

### Vocabulary used in the play

**Abandoned:** Left completely

**abiding by:** Keeping to

**absorbs:** Takes in; properly understands

**accountability, accountable:** Sense of responsibility, responsible

**accurate:** Correct

**adventurous:** Ready to do exciting things

**affair:** A romantic and/or sexual relationship between two people that is usually short

**allied:** Joined; related

**analysis:** Study; examination

**anxious:** Nervous

**apologises:** Says sorry

**application:** A formal request to someone in authority

**applying:** The act of making a formal request

**appointment:** Time to meet

**arise:** Get up

**articles:** Part of the study for becoming a lawyer

**audience:** People who watch something

**avoid:** Try to get away from

**awards:** Prizes given to honour people for doing something special

**awkward:** Uncomfortable

**betrayal:** Unfaithfulness; disloyalty

**body language:** The way people hold and move their bodies and faces that expresses how they are feeling

**challenges:** Invites someone to do something difficult

**challenged:** Disagreed with

**challenging:** Demanding

**charming:** Pleasing

**clerk:** Office worker

**commits to:** Promises

**committed:** Did

**communicate:** To express thoughts, feelings or information

**complication:** Difficulty

**confirming:** Saying that something is true

**connecting:** Relating to

**consider:** Think carefully about

## words to know

**considerate:** Thoughtful about the needs of others

**contribution:** What one gives or does to help with something

**conversation:** A talk between two or more people in which they give each other information

**coward:** Someone who is scared of doing something

**cremate:** Burn a body to ashes

**crisis:** A time of great difficulty or danger

**criticism:** Passing judgement, usually negative

**crowned:** Put a crown on his head, like a king

**curious:** Inquisitive, wanting to know things

**deal with:** Get it done properly

**declares:** Announces

**dedication:** Devotion to something; the words at the beginning of a book, play or film that mention a person who is important to the author or director

**dependence:** Great need

**deserves:** Is worthy of

**designer:** Someone who creates clothes or stage or film sets

**despite:** Even though there is something else to consider

**diagram:** A drawing showing the way something works or the way something should look

**disapproving:** Believing something is wrong

**disclosure:** Something that is admitted or no longer hidden

**donation:** Contribution of money or gifts

**dramatic:** Of a drama

**due to:** Because of

**dull:** Not interesting

**duty-free:** Free of the tax that people who live in a country have to pay. Visitors do not have to pay it so some shops at airports are duty-free shops

**elements:** Parts

**empowerment:** To be enabled, to be given more power

**encourages:** Gives confidence, courage, inspires, excites

**ensured:** Made sure

**enthusiastic:** Showing enjoyment, interest or approval

**established:** Set up

**ethical:** Moral; having principles

**evidence:** Proof

**expand horizons:** See and do more

**experiences:** Events that people go through in life and learn from

**external:** Outside, outer

**extreme:** Great

**facilities:** Services like libraries, universities, buses, schools, trains, toilets, etc.

**fake:** Not real, pretending

**fictional:** Imaginary, 'made up', as in a story, book, play or movie

**focusing:** Concentrating

**followed in his shoes:** Did as he did

**for donkey's years:** For a long time

**frustration:** Dissatisfaction

**full houses:** The theatre was full

**gatherings:** People coming together

**glamorous:** Attractive, elegant

**glamour:** An attractive or exciting quality

**granted, granting:** Given, giving

**grateful:** Thankful, appreciative

**gross:** Major, awful

## words to know

**harsh:** Hard, cruel

**heal:** Get better

**hearings:** Places where people give evidence or tell their stories in front of a committee, in a court of law or at the TRC

**hearse:** A large van, usually black, which transports a coffin

**hurtful:** Painful

**imagines:** Pictures in his or her mind

**indicate:** Point to

**integrity:** Honesty, uprightness

**intense:** Strong

**internal:** Inside, inner

**internal conflict:** The conflict inside oneself

**interview:** Questions asked when somebody is applying for a job

**invites:** Asks someone to join in

**interpreter:** Someone who translates from one language to another

**ironic:** Biting, mocking

**irony:** A statement or situation that has an underlying meaning different from its literal or surface meaning

**issues:** Matters

**just:** Fair

**loyal:** Faithful, devoted

**materialistic:** Concerned about money and the things it can buy

**moaning:** Complaining

**moving:** Touching their hearts

**murky:** Unclear, dark, unsolved

**obituary:** Notice of the death of a person

**opposing:** Opposite, contrasting

**oppressive:** Cruel, disempowering

**overreacting:** Responding more emotionally than is necessary

**outspoken:** Says what he/she feels

**parallel:** Next to, alongside

**perpetrator:** Somebody who does something, usually something bad

**perpetrated:** Carried out or committed something bad

**pointless:** Without reason or purpose

**portfolio:** A flat case for carrying loose papers or drawings

**post-apartheid:** After apartheid

**pressurise:** Encourage with force, persuade

**promotion:** Advancement, getting a better job

**properly accountable:** As responsible as one should be

**published:** Printed in book form

**quality:** The standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the characteristics of a person

**reciting:** Performing poetry or other literature before an audience

**reconciliation:** Rebuilding good relationships or making up with somebody with whom you have had a bad relationship

**reconciling:** Becoming friendly again

**relevance:** Importance

**remains:** Whatever is left of someone after he or she has died, even after a long time

**relevant:** Important to

**relevance:** Meaning, importance

**resentment:** Bitterness

**resists:** Withstands, opposes, won't give in to

**resolution:** Solution

**resolved:** Solved

**retirement:** When a person stops working, usually because of age – in the public service in South Africa the retirement age is 65

**revealed:** No longer hidden

## words to know

**reveals:** Shows

**selection:** Piece chosen

**series:** A run of one performance after another

**serious:** Thoughtful, not funny

**shattered:** Shocked and hurt, broken.

**society:** Community

**still:** Not moving

**standing ovation:** Standing up to clap after a performance

**stimulated:** Moved, inspired

**striking:** Noticeable

**stuck:** Can't move on

**suggests:** Puts forward

**supported:** Backed up

**swap:** Exchange

**tension:** Pushing and pulling, pressure, stress

**terrible:** Very bad

**tough:** Hard, strict

**undertaker:** A person who prepares bodies for funerals

**urn:** A vase for holding the ashes of the cremated dead

**versus:** Against

**victim:** Someone who suffers either because of the actions of somebody else or because he or she punishes himself or herself

**violate:** Disturb; abuse

**wrenched:** Pulled hard

### Vocabulary to understand the background of the play

**activism:** Campaigning to bring about political or social change

**activist:** A person who campaigns to bring about political or social change

**amnesty:** An official pardon for people who have been convicted of committing a political offence

**apartheid:** The policy of the National Party government of South Africa to separate people and discriminate on the basis of race

**banned:** Did not allow. During the apartheid years a banned person was not allowed to do many things, including be with more than two other people at the same time

**ensorship:** Control of what people can read, see and hear

**detained:** Held in prison without trial

**detention:** When a person is held in prison without trial he/she is in detention

**exile:** Being forbidden to return to one's country of birth

**passbook (also called reference book or dompas):** The identity document all black people in South Africa during apartheid had to carry all the time

**protest:** Express opposition to something

**terrorist:** A person who uses terrorism to achieve a political aim

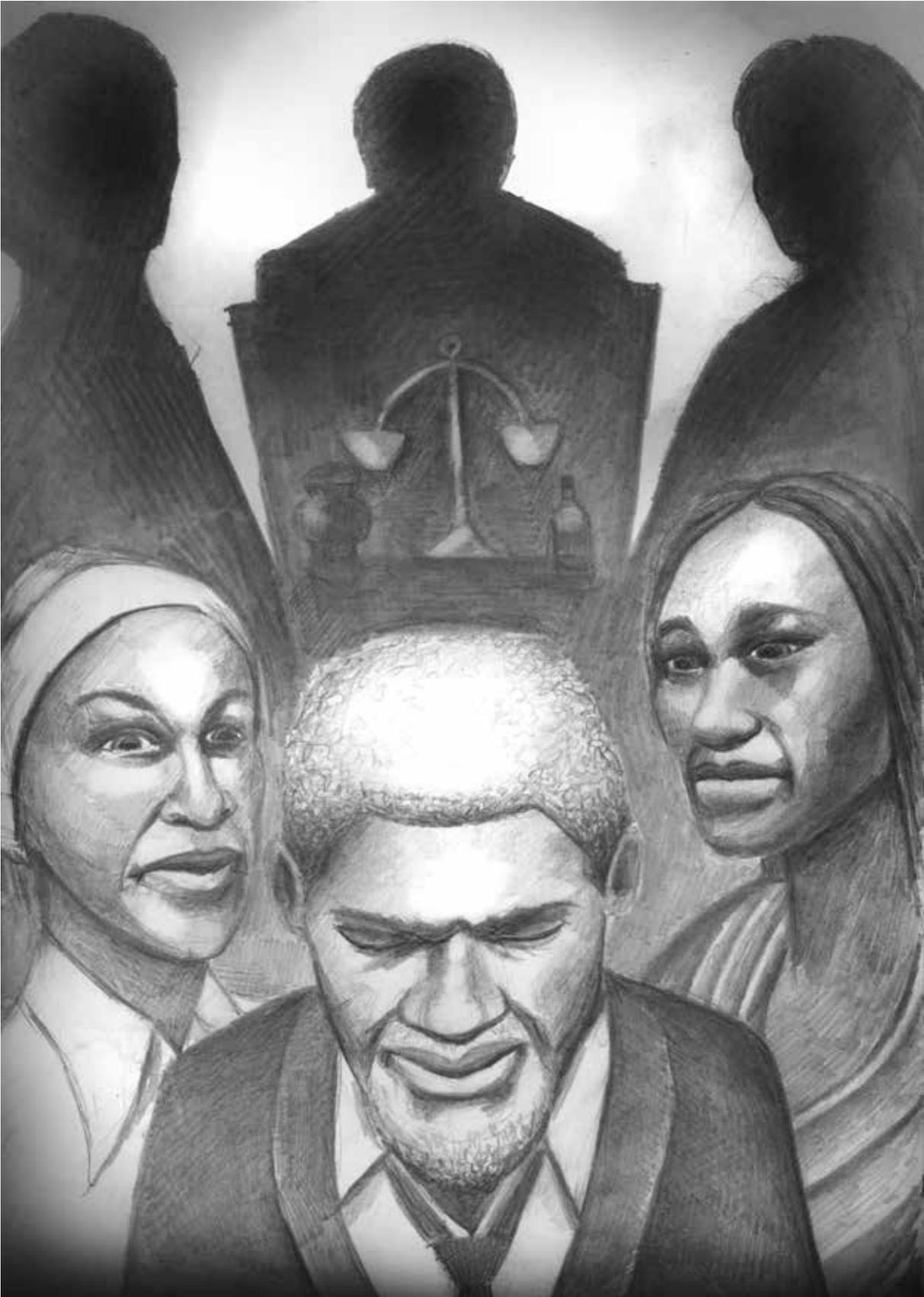
**Struggle, The:** the fight for liberation in South Africa

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC):** a body something like a court set up to hear the stories of people who had suffered under apartheid

**UDF (United Democratic Front):** a non-racial anti-apartheid organisation

# Overview

Nothing  
But the  
Truth



vocab

**Contemporary:**  
Belonging to the present times.

vocab

**Playwright:** A person who writes plays.

# Nothing But the Truth

*Nothing But the Truth* is a **contemporary** play that deals with modern issues. The play tells one man's personal story as he questions and reflects on his life and his family during and after apartheid.

## 1. The playwright

*Nothing But the Truth* was written by Bonisile John Kani. Kani is an actor, director and **playwright**. He wrote the play in 2001 and also acted in it when it was first performed at the National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown in 2002.

Kani was born in 1943 and grew up in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, where the play is set. His career in theatre started while he was still at school in New Brighton, where he performed in plays with Winston Ntshona. He later joined the Serpent Players drama group, formed by the famous playwright Athol Fugard. The group performed plays in the townships that dealt with people's experiences of living under apartheid.

Kani, Fugard and Ntshona wrote several plays together, including *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972), which was about the harsh pass laws of the apartheid regime. They also wrote *The Island* (1973), which was about two political prisoners on Robben Island. These plays are known as 'protest theatre', as they protested against apartheid.



## 2. Background

*Nothing But the Truth* was written some years after the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. The play explores the question, 'What do we do with the freedom we have won?'. It reflects the experience in South Africa of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings.

### The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

The TRC was set up to help deal with the major human rights violations that took place during apartheid. It gave people who were victims of these violations a chance to tell the story of what happened to them. It also gave the people who committed the crimes or abuses the chance to tell the truth about what they did and to ask for forgiveness.

The TRC hearings were public meetings that were held in different parts of the country.

People who had committed major human rights violations could apply for amnesty for what they had done if they told the whole truth about what had happened at the hearing. 'Amnesty' means they were legally pardoned for their crime.

The play tells the story of a man, Siphon Makhaya, who has had a hard and painful life. At the time of the TRC hearings in South Africa Siphon is struggling with his own personal truth and reconciliation process:

- Within himself;
- With his family;
- With his past; and
- With his present situation in the 'new' democratic South Africa.

