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Reflect before you start to read the novel

1. For the writer: to grab attention/motivate the reader to want to keep reading; to provide background information; to introduce main characters For the reader: to decide whether to keep reading; to be able to understand and identify with what is going on
2. No. It depends on their past life experience, past reading experiences, their ability to connect with the story and so on.
3. Personal opinion. Example answers: the gangster element; the theme of redemption; nurturing-and bonding with the baby and so on.
4. Personal experience
5. Redemption/atonement: saving a tsotsi from a life of crime and brutality; making amends for crimes against fellow humans; workings of conscience; needing forgiveness and so on
6. Personal response. Our identity is formed by our environment, family, upbringing, experience and so on. Our sense of identity probably comes from childhood experiences, family bonds, education, religion, other people's responses to us and their view of who we are and what we should become and so on.
7. Reactions to pain are usually negative: we try to avoid it - be it physical or emotional. Pain can be a learning experience.
8. For characters to grow and develop they need to develop the ability to empathise and sympathise with fellow human beings. They need to learn how to be unselfish, less egotistic, more conscious of *ubuntu*.
9. "Decency" means treating others the way you want to be treated. It means not harming others if you can avoid it. It means affirming the existence of your fellow human beings.
10. Example answer: Baby: dependence on carers; potential; helplessness; vulnerability; need to be loved and nurtured; malleability (can be shaped and influenced)

Test yourself on chapter 1

1. Tsotsi; Boston; Butcher; Die Aap; Gumboot Dhlamini
2. Tsotsi: youngest, not talkative, delicate hands Boston: short-sighted, talkative, fearful Butcher, lithe, supple, dangerous, impatient Die Aap: long arms, loyal
3. What "job" they will be doing that evening
4. Bicycle spoke. For stabbing into victim's heart.
- 5.1 Maxulu
- 5.2 In the mines
- 5.3 He used a letter writer.
6. He smiles. He wears a bright new tie. He opens his pay packet in public.
7. To take pay packet from victim's pocket and help hold up the body.
8. He feels sick because he feels guilty and knows what he did was wrong.
9. To show his hatred, and demonstrate lack of feeling/ nihilism.
10.1 - d; 2 - a; 3 - e; 4 -h; 5 - c

Test yourself on chapter 2

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1. Butcher
2. Tears. He was conscience-stricken./He has a little bit of “decency”.
3. He is “prowling” around, trying to escape but surrounded by the others who are taunting him for being sick.
4. They use Tsotsi-taal, which is a mixture of other languages such as English and
5. He does not want to look into Ms “darkness” or probe into his past roots. Tsotsi wants no questions: nothing in his life must be disturbed.
5. Boston’s questions disturb him.
7. The concept of “decency” is meaningless for Butcher.
8. He is referring to “decency”. He means that he has some understanding-of commonly accepted standards of moral behaviour, whereas Gumboot was a thoroughly moral man.
9. He denies any past that might have shaped his character. He is a nihilist: for him life is pointless and human values are worthless.
10. 1 - d; 2 - a; 3 - b; 4 - e; 5 - c

Test yourself on Chapter 3

1. Boston’s questions about his past
2. His mind is filled with hate.
3. Boston’s
4. Boston’s words are compared to a magical spell. The metaphor shows the power of Boston (he is like a magician) and his words.
5. He has-to see to his knife on waking.
He permits no disturbing memories or thoughts about himself.
He allows no personal questions from others.
6. It is a symbol representing his chosen way of life.
7. A street child or friend from Tsotsi’s past
8. "... sudden impulse of her generosity". Perhaps it was not her child or it was an illegitimate baby that she wanted to get rid of. She might not be able to care for the baby.
9. Personal response
10. 1 - c; 2 - a; 3 - d; 4 - e; 5 - b

Test yourself on chapter 4

1. He fears that Tsotsi is there to rob his shop.
2. Bombay (Mumbai). His wife is from Durban.
3. He is embarrassed and does not want anyone ' to see him buying baby milk.
4. He is illiterate and so he cannot read the . words on the label.
5. It is not normal for a man (especially a gangster) to do things normally done by a woman.
6. It has been demolished. Sophiatown is being destroyed by the apartheid authorities.
7. It threatens his need to avoid the past by triggering disturbing memories about his past.
8. His usual weapon of death is now being used for a nurturing, life-giving purpose. The baby is becoming his new talisman instead of the knife.
9. The baby is compared to dice. Finding his past is compared to a gambling game.

Test yourself on Chapter 5

- 1 He has to bury Gumboot Dhlamini but does not even know his name.
- 2 It is depressing. It is crowded, has a broken fence and stunted trees.
- 3 Big Jacob
- 4 Boston wakes up in a back alley. He is in terrible pain, trouserless, unable to speak and convinced that all is utterly finished.
- 5 What the "job" is for that night.
- 6 She sparks of Tsotsi's memory of the baby and its needs.
- 7 He is distracted by thoughts of the baby and the memory of the yellow bitch.
- 8 He was the one who beat Boston. Now he needs him.
- 9 To go into the city, but without a definite plan.
- 10 l-d;2-e;3-a;4-b;5-c

Test yourself on chapter 6

- 1 Personal opinion. Example answers: empathy, pity, admiration ...
- 2 A beam fell on them in a mining accident
- 3 He could not find a job.
- 4 C. Cowardly
- 5 Personal opinion. Example answers: Morris represents the hardness of life; Tsotsi will release him from the "nothingness" of his existence; to test his resolve to maintain his old way of life
- 6 A car stalls and has to be pushed. Morris follows behind it
- 7 Without permission
- 8 He felt shame. His pride was damaged.
- 9 Personal opinion. The possible answers are: His life will be saved. OR He will be murdered.
- 10 l-d;2-e;3-a;4-c;5-b

Test yourself on chapter 7

- 1 It is an accident
- 2 First "chaos and terror"; then a "burning hate of the cripple". It reminds him of the dog that his father killed.
- 3 "baby"; "bluegums"; "bitch"
- 4 The gang members have separated to look for victims.
- 5 He compares him to a dog.
- 6 He feels a "spasm of relief". He feels for his victim.
- 7 That life is worth living after all.
- 8 It's the most beautiful thing he knows.
- 9 The mother of the baby gave her child to him.
10. 1 - d; 2 - a; 3 - e; 4 - b; 5. - c

Test yourself on Chapter 8

- 1 Because he needs help. He is not reaching those who are most in need of help.
- 2 He was beaten by Tsotsi and is still lying in a near comatose state.

