

Nelson's Dream

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Before reading

1. Look at the front cover of the book. What does the picture show? Where do you think it is?
2. Read the blurb on the back cover. Who do you think is the main character? What is 'one of the greatest challenges of our age'?
3. Look at the names and occupations in the 'Characters' list on page 4. Two of them are not from Gomokure. Which ones do you think they might be and why?
4. What business is the main character and his family in?
5. If you have the recording, listen to Chapter 1.

Check you reading

CHAPTER 1

1. Why is Nelson going home?
2. How are his parents described?
3. Who dies in this chapter?
4. How many children does she leave?
5. Who comes to help the children?
6. Who does Melanie ask Philomena to get help from?

CHAPTER 2

1. Which of these statements are true?
 - a Nelson's father meets him at the airport.
 - b Nelson's father wants Nelson to work for him.
 - c Nelson's family are rich.
 - d Philomena is poor so she asks Mrs Mbizi for some money.
 - e Nelson tries to persuade his mother to give money for the poor family.
 - f Everybody likes Nelson.
 - g Nelson gives some money to Philomena.
 - h Philomena gives Nelson the Mawadza family's address.

CHAPTER 3

1. Read the extracts about Sector D and answer the questions.
 - a 'His parents would probably be furious if they knew he was even interested.' Why?
 - b 'In the men's toilets he changed into the old clothes and a woollen hat with a hole in it.' Why did Nelson do this?
 - c 'The young man who'd been singing stood up. He was tall, but much too thin . . .' Why was he like this?
 - d 'She walked fast across the road towards number 1175, stepping over a dirty plastic bag . . .' What does this tell you about the streets?
 - e 'He felt shocked and sickened by the way these people lived, in spite of their cheerfulness.' What is surprising about how the people are?

CHAPTER 4

1. There are four sections in this chapter. Put them in the order in which they occur.
 - a Eddy Mawadza comes home to his family.
 - b Nelson talks to his mother about his father's other sons.
 - c Nelson starts work at his father's hotel.
 - d Nelson's father refuses to give him any money.

2. What do Nelson's parents argue about?
3. What is Ruby Mbizi determined about?
4. What does Nelson see on TV?

CHAPTER 5

1. Match the beginnings and the endings.
 - 1 Mr Mbizi wants to talk to Nelson
 - 2 Nelson asks his father
 - 3 Nelson also asks his father
 - 4 Mr Mbizi doesn't give Nelson any money
 - 5 Mr Mbizi hits Nelson
 - a about the other sons that he has.
 - b because he went into Sector D.
 - c about the restaurant manager.
 - d because he says he has to prove he's worth it.
 - e about the Health Ministry's AIDS programme.
2. Where is Eddy Mawadza working?
3. Why did he bring some sadza home?
4. What does Tobias Nakula suggest?
5. What do the children decide to do?
6. Where do you think Lily Anne goes with the last coin?

CHAPTER 6

1. Name the people.
 - a This man is very surprised when someone stands up to him over money.
 - b He is angry with himself for thinking about a woman.
 - c They go to live with Tobias Nakula.
 - d He was on television.
 - e She looks after Daniel.
 - f Nelson telephones him.
 - g Phil says she's really poisonous at times.

CHAPTER 7

1. This chapter is called 'Rescue'. Who gets rescued?
2. Why does she get rescued?
3. Does Philomena understand about AIDS?
4. What does Philomena offer?
5. Where do Nelson and Philomena take the children?

CHAPTER 8

1. Put these events in the correct order.
 - a Nelson took Lily Anne and Blessing to the hospice.
 - b Nelson phones Viki and Viki phones him back.
 - c Philomena took the children for HIV tests.
 - d Viki arranges to meet Nelson the following morning.
 - e Nelson found out about St John's Hospice.
 - f Nelson went to see Daniel at the Chivasa's house.

CHAPTER 9

1. Which of these statements are true?
 - a Washington Mbizi is in danger.
 - b He has stolen a lot of money from the government.
 - c A lawyer comes to help them arrange everything.
 - d Mr Mbizi leaves Nelson in charge of all his businesses.
 - e Mrs Mbizi doesn't leave with her husband.
 - f Soon after they leave, the police come and arrest Nelson.

CHAPTER 10

- Who says these things to whom?
 - 'I want you to tell me all about Daniel's sister . . .'
 - 'Now I'm taking over much more of the management of the hotels.'
 - 'This is Arthur, my brother. He has lived with us since his wife died.'
 - 'I thought twelve-year-olds were very attractive to older men?'
 - 'So a song about my mum would be OK?'
 - 'Keep my number!'
- What is the message of what Viki says in the TV programme?