Siphon's memories of the problems between himself and his activist brother, Themba, are brought to life again when Themba dies in **exile** in London. Mandisa is Themba's daughter and Siphon's niece. She brings Themba's remains back to South Africa to be buried with his family. It is the first time that Siphon and his daughter, Thando, have met Mandisa. The play is about how these three characters remember their past, face family secrets, and manage their present relationships with one another.

This play is also about our South African past, present and future. It invites us to think not only about how hard it was to live under apartheid, but also how to make South Africa a better place in the future. The play suggests that freedom brings responsibilities and that **reconciliation** is one of those responsibilities. The play reflects the challenges and changes that faced South Africa during the early days of the new democracy.

By the end of the play, the characters are able to come to terms with the past and they find a sense of truth, justice, forgiveness and empowerment within themselves and with each other. All these elements are part of a process of reconciliation, and of coming to terms with the past.

## vocab

**Exile:** To leave one's own country for political reasons.

## vocab

**Reconciliation:** Restoring friendly relationships.

### 3. Title

In a court of law, before a witness gives evidence he or she must promise to tell 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God'. People giving evidence in the TRC hearings also had to make this promise.

The fact that the play's title is *Nothing But the Truth* suggests that it will reveal some deep, and hidden, truths.

In Act 2, a very important hidden truth about the characters is revealed: Siphon confesses that his wife and his brother, Themba, had an affair. This explains the source of his real anger towards his dead brother. This revealed truth is also important to the identity of the two young women in the play: Thando may be Themba's daughter, not Siphon's daughter, which would make Thando and Mandisa sisters, not cousins.

The play shows that it can be difficult and challenging to tell the truth and to understand and accept it. However, the process can be healing and it can help us to move on from a painful past. This applies to the characters in the play as well as to South Africa as a whole during and after the TRC process. In the play, Kani suggests that by accepting "nothing but the truth" we can achieve reconciliation.

## 4. How the story is told

### 4.1 Setting

The setting of *Nothing But the Truth* is a four-roomed house – 46 Madala Street, New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, South Africa. The year is 2000.

The play opens on the evening before the last day of the TRC hearing about the deaths of the group of political activists known as the Cradock Four. The Cradock Four were four activists who were killed in 1985 on their way home from a meeting in Port Elizabeth. The hearing, in reality, took place in Port Elizabeth in 1998 and 1999.

In the play, the characters talk about historical events that took place in South Africa and some of the real political activists who struggled against apartheid.

### 4.2 Characters

This section presents all the characters in *Nothing But the Truth*:

- The three characters whose parts are played on stage by actors: Sipho, Thando and Mandisa; and
- The characters we do not see on stage, but whose lives and actions are important to the story.

#### Protagonist and antagonist

In a drama, the main character is the protagonist. In *Nothing But the Truth* the protagonist is Sipho.

The character the protagonist struggles against, or competes with, is called the antagonist. Themba, Sipho's younger brother, is the antagonist, even though his character never appears on stage. Mandisa also takes on her father's role as the antagonist in the play.

The conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist creates tension in the play, which helps to keep the audience interested in the story.

### Characters that appear on stage



#### Sipho Makhaya

Sipho is assistant Chief Librarian at the Port Elizabeth Public Library, where he has worked for almost 33 years. He is 63 years old, only two years away from retirement.

Important aspects to his character to be aware of are:

- **His personal truth and reconciliation process:** At the start of the play Siphon is angry and resentful about things that happened to him in the past. He blames his younger brother, Themba, for many of these. During the play we see Siphon change as he accepts what happened and

realises that his brother was not to blame for everything. He forgives his brother and is able to move on with his life. In his soliloquy at the end of the play, Siphso says he loves Themba and he begins to laugh as he imagines himself as the Chief Librarian of the new library he plans to create.

- **His respect for tradition and sense of duty towards his family:** Examples of Siphso's respect for African traditions include his shock at Themba's cremation, when he had planned a traditional funeral. He has also raised Thando up according to traditional African values, expecting her to show respect for traditional marriage customs and mourning periods. As the eldest male in the house, he expects to be consulted before any important decisions are made.
- **His work as a librarian:** Siphso takes great pride in his work, and is terribly disappointed and angry when he doesn't get the job of Chief Librarian. However, by the end of the play he has reconciled himself to this loss and plans to build the first African public library in New Brighton, of which he will be the Chief Librarian.



### Thando Makhaya

She is Siphso's daughter. Thando is a teacher and also works as an interpreter, or translator, at the amnesty hearings of the TRC. She is planning a traditional marriage to her boyfriend, Mpho.

Thando is a strong, independent woman who is also very caring. She has a social conscience and wants to contribute to society's well-being. This is shown by her work for the TRC, which she says she does not do for the money. She is caring and helpful towards her family.

She also respects traditional African culture. For example, she says that Mpho's uncles want to discuss lobola with Siphso. She generally accepts her father's authority, although she is not afraid to challenge him when she thinks he is being too old-fashioned or unreasonable. For example, when Siphso is angry because Themba has been cremated, she says: "Daddy! Some black people here are also going for cremation these days". (Act 1, Scene 2). Also, in Act 2 she makes her own decision to go to Johannesburg and says that she will go whether or not her father gives his permission.



### Mandisa McKay

Mandisa is Siphso's niece and the daughter of Themba, Siphso's younger brother. She was born in Camden Town in England. She studied fashion design at college. This is her first visit to South Africa.

In contrast to Thando who grew up with traditional African customs, Mandisa was raised with modern 'western' values. She is materialistic and likes shopping, as can be seen by the many bags she arrives with. She is also independent and is not afraid to say exactly what she thinks. For example, she calls what Siphso says about Themba, "drunken drive!" (Act 2, Scene 1).

Unlike her cousin Thando, Mandisa does not believe in the TRC process. She thinks the TRC forgives people too easily.

## Important characters that do not appear on stage

### A. Characters related to the Makhaya family



#### **Themba Makhaya**

Themba was Siphó's younger brother. He was a political activist, working to end apartheid. He went into exile and never returned to South Africa, although his ashes were brought back by his daughter, Mandisa. However, we know that he missed South Africa because Mandisa tells us that he often talked about "home".

There are two sides to Themba's character: the public image, and the hidden, private side. Publicly, Themba was admired as a struggle hero and influential speaker by his community. He was known to be handsome and 'a ladies' man'.

Privately, Themba was a selfish person who always put his own needs first. For three years, Themba had a sexual relationship with Sindiswa, Siphó's wife. He was too cowardly to face his brother for this terrible betrayal. However, he loved his family, and Siphó especially. We know this because Mandisa says that he talked about Siphó a lot towards the end of his life.



#### **Luvuyo Makhaya**

Luvuyo was Siphó's son. Like his uncle Themba, Luvuyo was a political activist. He was a poet and was shot by police when he was reading his poetry at a funeral. People in the local community still talk about him.

#### **Sindiswa Makhapela**

Sindiswa is Siphó's wife and Thando's mother. She left Siphó and her baby, Thando, after Siphó found out about her sexual relationship with Themba.

#### **Thelma McKay**

Thelma is Mandisa's mother. She is a human rights activist and has worked for Amnesty International for a long time. It was her decision to cremate Themba. Although both Thelma and her parents were born in London, she and Mandisa still visit Thelma's family in Barbados, in the West Indies.

#### **Mpho**

He is Thando's boyfriend and they are planning to get married. He is a History teacher.

#### **Derek Loxworth**

He was Mandisa's boyfriend in England. Mandisa says he is a "true gentleman", from a rich family.

## B. Characters that help with the funeral arrangements

**Mr Khahla:** He is the undertaker who helps with Themba's funeral. He was also at Siphon's father's funeral in 1987.

**Reverend Haya:** He advises Siphon about Themba's funeral arrangements. He was also at Siphon's father's funeral in 1987.

## C. Characters that worked with Siphon

**Mrs Meyers:** She gave Siphon a job at the library when he left the law firm. When her husband died Mrs Meyers left South Africa to live in England, but before she left she promoted Siphon to Assistant Chief Librarian.

**Mrs Potgieter:** She is the former Chief Librarian of the Port Elizabeth public library. She recommended Siphon for the job of Chief Librarian.

**Mr Spilkin:** He is the lawyer, from Spilkin & Spilkin Attorneys, for whom Siphon worked as a clerk. Mr Spilkin did not keep the promise he made to Siphon – that Siphon could study to be a lawyer.

## 4.3 Structure and plot development

This section shows how the plot of *Nothing But the Truth* develops in a way that keeps the audience interested.

### The structural elements of a plot

- **Exposition:** The beginning of the story, which introduces the main character.
- **Rising action:** The conflict, complication or problem that arises.
- **Climax:** The crisis point, or the most exciting part, or a turning point in the story.
- **Falling action:** The problem, or conflict, begins to be resolved.
- **Resolution:** The play's ending or conclusion.

### The main plot

The main event in the plot of *Nothing But the Truth* is Themba's funeral. This event brings the main characters together. The conversation and debate among the characters bring back the memories that are the focus of the play.

Siphon has organised a traditional funeral for his brother. Siphon's relationship with Themba is one of the important complications in the plot. However, there is a further complication – Themba's body has been cremated (burnt), so there is no body for burial, only a container full of ashes.

### Sub-plots

Sub-plots are events, or stories, that are told alongside the main plot.

The sub-plots in this play include:

- Siphon's application for the job of Chief Librarian;
- South Africa's TRC process following the end of apartheid;

- Mandisa inviting Thando to go with her to Johannesburg, and Thando's decision to go; and
- Other events that Siphon remembers from his past. For example, his first and subsequent jobs, his father's funeral and Luvuyo's death.

## 4.4 Themes

The main ideas in a play are called themes. The main themes in *Nothing But the Truth* are outlined below.

As you read the play, look out for examples of these themes.



### Truth and reconciliation

Reconciliation is a process of finding peace where there was once conflict. It involves understanding the truth and feeling that the problem has been solved fairly. As a healing process, reconciliation involves the people who have caused harm understanding the suffering that they have caused others and apologising for it. On the other hand, it involves forgiveness being granted to these people by the people who suffered because of their actions. This helps the victims let go of negative feelings like resentment and anger, and to move on with their lives.

In the play, the theme of truth and reconciliation is shown through the characters' different views of the purpose of the TRC, as well as in the personal truth and reconciliation process that Siphon goes through.

### Sibling rivalry

'Sibling rivalry' refers to the jealousy and struggle for power between brothers and sisters. Siphon gives examples of the rivalry between himself and his brother, such as when his father made Siphon give Themba his wire bus.

The most hurtful part of the sibling rivalry was the fact that their father always favoured Themba. Siphon says, "My father openly favoured Themba and it hurt." (Act 2, Scene 1)

### Being the victim or taking responsibility

Sometimes when bad things happen to people they begin to feel like victims, as though they cannot control what happens to them.

In the play, Siphon sounds like a victim when he talks about what was taken from him in the past, and he blames his brother for many of his losses. However, by the end of the play he realises that he cannot blame Themba for everything. He realises that he has to take some responsibility for what happened and for what he can do in the future.

### Traditional and modern culture

Culture relates to beliefs, attitudes and values that influence our behaviour, community and society. We live in a world with many different cultures that change and influence each other.

Tradition refers to cultural practices, or customs, that are passed on from one generation to another.

In the play, aspects of traditional African culture are contrasted with Mandisa's attitude and behaviour, which has been influenced by the fact that she grew up in a modern, materialistic society. For example, Mandisa cannot believe that Thando will allow Siphso to forbid her to go to Johannesburg if she wants to: "Girl! 'He won't allow you'!".

Thando answers: "Things are different here. This is not London. There are rules in this house." (Act 1, Scene 2)

## Exile

The play reflects some of the tensions between people who stayed in South Africa during the struggle and those who went into exile, like Themba, Siphso's brother.

## Political elites and the ordinary person

This theme is about how politicians in a democracy do not always serve the ordinary people who vote them into power.

Siphso describes how politicians took over his father's funeral. When he does not get promoted, simply because of his age, Siphso is critical of the South African government. He feels the politicians have forgotten to recognise and empower the ordinary people who fought for freedom, and who voted for them. Near the end of Act 2, Scene 1, Siphso says that he will write a letter to the President, to remind him that: "... I voted for him. I put them in power. I paid for this freedom. I paid with my son's life. My brother died in exile. They must never forget the little people like me. ... We have dreams too."

## 4.5 Symbols

A symbol is something that stands for or represents something else.

Here are examples of some of the symbols in *Nothing But the Truth*:

- The **passbook** and **baptismal certificate** represent apartheid.
- The bus and the **blazer** are symbols of the sibling rivalry between Themba and Siphso.
- The **urn** represents Themba, who has finally returned to South Africa. As Siphso had been expecting Themba's body for burial, it also represents the conflict between traditional and modern culture.
- The **dress**, designed by Nandipha Madikiza, symbolises the link between South Africa and the rest of the world. Mandisa's excitement about the dress and her desire to meet Nandipha shows that Mandisa, who knows about international fashion, thinks that something that looks so African will be appreciated internationally.
- The **first African public library** in New Brighton is a symbol of black empowerment, and that education is important for everyone. It is also symbolic of Siphso's new life, where he takes responsibility and is no longer a victim.

### vocab

**Urn:** A container used to store the ashes of a cremated (burnt) body.

## 5. Style

Kani's writing style helps us to imagine what is happening on stage and the events the characters are talking about. It makes the events come alive for readers and audiences.

### 5.1 Diction and figurative language

**Diction** refers to the writer's choice of words and how they are used.

In *Nothing But the Truth*, Kani uses ordinary, everyday language. This gives the play a realistic feeling.

**Figurative language** is the use of words in an imaginative or unusual way to express an idea or to create a special effect.

Some examples of figurative language used are:

- **Metaphor:** Thando uses a metaphor in her conversation with Mandisa:

MANDISA: Have you got time? It's a long story.

THANDO: We are going nowhere. **I am all ears.**

(Act 1, Scene 2)

This metaphor means that Thando is ready to listen – she is not literally made of ears!

- **Irony:** In this quotation below Thando is being funny, but in a bitter way. She says to Sipho:

A baptismal certificate, of course, that's all you old people have.

The only proof for black people that they truly existed [*laughs*].

(Act 1, Scene 1)

Thando is being ironic: obviously black people existed, so the certificate cannot be the only proof. This is also an example of **dark humour**, which is talking about something that is serious in a humourous way. It can make you laugh, even if it makes you feel uncomfortable.

- **Dramatic irony:** Stage directions can be used to create a situation in which the timing of the actors' entrances and exits on stage, contributes to dramatic irony. There is dramatic irony when the audience or reader knows more about the situation and what is going on than the characters on stage. Dramatic irony adds to the tension, or excitement in the play.

For example, twice during the play the audience sees Sipho come on stage and listen to Mandisa and Thando talking. However, the two women do not know that Sipho is there – only the audience is aware that he is listening.

### 5.2 Dialogue

The characters' speech is called dialogue. The characters' names are written in bold capital letters before their speech.

Kani uses realistic dialogue to make the characters easy to relate to and understand.

## 5.3 Soliloquy

A soliloquy is a speech that an actor makes that only the audience hears, even if there are other characters on the stage. It is often used to show the inner thoughts and feelings of a character.

There are **three** soliloquies in *Nothing But the Truth*:

- In the first two soliloquies, Siphó is alone on stage and talks to and about his brother, Themba. Siphó's emotions here are resentful, angry and self-pitying.
- In the third soliloquy at the end of the play, Siphó talks of his dream of building the first African public library in New Brighton. His emotions have changed to forgiveness and optimism.

## 5.4 Dramatic elements

### The stage

In *Nothing But the Truth* the **stage** looks like the inside of an ordinary four-roomed house in New Brighton. During the play the characters enter and leave the house and move between the kitchen, living room and bedrooms.

The audience can see into the living room and kitchen, but not into the bedrooms.

**Stage directions** are instructions for the director of the play and the actors. For example, they suggest how the actors should move, where they should stand, what they need to wear, or carry, the lighting and other specific things to be shown on stage.

The stage directions are written in italics. They are also in square brackets if they come immediately after the name of a character. For example:

MANDISA [*looking at both of them*]: It's amazing. You do look like my father.

SIPHÓ [*stunned*]: He was my brother.

*Blackout.*

(Act 1, Scene 2)

'Blackout' is a stage direction for lighting. It means turn off all the lights, so the stage is dark.

### Props

The word 'props' is short for 'properties' (meaning the property of the character/actor who uses these items on stage). Props are anything moveable on the stage, for example, Mandisa's luggage, or the tea tray. The props the actors use on stage often tell us more about the characters.

For example, while Siphó is on the phone in Act 1, Scene 1:

[*THANDO rushes in, carrying her briefcase, handbag and books.*]

These props suggest that Thando is serious, works hard and reads.

By contrast, when Mandisa arrives from the airport she carries a fashion designer's portfolio (a flat case for carrying drawings) and a bag from an airport duty free shop (where things are sold without adding tax), which, we find out later, contains a bottle of whisky.

## Costume

What characters wear, their costume, also tells us something about their character. For example, the play begins with Siphon putting on his Sunday suit. This shows the importance and seriousness of the situation – meeting Mandisa, who has come from England with Themba's remains. It also shows that Siphon is conservative in the way he dresses. This contrasts with Mandisa's glamorous clothes.

## 5.5 Tone and mood

**Tone** is the feeling, or atmosphere created by the author. In *Nothing But the Truth* the lighting and scenery does not change during the scenes.

However, changes in tone are shown through the dialogue and the sound of the actors' voices. The author uses stage directions, such as [*pause*] or [*laughs*], to show changes in tone.

The tone changes dramatically throughout the play. At points where the characters are arguing, the tone becomes **angry**; when the characters have sorted out their differences, the tone becomes **calm** and **hopeful**. There are also light-hearted moments, when the tone is **humorous**.

**Mood** is the feeling that a person gets reading or watching the play. The setting, props and actors' voices and movements all contribute to creating the mood.

How did reading *Nothing But the Truth* make you feel? Happy, sad, angry or indifferent?

# Scene by Scene

Nothing  
But the  
Truth

There are three scenes in *Nothing But the Truth*. Act 1 has two scenes; and Act 2 has one very long scene.

This section of the study guide contains:

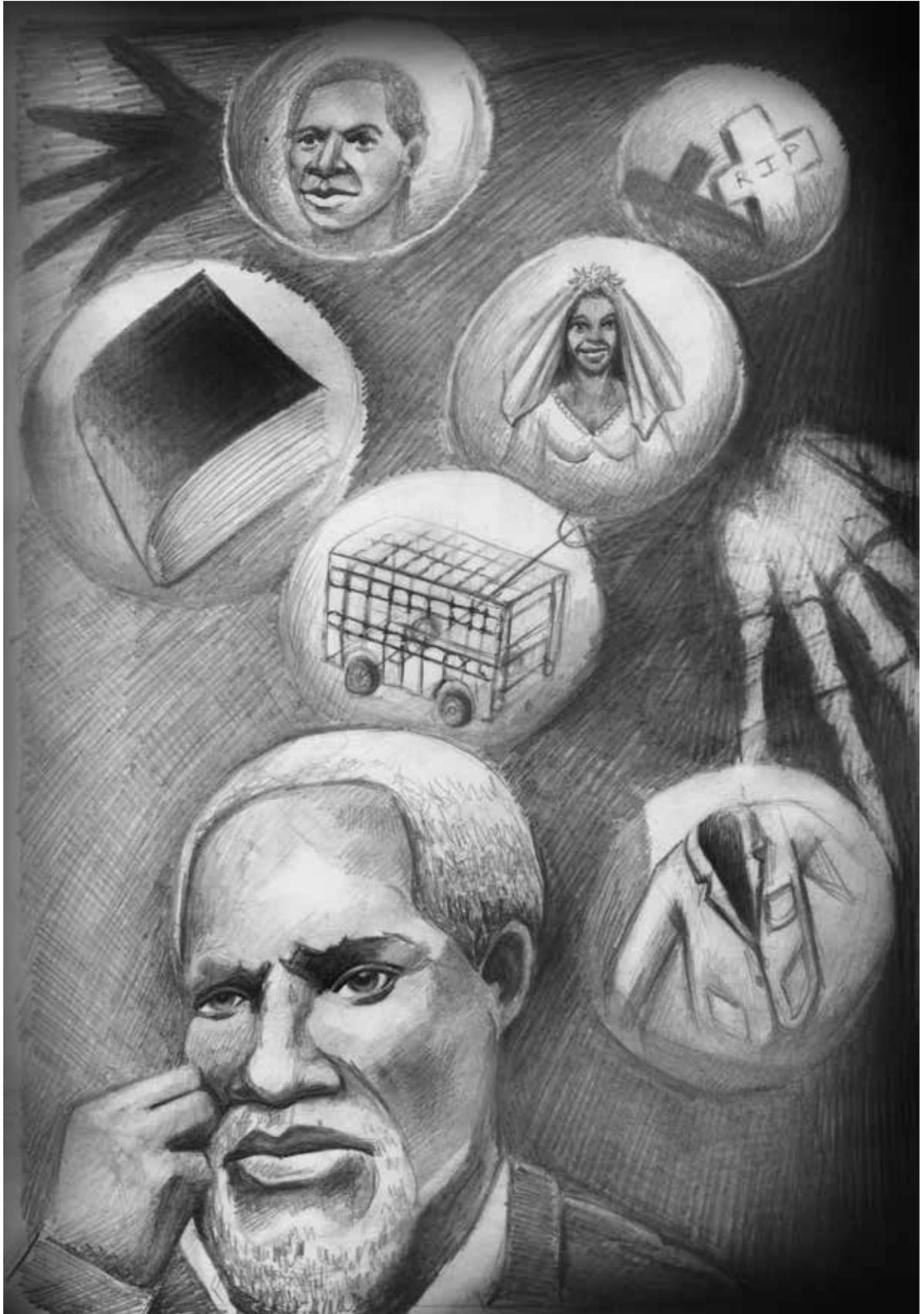
- A summary of what happens and who is involved – the main events and characters in the act.
- Information on themes; style; diction and figurative language; and tone and mood.
- Activities with exam-type questions for you to test yourself, and answers to these activities.



In the exam, you will need to know what happens in each scene of the play.



# Act 1



# Act 1, Scene 1

- ▶ Thursday evening, at Siphon and Thando's house
- ▶ Siphon and Thando are getting ready for Mandisa's arrival
- ▶ Siphon has questions to answer about the past

## 1. What happens and who is involved?

In terms of the plot structure, this scene is the **exposition**. It introduces the main characters and provides some background to the story.

- The scene begins with **Siphon** alone on stage. In the first soliloquy of the play, he complains about his brother, **Themba**. He feels that Themba was never around when Siphon needed him. He sounds angry and resentful. He is also worried about being late and phones **Mr Khahla**, the undertaker, to remind him what time he has to come to the house.
- **Thando**, Siphon's daughter, rushes home from work at the TRC hearings and apologises for being late. She asks how Siphon's interview for the position of Head Librarian went.
- Siphon and Thando are getting ready to go to the airport to meet **Mandisa**, Siphon's niece. She is arriving from England with Themba's remains, for his funeral in South Africa.
- Thando asks Siphon a lot of questions about Themba, about her mother, **Sindiswa**, and about **Luvuyo**, her brother who had been killed in the struggle against apartheid. Siphon does not tell her much about them.
- Siphon talks about his childhood with Themba and how Themba took the wire bus Siphon made and loved.
- Siphon complains that Themba, as a political activist, told people to make sacrifices for the struggle that he did not make himself.
- Mr Khahla arrives with the hearse (a funeral car that carries a coffin) and they leave for the airport. Siphon is anxious and nervous about meeting Mandisa and Thando tries to calm him down as he follows her out.

In Act 1, we learn about Siphon's past. But there are unanswered questions.



## 2. Themes

### Sibling rivalry

- At the beginning of the scene, Siphso tells us that when they were boys Themba lost Siphso's blazer. Their mother blamed Siphso for this, but it was not his fault. Siphso, being the elder, always had to take responsibility, not Themba.
- Near the end of the scene, Siphso tells Thando about a wire double-decker bus he spent four days making as a child. Themba wanted it and cried. Their father shouted at Siphso, telling him to give Themba the bus. Themba grabbed the bus from Siphso's hand. The wire cut Siphso's finger. But about two days later the bus was broken. Themba was playing with it in the street. He ran out of the way of a van, but left the bus on the road and a van smashed it.

### Truth and reconciliation

- Thando asks Siphso many questions about Themba, but Siphso does not answer them truthfully. These truths will be revealed later in the play during Siphso's personal 'TRC'.
- Thando describes her day working as a translator at the TRC amnesty hearings. She argues that "the truth does come out", but Siphso says the TRC is "pointless".
- Siphso asks whether the "Cradock case" is over. This is a reference to the four anti-apartheid activists (Matthew Goniwe, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkonto and Sicelo Mhlauli) who were killed between Cradock and Port Elizabeth by security policemen in 1985. The security policemen were applying for amnesty for their deaths.

### Being the victim or taking responsibility

- Siphso sounds like a victim when he talks about what was taken from him in the past, and he blames his brother for many of his losses.

### Exile

- Themba was one of those exiles who decided not to return to South Africa, even after apartheid had ended. Siphso explains that "they were settled and comfortable where they were" in England.
- Thando refers to two famous, real life people who did return from exile after democracy was won. They are the activists and musicians "Bra Hugh" (Hugh Masekela) and "Sis Miriam" (Miriam Makeba).

## Traditional culture

- Thando mentions that her boyfriend's (Mpho's) uncles want to discuss lobola with Sipho as she and Mpho wish to marry.
- Thando asks Sipho whether the ox has been bought – it will be slaughtered at the funeral.