CHAPTER 11

- Nelson takes Viki to dinner at the Black Umbrella. True or false?
- Which of these things do Nelson and Viki talk about at dinner?
 - Her interview in Sector D.
 - Viki's family in Soweto.
 - The weather in Gomokure.
 - Nelson's work.
 - Why Nelson invited her to dinner.
 - What Nelson could do to help people with AIDS.
 - Viki's job at Network 10.
 - Viki's hobbies.
- What happens to Nelson at the very end of the chapter?

CHAPTER 12

- Complete this summary.

Nelson is taken away and put into a (1) with another man. Later he was interrogated by someone from the (2). When the police let Nelson go next morning, he felt very (3). When he got home the Cook told Nelson that people from the Intelligence Agency had been there (4) the house; Nelson said they must be careful about what they say to each other. As Nelson ate he read the afternoon newspaper where it said his father had been accused of stealing (5). Nelson goes to Sector D again to talk to Mrs Chivasa. He tells her he wants to start a (6) centre for young people. Mr Chivasa suggests using an old (7) for the centre. So they all go and look at it. Nelson wants the centre to be a place where people can be (8) for HIV and also given (9) about it.

CHAPTER 13

- Match the beginnings and the endings.
 - Nelson noticed that he was being followed
 - Nelson drove Daniel to the hospice
 - Nelson talks to Sister Michael
 - Sister Michael suggests that
 - Nelson spent a lot of time
 - When Nelson tries to phone his mother
 - about his plans for the centre.
 - a machine tells him he number is no longer working.
 - working on his business plan.
 - by a small black car.
 - maybe others stole the money and tried to blame his father.
 - to see his brother and sister.

CHAPTER 14

- Who visits Nelson early in the morning?
- What good news does Nelson hear?
- Who telephones Nelson and what does she say?
- What happens at the bus garage?
- What good thing happens to Daniel?

CHAPTER 15

- Complete the sentences to explain the change in mood in the chapter.
 - At the opening of the chapter, Nelson is serious because . . .
 - When he gets to the garage Nelson is very happy because . . .
 - Daniel is very excited because . . .
 - Then when Mrs Chivasa arrives everyone is sad because . . .
 - Viki is excited about the funeral because . . .
 - Daniel feels sick because . . .

CHAPTER 16

- Which of these statements are true?
 - Nelson doesn't go to Blessing's funeral
 - Daniel doesn't like Phil and Viki filming the funeral.
 - Phil and Daniel have an argument after the funeral.
 - Daniel upsets Viki with what he says.
 - Daniel has to take some pills to calm him.
 - Viki, Phil and Daniel leave for the Garage.

CHAPTER 17

- Who said these things to whom?
 - 'I need to tell you something very important.'
 - 'So she's HIV positive . . . That explains a lot.'
 - 'The man I went with knew he was positive, but he didn't tell me.'
 - 'I can't give a man love and children without killing him.'
 - 'But you don't have to be alone.'
- Where is everyone going in the evening?
- What is Nelson going to do before that?

CHAPTER 18

- Write short answers to these questions.
 - Does Nelson sell the hotel?
 - Is Viki happier than before?
 - Does Nelson want to see Viki again?
 - Did the crowd like Daniel's performance?
- What does Viki go to do after Daniel's performance?
- What does Nelson tell Sister Michael about himself and Viki?
- What happens for the first time at the end of the chapter?

EPILOGUE

- The Epilogue is in two parts; what is each one about?
- Say what happens to the following characters:
 - Nelson and Viki
 - Daniel
 - Lily Anne
 - Washington and Ruby Mbizi
 - Eddy
- What does the second part say about
 - the levels of AIDS in most countries in southern Africa?
 - the numbers of orphaned children?

After reading

Choose some of these activities.

1. Choose one of the characters and write a few paragraphs about him or her, describing what sort of person he or she is.
2. Write a newspaper article about the problem of AIDS in southern Africa.
3. Think of another title for "Nelson's Dream" and give reasons for your choice.
4. Make a quiz about the story for other students, including some true/false questions and correct/incorrect sentences.
5. Write about Nelson and Viki's life in the year leading up to the birth of the baby: where do they live, what do they do?
6. Imagine you are Daniel. Write about what you have been doing in the year since the first concert with Kundai.
7. Write an email to the author, J. M. Newsome, telling her what you liked and didn't like about this story.
8. Write about daily life at the Garage – e.g. what happens, and what it's like there.
9. If you were making a film of this story, who would you choose for the main roles and why?