## 3. Style

### Soliloquy

- Sipho's opening lines of the play are a soliloquy. He is alone on stage. Only the audience, or reader, knows what he says – not the other characters. We are told his thoughts about the main conflict in this drama: his relationship with his brother Themba.

[Sipho, alone on stage, remembers Themba.]

**SIPHO:** Typical. Just like him. Always not there to take responsibility. Even when we were kids. It was never his fault. Even when he lost my blazer, it wasn't his fault. So said my Mother. Damn you Themba. All I wanted was a little time. Just for the two of us. There are things I wanted to talk to you about. There are questions I needed to ask. But no. Themba doesn't arrive. He is not available. As usual. I am the eldest. I must understand. *[Checks the time.]* ...  
(Act 1, Scene 1)

Bring these words to life by reading this speech out loud as if you were an actor playing Sipho.



### Sarcasm, tone and pauses

The extract below shows how Kani uses sarcasm, the sound of actors' voices, and pauses to show changes in tone and the full meaning of the characters' words.

Read the extract and then the notes about it that follow.

[Sipho and Thando talk about Themba.]

**THANDO:** Why did uncle Themba go into exile?  
**SIPHO:** HE LEFT THE COUNTRY! Leave it at that. *[Pause.]* Why are you asking these questions?  
**THANDO:** Mandisa will be here any time now. I know nothing about her father. What am I going to talk about? What is she going to think of me when I tell her that I don't know her father? *[Pause.]* People say he was a political activist. Weren't you proud of him? I would be.  
**SIPHO:** Oh yes, he was an activist. Believe me he was an activist. He caused a lot of trouble for everyone and a lot more for himself.  
(Act 1, Scene 1)

- Note the use of **capital letters** in "HE LEFT THE COUNTRY!". These words are in capital letters to give them emphasis. They look as if they

## vocab

**Sarcastic:** To speak in a way that is sharp or bitter, and often meaning the opposite of what is said.

As you read,  
be aware of the  
dramatic effect of  
each pause.



are shouting from the page. They are to be said in a loud, firm voice. Siphso is making it clear that this is all that Thando needs to know.

- Siphso's tone here is **sarcastic**. He does not mean "activist" in the sense of someone taking action to make society better, but rather someone who only wants to cause trouble.
- A **pause** is a short period of silence. In the extract above, there are two important stage directions telling the actor to pause:
  - Siphso pauses after he says "Leave it at that". This pause indicates that Siphso is troubled that Thando is suddenly asking about her uncle.
  - The second pause comes after Thando's question about what Mandisa will say "when I tell her that I don't know her father". This pause is to show that Thando is thinking of what it is she would like to know about her uncle before she asks her father the next question.

There are many other pauses in the play. Each pause is very expressive.

## 4. Diction and figurative language

### Metaphor

The metaphor in the extract below shows how important the wire bus was to Siphso. It must have really saddened him when his parents ordered him to let Themba have the bus and Themba took it from him so forcefully.

Read the extract and then the note that follows.

[Siphso tells Thando how Themba took his wire bus when they were young boys.]

**SIPHSO:** [...] He wrenched it out of my hands. My finger bled a little, because of the force with which he grabbed it from me. The wire cut my finger. He drove it away. I watched him go with a piece of my heart and love for my wire bus. Themba had a lot of toy cars my father bought for him from town. He did not need that wire bus. He took it because it was mine.  
(Act 1, Scene 1)

- "A piece of my heart" is a **metaphor** for the emotional attachment that Siphso had for his bus. It does not literally mean that a piece of Siphso's heart was taken.

## 5. Tone and mood

In this first scene there is a sense of mystery. The **tone** is one of suspense because of the information that is being withheld:

- Siphso has questions he wanted Themba to answer.
- Why did Themba not come back from exile?
- Why does Siphso not talk to Thando about Luvuyo, Thando's mother and Themba?

The audience, and Thando, wonder what is going on. The truth will be revealed slowly.

The **mood** is the way the play makes the reader or audience feel. Did this scene make you feel happy, sad, angry or indifferent?



## Activity 1

Read the extract below and then answer the questions that follow.

[Thando and Sipho talk before they leave for the airport with Mr Khahla.]

<b>THANDO:</b> Have you tried to find her?	
<b>SIPHO:</b> She left me. I don't think she wanted to be found.	
<b>THANDO:</b> And me?	
<b>SIPHO:</b> No. She loved you very much.	
<b>THANDO:</b> How can you say that! How could you know that?	5
<b>SIPHO:</b> I know. She loved you.	
<b>THANDO:</b> How could you know that?	
<b>SIPHO:</b> Because I do!	
<b>THANDO:</b> There are three things you know because you do. Three things you do not want to talk about – my mother, my brother, Luvuyo, and my Uncle Themba.	10
<b>SIPHO:</b> Let the dead rest.	
<b>THANDO:</b> You have just said my mother is not dead.	
<b>SIPHO:</b> I know.	
<b>THANDO:</b> Because you do.	15
<b>SIPHO:</b> Are we going to use your car to follow the undertaker? I don't fancy riding in the hearse.	
<b>THANDO:</b> Of course. You are alive aren't you? How could I let you ride in a hearse?	
<b>SIPHO:</b> Not yet. It's not my time yet. This old ticker [ <i>pointing to his heart</i> ] tells me it's not going to be long though.	20
<b>THANDO:</b> You! You will outlive us all.	
<b>SIPHO:</b> That's what my father said. It's like a punishment, to witness the pain of losing all those you love, to be alone.	
<b>THANDO:</b> Dad, you will never be alone. I'll always be with you.	25
<b>SIPHO:</b> What about Mpho! When you get married?	

1. State the relationship between the two speakers in this extract. (1)
2. Refer to line 1 ("Have you tried to find her?").  
About whom are Thando and Sipho speaking? (1)
3. Refer to line 2 ("She left me ... to be found.").  
If you were the stage director of this play, what would you:  
a) Tell Sipho to do while saying these words? (1)  
b) Want his face to express? (1)
4. What do Thando's words in lines 1 to 11 tell us about her feelings? State TWO points. (2)



The word 'relationship' has two meanings: a) How two people are related (such as mother and son); or b) the way a person feels about another person. In your answer, you can either say how Sipho or Thando are related OR you can say how they feel about each other.

5. Refer to lines 16 and 17 (“Are we going ... in the hearse?”). Why do Thando and Sipho arrange for a hearse to go to the airport? (1)
  6. Complete the following sentence by filling in the missing word. Write down only the question number and the word. Sipho never talks about ... because he is afraid of losing Thando to him. (1)
  7. Is the following statement TRUE or FALSE? Write ‘true’ or ‘false’ and give a reason for your answer. Mandisa’s father was killed by the police. (2)
- [10]**

### Answers to Activity 1

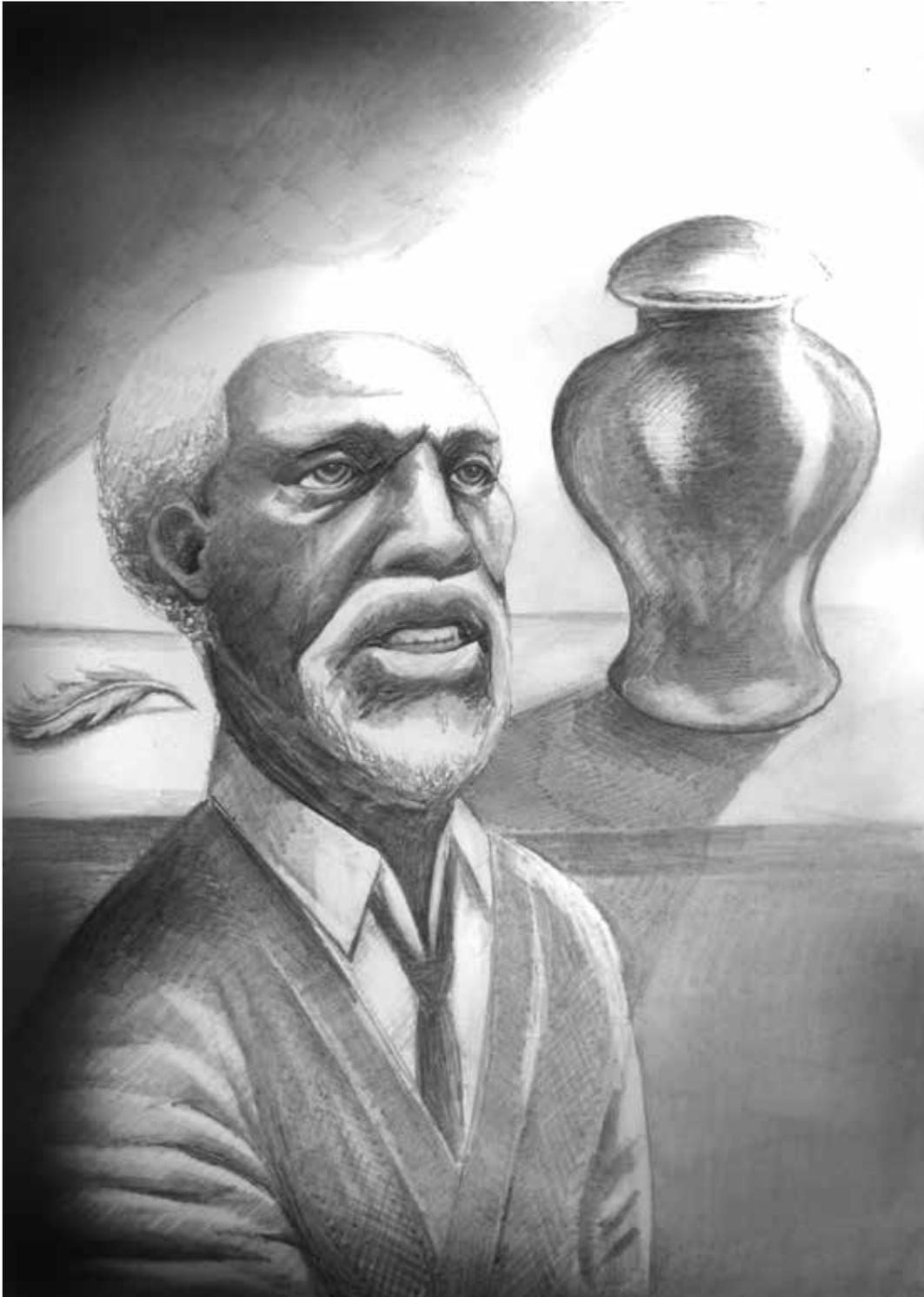
1. They are father and daughter.✓  
OR  
They have a good relationship/they love each other.✓ (1)
  2. Sipho’s wife✓ OR Thando’s mother✓ OR Sindiswa✓ (1)
  - 3 a) If I were the director, I would tell Sipho to face Thando✓ (1)  
OR point at himself✓ OR shake his head✓ OR shrug his shoulders✓ OR raise his hands✓.  
b) I would want his face to express sadness✓ OR seriousness✓ OR frustration✓ OR impatience✓. (1)
  4. She is upset/angry with her father for not talking about her mother.✓  
She is curious to know the truth about her mother.✓  
She is anxious to know the reason why her father refuses to speak about her mother, Themba and Luvuyo.✓  
She is confused and misses her mother. ✓ (2)
  5. They expect that Themba’s body will come back in a coffin so the hearse will be needed to transport it.✓ (1)
  6. Mpho✓ (1)
  7. False. He died of heart failure/illness. ✓✓ (2)
- [10]**



Any TWO of these answers will earn you 2 marks

## Act 1, Scene 2

- ▶ Thursday evening in the kitchen and living room of Sipho and Thando's home
  - ▶ Mandisa arrives with Themba's remains
- 



# 1. What happens and who is involved

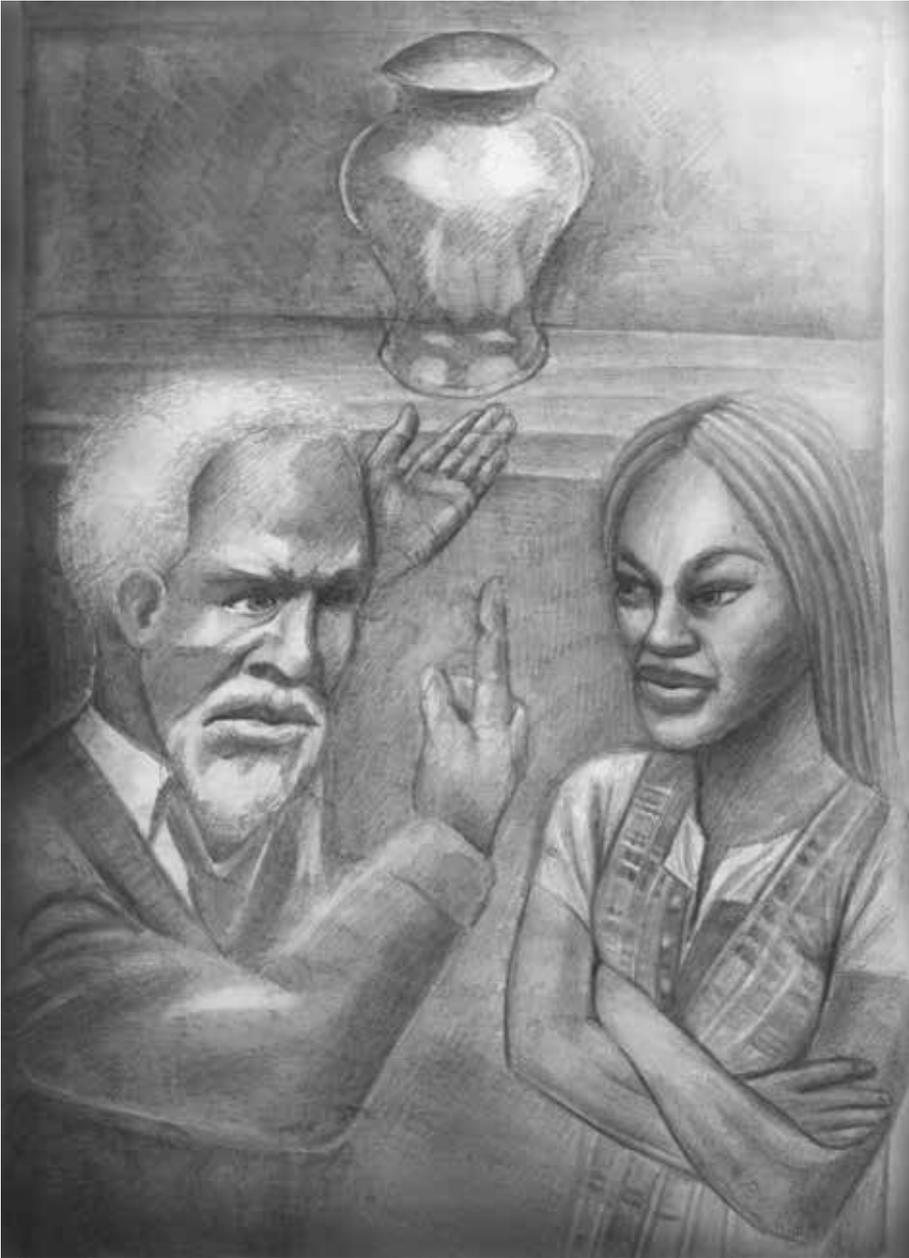
In terms of the plot structure, this scene forms part of the **rising action**. The fact that Themba's body has been cremated **complicates** Siphso's plans for Themba's funeral. The questions posed in Act 1, Scene 1 are not answered fully, but we hear a bit more about what happened to Themba and Luvuyo.



- **Siphso** comes on stage carrying an **urn**. He puts it on the table, sits down in his chair and stares at the urn.
- **Thando** comes into the room carrying suitcases and bags. **Mandisa** follows her, carrying a fashion designer's portfolio and a bag from a duty-free shop.
- Thando says that Mandisa can stay with them until after the funeral on Saturday.
- Siphso argues with Mandisa because she has come with **Themba's** ashes, in an urn. He did not know that he had been cremated. He had expected Mandisa to bring Themba's body and has made a lot of effort to plan a proper traditional funeral for his brother.
- Mandisa explains that it had been her mother's wishes to cremate him, and that Siphso had not replied to her letter informing him.
- Siphso is worried about the funeral arrangements. He rushes out to talk to **Mr Khahla, Reverend Haya** and his uncle.
- Mandisa agrees to stay with Thando and Siphso. She phones the hotel to cancel her reservation.
- Thando and Mandisa tell each other about themselves and their lives. They are very different.
- Mandisa asks Thando to go with her to see Nandipha, a fashion designer in Johannesburg.
- Thando invites Mandisa to come with her to the TRC hearings.
- Thando explains to Mandisa that Siphso blames Themba for **Luvuyo's** death because "Luvuyo worshipped Uncle Themba" and wanted to be an activist, like his heroic uncle. Thando and Mandisa think Luvuyo was killed during the **student uprisings**.
- Thando asks Mandisa why her father, Themba, did not return to South Africa when Nelson Mandela was released from prison. Mandisa says: "His job. It was not the right time. Things had to settle down first. They had a life in England, they could not just uproot themselves. Besides they would consider it when my father's health had improved. It never did."
- Near the end of the scene Siphso returns. He says that there will still be a traditional funeral for Themba.



The most famous **student uprisings** in South Africa began in Soweto on 16 June 1976. Youth Day, on 16 June each year, is in honour of those young people.



Sipho questions Mandisa about Themba's remains in the urn.

## 2. Themes

### Truth and reconciliation

- Thando explains to Mandisa how Sipho refused to let the TRC investigate who killed his son Luvuyo.
- Thando invites Mandisa to come with her to the conclusion of the Cradock case.

## Traditional and modern culture

- Mandisa thinks it is enough to mourn her dead father for two weeks. Thando explains that in her African tradition one should mourn for a month.
- Cremation is accepted by Mandisa who grew up in London, but not by Siphso as cremation is not part of African culture.
- Themba had wanted to be buried “closer to his ancestors”.
- Mandisa doesn’t understand when Siphso speaks isiXhosa and he has to translate for her.
- Mandisa’s parents expected her to marry her “kind”: either a black man from the West Indies, or a black South African man.

## Exile

- Mandisa explains what it was like to be born in England, but to always hear from her father about her unknown “home”, South Africa.
- Mandisa tells the story of how Themba first studied in Nigeria before moving to England. She says, “Our house was like a halfway house for all South Africans”.

## 3. Style

### Dramatic irony

This extract below shows a moment of dramatic irony towards the end of this scene.

[Thando and Mandisa are in the living room. Mandisa has just finished telling Thando about her boyfriends.]

**THANDO:** And now?

SIPHO *enters from the kitchen.*

**MANDISA:** Well now, I am fresh on the market. My work has kept me busy preparing for the London Fashion Week. I really want to make a good impression. If things go well, I might get an offer from one of the big fashion houses.

**THANDO:** Mmn. Wow!

**MANDISA:** That is why I would like to see as many designers here as possible, before I go back to London. So it’s very important that I meet this Ms Nandipha in Jo’burg. So please will you come with me?

**SIPHO:** To where?

**THANDO:** Tata, you are back. What happened?

- Earlier in the scene, Thando has said that Siphso will not allow her to go to Johannesburg with Mandisa so soon after the funeral. The dramatic irony here is that the audience knows that Siphso will not like what he hears Mandisa say. It will be another thing that he disagrees with Mandisa about. It increases the tension in the play.

## A dramatic ending to the scene

The scene ends in a dramatic way, as shown in the extract below. Then stage instruction “Blackout” means that the lights are suddenly switched off. This emphasises a sense of drama and the audience looks forward to the next scene, in which they hope they will learn the truth.

[In response to Thando’s question, Sipho explains that there will be a funeral on the Saturday.]

**SIPHO:** My uncles have agreed that the ox must be slaughtered on Saturday to clear his passage to the ancestors.

**MANDISA:** Thank God.

**SIPHO:** You can say that again. I have already told the undertaker. He has agreed.

**MANDISA:** So Mom and I are **off the hook** then?

**SIPHO:** For the moment. There are a lot of things we still have to talk about young girl. You still have not answered my question ... where do you want to take Thando to?

**THANDO:** Mandisa wants to see some fashion designers. She wants me to go with her to Johannesburg after the funeral, if it’s OK with you.

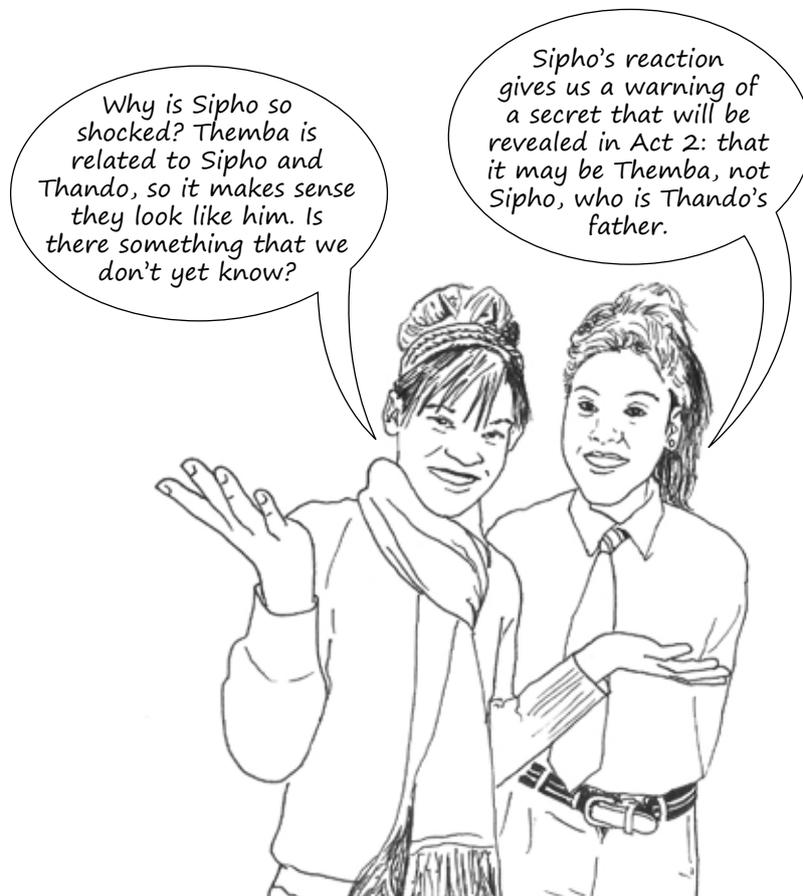
**SIPHO:** We will talk about that later.

**MANDISA** [*looking at both of them*]: It’s amazing. You do look like my father.

**SIPHO** [*stunned*]: He was my brother.  
*Blackout.*

## vocab

**Let off the hook:** To no longer be in trouble. The expression comes from fishing. If a fish is let off the hook, its life has been saved.



## 4. Diction and figurative language

### Euphemism

- Siphso describes his brother's dead body as being "burnt". In fact, this is what happens when someone's body is cremated. However, Mandisa and Thando prefer to use the word "cremated" because it does not seem as horrible as saying that Themba's body was "burnt". Cremated is a more polite way of saying it, and is therefore a euphemism.

### Local languages and slang

- Mandisa tries a little to speak isiXhosa, and Siphso does so on several occasions. This helps to make the play more realistically South African. The use of colloquial expressions (slang) such as "skokiaan joints" also make it more realistically South African.

## 5. Tone and mood

Much of the scene has an **uneasy** tone. This is created by the fact that the family still needs to bury Themba, and there are strong differences of opinion between Mandisa and Siphso.

The scene ends with a **dramatic** tone. The lights suddenly go out, which emphasises a sense of drama and the audience looks forward to the next scene, in which they hope they will learn the truth.

The **mood** is the way the play makes the reader or audience feel. Did this scene make you feel happy, sad, angry or indifferent?



## Activity 2

Read the extract below and then answer the questions that follow.

[Thando and Mandisa discuss their families.]

<b>THANDO:</b> You are not staying a little longer ... I mean to mourn?	
<b>MANDISA:</b> My father died two weeks ago. I've done all the mourning ... I've got work to do now.	
<b>THANDO:</b> My father would expect us to show some respect for at least a month as children. Elderly people mourn much longer. He won't allow me to go with you to Jo'burg.	5
<b>MANDISA:</b> Girl! 'He won't allow you'!	
<b>THANDO:</b> Things are different here. This is not London. There are rules in this house. For as long as I am staying with him under his roof there are rules and they're his rules [ <i>laughing</i> ]. Would you like some tea?	10
<i>She goes to the kitchen.</i>	
<b>MANDISA</b> [ <i>following her</i> ]: Yes, love some.	
<b>THANDO:</b> You were telling me about yourself.	
<b>MANDISA:</b> My mother works for Amnesty International and has done for donkey's years. She met my father in Lagos, Nigeria, where she was working at the Amnesty office. Love at first sight – as my father used to say. They both came to London and got married – I was born ...	15
<b>THANDO:</b> Any brothers and sisters?	20
<b>MANDISA:</b> Nope. I am the only child.	
<b>THANDO:</b> I had a brother, Luvuyo, not from my mom though, but he died ... he was killed.	
<b>MANDISA:</b> During the riots. Yes my daddy told me.	
<b>THANDO:</b> Not riots. Student uprisings. My father was devastated. Every morning for months his pillow would be soaked with tears. Always hid his tears from me. Didn't want me to feel that he loved him more than me. I know he did. African men love their sons more than their daughters.	25

1. What TWO characteristics of Thando's are shown in lines 4 – 5 ("My father would ... month as children")? (2)
2. In line 7 Mandisa says, "Girl! 'He won't allow you'!"
  - a) If you were the stage director, what would you want Mandisa's face to express? (1)
  - b) Explain why she should have this expression. (2)
  - c) What do Mandisa's words in this line show you about the way she was raised? (1)
3. What does Mandisa mean when she says "donkey's years" in line 16? (1)
4. Thando believes that a long mourning period for the loss of a loved one is good. Mandisa disagrees with her. Discuss your view on this matter. (2)

5. Is the following statement TRUE or FALSE? Give a reason for your answer.  
Sipho is pleased when Mandisa arrives with Themba's ashes for burial. (2)
6. Match the names in COLUMN A to the descriptions in COLUMN B. (4)

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
(a) Themba	A Fashion designer
b) Sipho	B Translator
c) Thando	C Activist
d) Nandipha Madikiza	D Librarian
	E Writer

[15]

### Answers to Activity 2

1. Thando was brought up to respect cultural values.✓ She is respectful towards her father.✓ (2)
- 2 a) Mandisa's face should express shock✓ OR disbelief✓ OR amazement.✓ (1)  
b) Mandisa cannot believe that a grown-up woman✓ would seek permission from a parent to do something.✓ (2)  
c) She was brought up to be independent and free.✓ (1)
3. She means 'for a very long time'.✓ (1)
4. Each person should mourn according to his/her own feelings or cultural requirements.✓ It is personal – nobody can really decide how long a mourning period should be.✓  
OR  
It is not good to mourn for a long time.✓ You must move on with your life.✓ (2)
5. False. Sipho had expected a traditional African funeral with Themba's body present.✓✓ (2)
- 6 a) C/activist✓ (1)  
b) D/librarian✓ (1)  
c) B/translator✓ (1)  
d) A/fashion designer✓ (1)

[15]

## Act 2, Scene 1

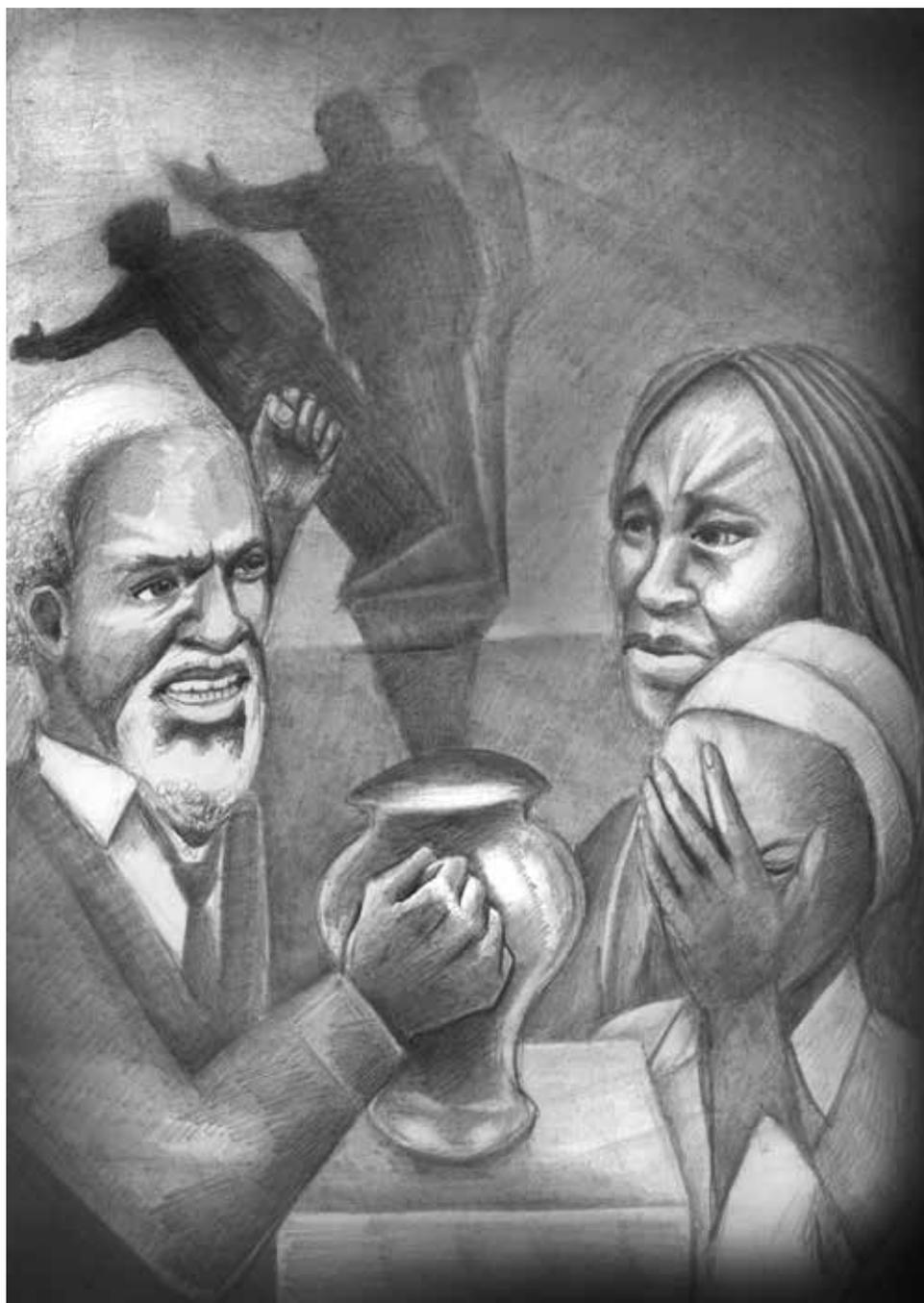
Act 2 only has one long and complex scene. To make it easier to learn about, the act is divided into two parts in this study guide:

- **Part 1:** Tando and Mandisa talk about the TRC and Siphso talks about his early work experience. Thando and Mandisa disagree about tradition; Siphso is provoked (see pages 30 to 36 in this study guide).
- **Part 2:** Siphso talks about what Themba took from him; Siphso forgives Themba and reconciles with his past; Siphso plans for his future (see pages 37 to 46 in this study guide).



## Part 1

- ▶ Thando and Mandisa talks about the TRC
  - ▶ Sipho talks about his early working life
  - ▶ Thando and Mandisa disagree about tradition
  - ▶ Sipho is provoked
- 

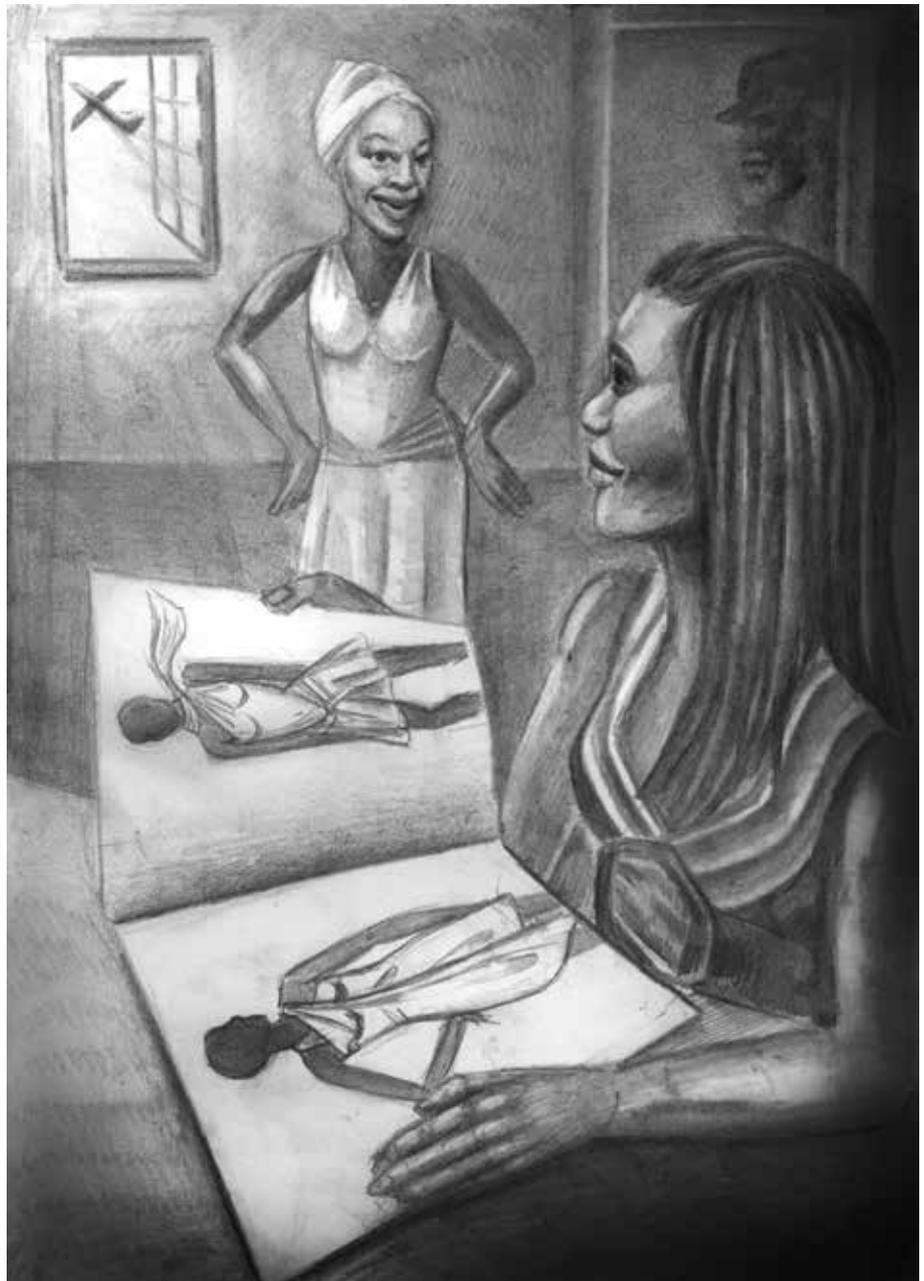


# 1. What happens and who is involved

In terms of the plot structure, this first part of scene is the **rising action**. There are several conflicts between the characters, and Sipho has not yet confessed the whole truth.

- **Thando** and **Mandisa** come back from the TRC hearing.
- Thando looks for Sipho, but he is not at home, which is unusual. She remarks that Mandisa was quiet on the way home from the hearing.
- Mandisa opens her bottle of whisky and pours herself a drink.
- Thando and Mandisa talk about the TRC process. They have different opinions about it.
- **Sipho** enters the kitchen just after Mandisa has poured herself another drink. He puts the lid on the whisky bottle and stands at the living room door listening to Thando and Mandisa. The women do not know that he is there until he speaks.
- Sipho is home late because he has been drinking at Sky's shebeen. He is disappointed. He did not get the job of Chief Librarian because he is too old.
- The phone rings. It is Reverend Haya. Sipho leaves the stage to go and talk with him about **Themba's** obituary.
- Thando is worried about Sipho. This is the first time she has seen him drunk since Luvuyo died. Also, he has never spoken about Themba before. Mandisa suggests that it is the drink that is making him talk.
- Mandisa suggests they go out for dinner with Mpho, but Thando says they have a funeral the next day and must stay home to show respect.
- Thando goes into the kitchen to prepare some food.
- Mandisa has decided to stay for a few extra days after the funeral. She asks Thando to go with her to Johannesburg for a week.
- Thando goes into her bedroom to put on the dress she bought from the fashion designer, Nandipha, to show Mandisa. The phone rings and Mandisa answers. It is **Mrs Potgieter** calling to ask how Sipho is and say she is sorry that he did not get the job.
- Thando comes back into the living room wearing a beautiful dress. She does not think that Sipho will agree to her going to Johannesburg, although she wants to go. Mandisa persuades her to come with her, and she agrees.
- Sipho comes in through the kitchen door. The women do not see him. He hears Mandisa ask Thando to go with her to London. Again, Thando is not sure that her father would agree. They argue about Thando needing to ask her father's permission to go to Johannesburg or London. Sipho does not give Thando a good reason for not allowing her to go. It seems that he is afraid that he will lose her.

- Mandisa says that her father said that “Uncle Siphos always put other people’s happiness first. His family’s happiness came first, even before his own. Well it’s obvious then that Uncle Siphos has changed.”
- Mandisa provokes Siphos even more. She tells him to give up the library and live – and let Thando live too. Thando shouts from the bedroom to tell her to shut up, but Mandisa goes on. Thando trying to prevent conflict between her father and Mandisa shows the caring side of her character.
- Mandisa says that her father was right, Siphos was jealous because Themba was a hero of the struggle.
- Siphos asks Mandisa why Themba did not return to South Africa, like the other exiled leaders. At this point in the play, the action is getting near to the climax.



Thando and Mandisa discuss plans to go to Johannesburg while Siphos secretly listens.

## 2. Themes

### Sibling rivalry

- Siphso remembers how “sad and angry” he felt when his father somehow found the money to send Themba to Fort Hare University, and how Siphso too had given Themba money while he was a student. Siphso says, “My father openly favoured Themba and it hurt.”
- Mandisa tries to provoke Siphso by claiming that the source of the sibling rivalry was Siphso’s jealousy because of Themba’s status as a struggle hero.

### Truth and reconciliation

- Thando and Mandisa mention five cases that were heard by the TRC. These cases were heard by the real-life historical TRC:
  - **The Cradock Four:** Four anti-apartheid activists (Matthew Goniwe, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkonto and Sicelo Mhlauli) were killed between Cradock and Port Elizabeth by security policemen in 1985. The security policemen applied for amnesty for their deaths.
  - **The Pebco Three:** On 8 May 1985, Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO) members Siphso Hashe, Champion Galela, and Qaqawuli Godolozzi disappeared. Former apartheid security police confessed during the TRC hearings in 1997 to murdering them.
  - **The assassination of Ruth First:** While she was living in exile in Mozambique in 1982, Ruth First was killed by a parcel bomb that had been sent to her by South African government agents. Two men later applied for amnesty for her murder.
  - **The assassination of Jeanette Schoon and her daughter:** Jeannette Schoon was living in exile in northern Angola. The letter bomb that killed her and her six-year-old daughter, Katryn, was delivered to her by Craig Williamson, a spy for the security police. Williamson was granted amnesty by the TRC.
  - **The assassination of Chris Hani:** Chris Hani was the leader of the South African Communist Party and chief of staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC). He was shot and killed by Janusz Walus, a Polish immigrant, in Johannesburg in 1993. Walus and Clive Derby-Lewis, a senior South African Conservative Party MP, were convicted of his murder.

## Exile

- Siphso continues to question why Themba chose to remain in exile after democracy was won.
- Siphso does not get the job as Chief Librarian. Instead, he bitterly remarks that the unknown person who did get the job “is from exile or something”. Siphso sarcastically adds that, these days, being a former exile is a qualification. This reflects some of the tension between returning exiles and those who stayed in South Africa during apartheid that existed when the country was newly liberated.

## Traditional and modern culture

- Thando’s respect for tradition contrasts with Mandisa’s lack of understanding of African customs. Thando says they have a funeral the next day and must stay in and show respect for the customs that are traditional when a family member dies.
- Mandisa cannot believe that Thando, a grown woman, can be told by her father what she should or should not do. She does not share Thando’s absolute respect for Siphso’s traditional role as the senior male head of the household.

## 3. Style

### Dramatic irony

- Siphso comes in through the kitchen door. The women do not see him and continue talking. He hears Mandisa ask Thando to go with her to London. The fact that they talk honestly about their plans without knowing that Siphso is secretly listening creates dramatic irony. This increases the tension and sense of conflict between Mandisa and Siphso.

## 4. Diction and figurative language

### Sarcasm

- When Siphso says, “Like father, like daughter!” to Mandisa, he is making a bitter joke using sarcasm. The usual expression is, “Like father, like son”, which means that the son takes after his father. Siphso is accusing Mandisa of being like her father by taking everything Siphso loves away from him.

## 5. Tone and mood

- The second act begins with a **thoughtful** and **bitter** tone as Thando and Mandisa discuss what they heard at the TRC amnesty hearings. They disagree about whether the crimes committed by the apartheid security police and the suffering of black South Africans generally can be so easily forgiven.
- As the conflict between Mandisa and a drunk Siphon increases, the tone becomes more and more **uneasy** and **bitter**.
- The **mood** is the way the play makes the reader or audience feel. Did this scene make you feel happy, sad, angry or indifferent?



### Activity 3

1. Explain why Mandisa is so quiet on the way home from the hearings. State TWO points. (2)
2. Mandisa believes that people who committed murder are forgiven too easily at the TRC. Do you agree? Explain your answer. (2)
3. Explain how Thando and Mandisa differ in their views on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2)
4. Complete the following sentences by filling in the missing words. Write down only the question numbers and the word(s).  
Mrs Potgieter is sorry that (a) ... did not get the job of  
(b) ... Siphon's current job is (c) ... Chief Librarian. (3)
5. Is the following sentence TRUE or FALSE? Give a reason for your answer.  
Thando does not respect traditional customs related to mourning. (2)
6. Siphon is a very traditional man. Do you think tradition is still relevant in South Africa today? Discuss your view. (2)

[13]

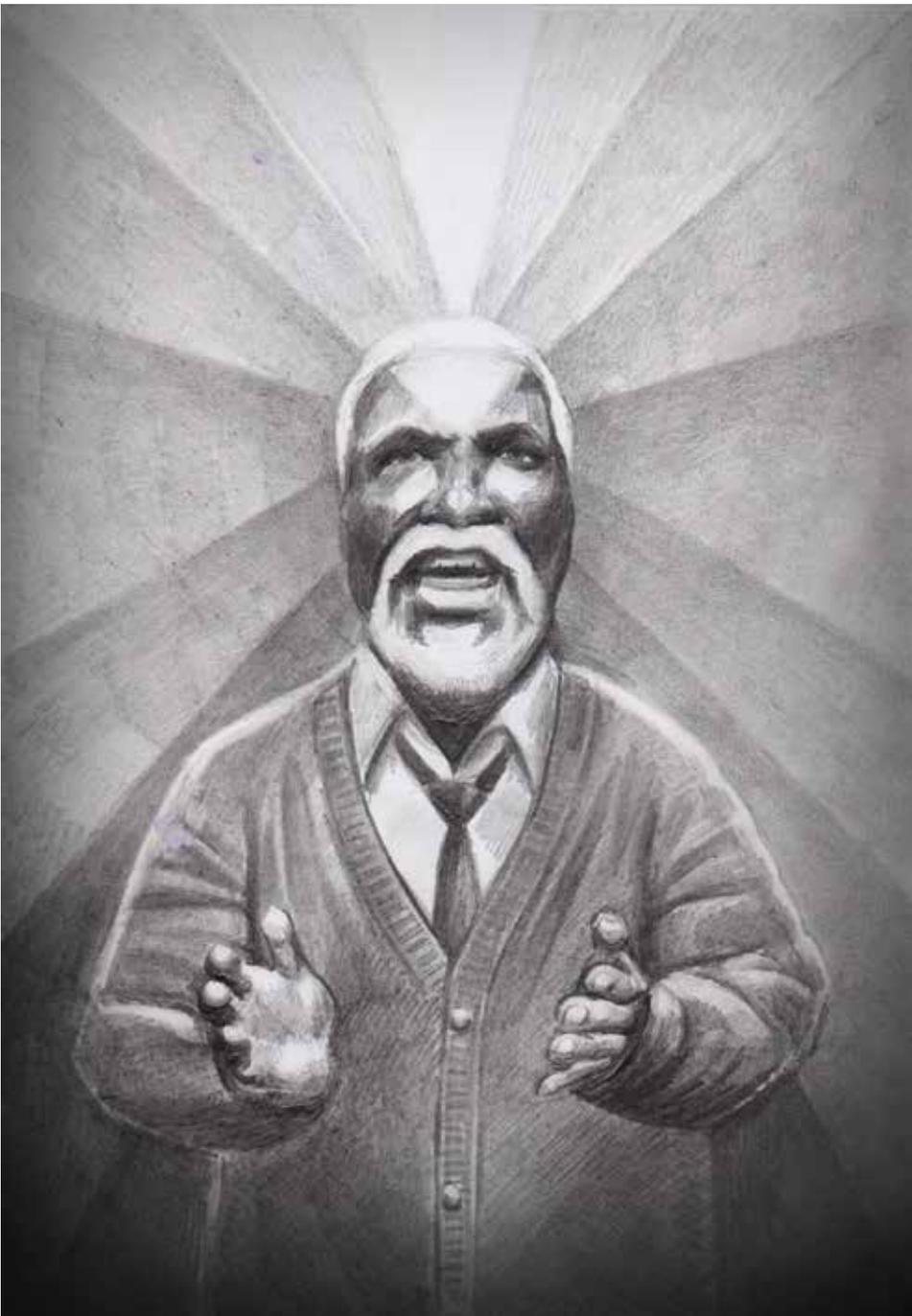
### Answers to Activity 3

1. Mandisa is emotionally touched by the hearings.✓ She is thinking about what she has heard at the TRC.✓ (2)
2. Yes, they killed people who were innocent✓ and they should go to jail for their actions.✓  
OR  
No, the whole purpose of the TRC was to help people forgive each other.✓ Admitting that you are a murderer to the relatives of your victims is not easy to do, so these security police were already being made to face their crimes.✓ (2)
3. Thando believes that the TRC is important because people need to hear and tell the truth as this is part of helping people accept the loss of their loved ones during the struggle.✓  
Mandisa believes that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission allows killers to get away by being granted amnesty.✓ (2)
- 4 a) Sipho✓ (1)  
b) Chief Librarian✓ (1)  
c) Assistant✓ (1)
5. False. When Mandisa suggests they go out, Thando says that they must show respect and stay in on the night before the funeral.✓✓ (2)
6. Yes, traditions and customs are important in all kinds of events today, such as funerals, weddings and the birth of a child.✓✓  
OR  
No, traditions belong to the past. Young people in particular believe in new ways of doing things.✓✓ (2)

**[13]**

## Part 2: Act 2, Scene 1

- ▶ Siphso talks about what Themba took from him
  - ▶ Siphso forgives Themba and reconciles with his past
  - ▶ Siphso plans for his future
- 



# 1. What happens and who is involved

In terms of the plot structure, Siphso revealing the truth about Themba to Mandisa and Thando is the **climax** of the play. This second part of the scene also contains the **falling action**, as the plot reaches a **resolution**.

• **Siphso** tells **Thando** and **Mandisa** about:

- His father's funeral, and how it was turned into a political rally;
- **Themba** being good at talking, but not having to suffer the consequences of the political action he encouraged others to take;
- Themba flirting and sleeping with many different women; and
- **Luvuyo** going to recite poems at a little girl's funeral even though Siphso had asked him not to go, because he knew there would be trouble.

• When Thando asks why Themba left South Africa, and why **her mother** left her, Siphso at first answers that he had a fight with Themba, and that Thando's mother left because she had stopped loving him.

• Mandisa asks, "What did my father do to you? What happened between the two of you?" Siphso replies, "He never told you?". Mandisa finally loses patience and says she is going out to dinner. Thando and Mandisa start to leave the room. Finally, Siphso shouts at them to stop, and reveals the truth.

• Siphso reveals that Themba had an affair with his wife. Mandisa sobs. She cannot believe it.

• Thando asks how long Themba had been having an affair with her mother. Siphso does not want to answer her, but Thando keeps asking. Siphso, bursts into tears and tells her, "For three years."

• Thando realises that this means that she may be Themba's child. Thando leaves, sobbing.

• Siphso tells Mandisa that he is not certain that Thando is Themba's child, she might be his own daughter. He found a letter from Themba to Sindiswa asking her to keep the baby because it might be Siphso's.

• Thando leaves the stage sobbing, and Mandisa soon follows her. Siphso is alone on the stage, imagining that he is talking to Themba. He tells his dead brother that the taking must stop. He ends his soliloquy by saying that Thando is his baby: "She is the one thing you cannot take away from me. Not even now. Thando is mine."

• Thando and Mandisa come back on stage and Thando hears his last few words. She confirms that she is his daughter and nothing will change that.

• Siphso says: "The taking must stop. I want my son back." He talks of getting justice for Luvuyo's death.

So Mandisa and Thando may even be sisters!



- Siphso still wants the job of Chief Librarian. When Thando asks what he is going to do about that, as the job has been given to somebody else, Siphso says he says he will blow up the library.
- Thando and Mandisa are concerned that he might really do that and be arrested. Siphso is not worried: he says that he will prove that he did it for political reasons and get amnesty.
- Thando is worried about Siphso's threats – she doesn't want him to get into trouble.
- Mandisa apologises to Siphso on her dead father, Themba's, behalf. She tells Siphso how much Themba admired him.
- Siphso is able to forgive Themba. He says his anger was mostly from jealousy, and from his anger at the death of his son Luvuyo.
- Siphso says he could never really burn down the library; it was just his anger speaking. He says he will go to the library, but not to work as Assistant Chief Librarian. He will collect his belongings and his early retirement package. He will write to the President to remind him that it is time that the government helped "the little people" who helped put the president into power.
- To save Thando from cooking, Siphso tells her and Mandisa to go out to get takeaways. As they prepare to leave he gives them both permission to go to Johannesburg after the funeral.
- Mandisa gives Siphso a recent photograph of Themba. Siphso gives Mandisa a photograph of himself with Themba when they were young.
- Thando and Mandisa leave the house.
- Siphso picks up the urn and says his final soliloquy. Again, he imagines that he is speaking to Themba. "Themba, my brother, I love you. About my wife ... it happened." He goes on to say that he will write to the President to ask for money to build the first African public library in New Brighton. He will be its Chief Librarian.

*For Siphso the library is a symbol of all that he feels has been taken from him. If he destroys it, he might be free from everything that has let him down.*



## Subplots in Act 2

### Sipho's job application

Thando asks about whether Sipho got the job and Sipho explains that they gave it to a young person from Johannesburg. They think Sipho is too old for the job of Chief Librarian because he is due to retire in two years. As Thando says, Sipho deserves the job. He has helped to make the Port Elizabeth library “the most used library in the Eastern Cape”.

Sipho is very disappointed that he did not get the job. He says: “All I wanted was to be the Chief Librarian. Is that too much to ask?”

In the apartheid days, Sipho could not be Chief Librarian because he is black. Now he feels he is being denied the job because of his age, despite having run the library for six years.

Sipho is also bitter because he thinks the person who did get the job was favoured because he is a former exile, not because he is better qualified.

### Sipho's early career

Sipho wanted to be a lawyer but his father had no money for him to go to university. So Sipho got a job as a clerk (office worker) at a law firm called Spilkin & Spilkin Attorneys. Mr Spilkin promised that Sipho could study to be a lawyer after three years, when the current article clerks had graduated. But after three years Mr Spilkin took on two new white boys as article clerks.

Mrs Meyers gave Sipho a job at the Port Elizabeth Public Library when he left the law firm. She was impressed by his English language skills. She encouraged him to study for his Diploma in Librarian Management (which he passed with distinction). She put Sipho in charge of the small section of books written by African writers, outside the main section of the library.

When her husband died Mrs Meyers left South Africa to live in England. But before she left she promoted Sipho to Assistant Chief Librarian. This is significant because during apartheid it was unusual for a white person to recognise and award a black persons abilities.

## 2. Themes

### Truth and reconciliation

- Because Sipho never saw Themba or Sindiswa again he never had a chance to talk to them about their affair. They never apologised, so Sipho was not able to understand why they had betrayed him. In this way he was like many people who came to the TRC. Until they could understand what had happened or why other people had hurt them, it was difficult for them to come to terms with what happened.

- Siphso wants justice for his son Luvuyo's death. He wants to see the policeman who shot Luvuyo punished. Only then should the policeman be allowed to apply for amnesty. He will not forgive the policeman.
- Siphso tells Mandisa that her father was a hero of the Struggle, and would have been killed by the police if he had stayed in the country. He no longer blames him for leaving and going into exile.
- Siphso and Mandisa reconcile.
- After this, Siphso is kinder to Mandisa. He tells her that Themba was a political activist whom everyone loved and that is why Siphso was jealous of him. Although Siphso kept the family together Themba got all the attention.
- Siphso says he no longer blames Themba for Luvuyo's death. He had really always known that it was not Themba's fault; blaming Themba just gave Siphso another reason to be angry with him.

*Siphso is talking about his own 'TRC' when he says to Mandisa and Thando, "The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God. That's what you've asked for. So sit down and take it like the adults you both claim to be."*



## Sibling rivalry

- The climax of the play is when Siphso reveals that Themba had an affair with his wife, Sindiswa.
- Siphso talks about all that Themba took from him but realises he never took Thando. Thando has always been with him; she has always been his daughter.

## Being the victim or taking responsibility

- Siphso talks about blowing up the library out of revenge for not getting the job of Chief Librarian. He feels he is the victim of an unfair world. However, later in the play he admits he could never do such a thing. Instead, he will create his own justice by starting a new library, where he will make himself Chief Librarian.
- At the end of the play Siphso no longer appears as a victim of circumstance but as someone who takes responsibility for his life. He is reconciled with his past and ready to face the future and take on new challenges.

## Political elites and the ordinary person

- Siphso bitterly describes how the senior comrades of the Struggle turned his father's funeral into a political rally. Nobody cared about his personal loss and grief, or the dignity Siphso felt his father deserved.
- Siphso feels that the suffering of all the thousands of ordinary South Africans who helped fight against apartheid is not recognised by the new political elite.
- Siphso says that it's time the new political elite helped the "little people" like him to also improve their lives.

### 3. Style

#### Soliloquys

- This section starts with Siphso alone on the stage. In his soliloquy, Siphso imagines that he is talking to Themba: “So, you win again Themba.” Siphso says that he was also part of the Struggle, but he has yet to be empowered, to see the reward. Now, he wants to be paid back – he wants his bus, his blazer, his wife, his daughter. After he says he has lost Thando he realises that that it is not true – Thando has always been, and will always be, his daughter.
- The play ends with a soliloquy, the second in Act 2. Siphso talks of his dream of building the first African public library in New Brighton. His emotions have changed from bitter and angry to forgiveness and optimism.

### 4. Diction and figurative language

#### Irony and humour

Mandisa answers the phone when Mrs Potgeiter calls to speak to Siphso. Coming from England, Mandisa is not familiar with Afrikaans names, and says it incorrectly as “Mrs Potgiator” when she tells Thando who was on the phone.

This is a source of humour, but is also ironic. Earlier in the act, Siphso had remembered how his first boss, Mr Spilkin, would call him “Sifo”, not “Siphso”. Siphso felt insulted by this because “Sifo” is the word for a disease, and his name means “gift”. Mr Spilkin’s ignorance and failure to pronounce Siphso’s name correctly suggests racism.

Mandisa’s incorrect pronunciation of Mrs Potgeiter’s names is therefore humourous and ironic because it echoes Siphso’s experience with Mr Spilkin.

### 5. Tone and mood

During the climax of the play the tone is highly **dramatic** and **tense**. This is during the part of the act when Mandisa challenges Siphso, and then Siphso dramatically reveals the truth.

Following this, the tone becomes **calm** and **hopeful**. This is towards the end of the play, when the characters are reconciled and making their plans for the future.

The **mood** is the way the play makes the reader or audience feel. Did this scene make you feel happy, sad, angry or indifferent?



## Activity 4

Read the extract below and then answer the questions that follow.

[Sipho reveals the truth about Themba.]

<b>THANDO:</b> All these years we have lived together you've kept this in your heart, alone. You've never share with me, your own daughter. Why?	
<b>SIPHO:</b> How could I tell you. It was best to say nothing.	
<b>THANDO:</b> So Uncle Themba took my mother from you?	5
<b>SIPHO:</b> He took everything.	
<b>THANDO:</b> No, not everything. I am here with you. I am not going with Mandisa.	
<b>SIPHO:</b> [ <i>pushing her away</i> ] No Thando. You must leave with Mandisa.	
<b>THANDO:</b> I am staying here with you.	10

- In line 5, Thando says: "So Uncle Themba took my mother from you?"  
What does this line suggest about how Mandisa and Thando may be related? (1)
  - Is the following statement TRUE or FALSE? Give a reason to support your answer.  
Sipho loses all the people he loves. (2)
  - Refer to line 6 ("He took everything.")  
Is Sipho justified in saying "He took everything"? Discuss your view. (4)
  - Sipho speaks to Mandisa about her father.
    - Using your own words, name TWO things Sipho tells Mandisa about her father. (2)
    - Why does Mandisa doubt the information she gets from Sipho? (2)
  - When Sipho talks to Mandisa about what he said about Themba, he says: "Yes, I was jealous." Using your own words, give TWO reasons why Sipho is jealous of Themba. (2)
  - Consider the play as a whole.  
Thando and Mandisa help Sipho to face his pain and anger. Do you agree? Explain your answer. (2)
- [15]

### Answers to Activity 4

1. They may be sisters because Themba may be the father of both women. ✓ (1)
2. False. He still has Thando who loves him/whom he loves very much. ✓✓ (2)
3. Yes. When Sipho and Themba were children Themba always took Sipho's toys. ✓ He also won their parents' love and favour. ✓ Sipho believes that Themba influenced Luvuyo to take part in politics, which cost Luvuyo his life. ✓ Themba also had an affair with Sipho's wife, and it is possible that Thando is Themba's child. ✓

OR

No. Sipho blames Themba unfairly. It was not Themba's fault that he was shown more love as a child by their father. ✓ Themba cannot be held responsible for Luvuyo's death as it was Luvuyo's decision to join the struggle. ✓ Sipho's wife was a consenting adult in her relationship with Themba so he did not take her away from Sipho. ✓ As the elder brother it was his duty to help his father pay Themba's university fees. ✓ (4)

- 4 a) He was a coward. ✓ / He played an active role in the Struggle. ✓ / He was dishonest. ✓ / He often lied. ✓ / He liked women. ✓ (2)

b) Mandisa had been told by Themba that he had been a good student and a hero of the Struggle, so Sipho's story about her father sounds like a lie. ✓ Themba was also popular with people who were in exile, especially those who visited him in London. Mandisa would have seen this for herself so she had evidence that Themba was a Struggle hero. ✓ (2)

5. Themba took his possessions/toys as a child. ✓ / Themba was always favoured as a child. ✓ / Themba was his parents' favourite child. ✓ / Themba was popular with women. ✓ / Themba was a popular activist/politician. ✓ / Sipho's son (Luvuyo) idolised Themba. ✓ / Themba had an affair with Sipho's wife. ✓ (2)

6. Yes. The two girls force him to face his fears, therefore he comes to terms with his resentment and anger. He forgives his brother and moves on. ✓✓

OR

No. He does not believe in the TRC. He believes that he has once again been cheated out of a job. ✓✓ (2)

**[15]**



Any TWO of the answers to questions 4a) and 5 will earn you 2 marks.



## Activity 5

Read the extract below and then answer the questions that follow.

[Sipho is very angry.]

<b>THANDO:</b> What are you going to do?	
<b>SIPHO:</b> I am going to blow it up!	
<b>MANDISA:</b> Great!	
<b>SIPHO:</b> No! I am going to burn it down!	
<b>MANDISA:</b> Even better! NO! You are drunk! You don't really mean that, do you?	5
<b>SIPHO:</b> Yes, yes I do! I am dead serious. I am going to burn it down. I am going to watch all those books burn and light up the sky.	
<b>THANDO:</b> You will be arrested.	
<b>MANDISA:</b> They will say you are mad.	10
<b>SIPHO:</b> That's even better. I will prove to them that my crime too was politically motivated. They will have to grant me amnesty. They have no choice. I qualify, don't I Thando? You know these things.	
<b>THANDO:</b> This is silly. You are going to do no such thing! Stop laughing, Mandisa!	15
<b>SIPHO:</b> How are you going to stop me?	
<b>THANDO:</b> I'll tell the police to stop you.	
<b>SIPHO:</b> You will inform the police about me? You will sell me out?	
<b>THANDO:</b> It's not selling out. We will stop you.	
<b>SIPHO:</b> Why?	20
<b>THANDO:</b> Because what you want to do is wrong.	
<b>SIPHO:</b> What they did to me was wrong too. Why do you want to stop me?	
<b>THANDO:</b> Because I love you. I don't want to lose you!	
<b>MANDISA:</b> She's right. I love you too, Uncle Sipho. You are the only father I have now.	25
<i>Pause.</i>	
[Act 2, Scene 1]	

1. Refer to lines 1–4 (“What are you ... burn it down!”).  
Give TWO reasons why Sipho is so angry at this point in the play. (2)
2. To what does “it” refer in lines 2 and 4? (1)
3. Refer to line 5 (“You are drunk!”).  
How do you know that Thando is not used to seeing her father drunk? (2)
4. Refer to line 8 (“ ... light up the sky”).  
What does Sipho mean by the expression “light up the sky”? (2)
5. Refer to line 9 (“You will be arrested”).  
Why does Thando say that Sipho will be arrested? (1)
6. Refer to line 12 (“They will have to grant me amnesty.”).  
Why does Sipho think that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) will grant him amnesty? State TWO points. (2)
7. Refer to lines 13 and 14 (“You know these things.”).

- Why does Siphso expect Thando to “know these things”? (1)
8. In this extract, Siphso is faced with a particular matter that disappoints him. How does he plan to deal with this disappointment? State TWO points. (2)
9. Choose the correct answer to complete the following sentence:  
Mandisa says that Siphso is the only father she now has because ...  
A he is her grandfather.  
B he is an old man.  
C she is his cousin.  
D her father has died. (1)
10. Give TWO reasons why the title of the play, *Nothing But the Truth*, is suitable. (2)

[16]

### Answers to Activity 5

1. He has not been appointed to the job of chief librarian.✓  
A young man returned from exile has been appointed instead.✓ (2)
2. The Port Elizabeth Public Library✓ (1)
3. She has only seen him drunk on one other occasion – when Luvuyo died.✓✓ (2)
4. He means the fire will burn brightly.✓ The flames will make the night sky as bright as day.✓ (2)
5. Burning down a library is a crime.✓ (1)
6. He thinks that the crime he intends to commit is politically motivated. The TRC pardons political crimes, so therefore he will be given amnesty.✓✓  
OR  
He is being sarcastic as he knows that the TRC has pardoned worse crimes.✓✓ (2)
7. He expects her to know these things because she works as an interpreter at the TRC.✓ (1)
8. He intends to retire and write a letter to the President, asking for money and start a public library in New Brighton.✓✓  
OR  
He plans to burn down or blow up the library and ask for amnesty.✓✓ (2)
9. D / her father has died.✓ (1)
10. Siphso reveals the truth.✓ / The play deals with people uncovering the truth.✓ / Mandisa and Thando demand nothing less than the truth.✓ / The activities of the TRC are at the centre of this play and those deal with the truth.✓ (2)

[16]



Any TWO of the answers to question 10 will earn you 2 marks.



**The Mind the Gap study guide series assists you to make the leap by studying hard to achieve success in the Grade 12 exam.**

**This publication is not for sale.**

© Copyright Department of Basic Education [www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za)  
Call Centre 0800 202 933



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**