- 3 Tsotsi is illiterate. Boston, an educated person, knows this. Tsotsi's impotence is expressed through violence (breaking the pencil).
- 4 It shows the extent of his despair but also indicates how the urge to care for the baby's life is now stronger than the old need to kill or destroy.
- 5 Indispensable: people cannot do without water (for drinking, washing and so on). Hated: when queues are long or the water has been cut off or is just trickling. Enjoyed: the tap is a place for chatting, meeting old friends, community gatherings and so on.
- 6 There are various possible answers, such as: he was arrested for not having a passbook/ killed in jail/abandoned her/ran away/ was injured.
- 7 He is used to violent ways of dealing with people. It is part of his conditioning.
- 8 It triggers her maternal instinct; it makes her * feel needed; she feels her Natural *ubuntu*.
9. It triggers Tsotsi's memories of the night his mother was arrested and his distraught father killed the family dog with her puppies. These were the events that caused him to run away.
10. l-d; 2-q3-a; 4-e; 5-b

Test yourself on chapter 9

- 1 Because the previous chapter ended with Tsotsi "reliving" "the memory that had come to him from a long time away"
- 2 E. Smallness
- 3 Tondi
- 4 She was heavily pregnant.
- 5 It seems not.
- 6 C. Humane
- 7 He is a stranger./The boy had expected to have his mother to hold onto when he met his father./The father's strange "thunder" voice scares him./The way his father kicks the dog scares him./The events of the night have traumatised the boy.
- 8 They think he is one of them - that he has no mother or father to care for him.
- 9 He is chased by a shopkeeper who shouts at him, and calls him this name.
10. l-b; 2-d; 3-a; 4-e; 5-c*7

Test yourself on Chapter 10

- 1 The knife is no longer a symbol of security as it was before.
- 2 Any three: river; mother; Petah; the gangs
- 3 To get instructions for a "job"; because this is what he always does. '
- 4 He has joined another gang.
- 5 He is glad he has it: he rejoices even in its crying and smelliness.
- 6 She wants to come and she is prepared to care for the baby.
- 7 Himself and his own father
- 8 Personal opinion, for example: his real identity
- 9 He returns to the river to confirm the truth of his memories. Personal opinion about returning the baby to the ruins.
- 10 l-d; 2-e; 3-b; 4-a; 5-c

Test yourself on Chapter 11

1. She is a shebeen “queen” and Boston’s former lover.
2. He wants Boston to explain what has been happening to him, to help clarify what it all means.
3. He is terrified that his attacker has come to finish him off.
4. He feels Boston’s pain and suffers an attack of nausea-
- 5 C. Popular with the girls
- 6 Personal opinion. It seems it was all a “mistake
- 7 He could not face the shame of his disgrace
- 8 Boston’s partner in the forgery scam
- 9 God
- 10 1-b; 2-d; 3-a; 4-e; 5-c;

Test yourself on chapter 12

1. Isaiah was an Old Testament prophet who described the mysteries of the church.
2. The pastor is Reverend Ransome. The office lady is Miss Marriot.
3. He must ring the bell to call people to believe in God.
4. Tsotsi was “given” “his” baby under the bluegum trees.
5. The Biblical stories of Noah, Moses and so on
- 6 As a washerwoman
- 7 Miriam
- 8 He does not fully trust Miriam.
- 9 To prevent people from coming back to Sophiatown
10. 1 - d; 2 - c;.3 - e; 4 - b; 5 - a

Test your understanding of the novels structure

1. The murder of Gumboot Dhlamini on the train
2. Boston asks questions about his past and challenges his apparent inhumanity.
3. It leads to tension and suspense, which hold the reader’s attention.
4. The baby sparks off memories of Tsotsi’s past such as the yellow bitch that crawls towards him.
5. Getting the baby; sparing the life of Morris; trying to save the baby from the bulldozers
- 6 Solving the riddle causes Tsotsi’s repressed memories of his past to return. This provides a denouement.
7. The hero, Tsotsi (David), dies.
8. Tsotsi (David) makes a selfless sacrifice.
9. When Tsotsi tries to save the baby from the bulldozers
- 10 Tsotsi does finally regain his humanity by *feeling* sympathy and compassion for others.

Test your understanding of the setting Page-30

- 1 In Sophiatown
- 2 One of poverty, deprivation, fear, violence and so on
- 3 Supposedly they are doing slum clearance, but they are also there to remove people of colour so that Sophiatown can be turned into an exclusively white suburb.
- 4 Soekie’s

5. Tsotsi (David) is separated from his mother who is arrested during a police passbook raid. Forging passbook signatures is Bostan introduction to a life of crime.

Test your understanding of the characters

- 1 D. All of these
- 2 It is not a real name carrying an identity. It is an informal word for a street thug.
- 3 The police raid, his mother's arrest and his father killing the family dog
- 4 It sparks off a series of changes, including triggering past memories, and giving Tsotsi something to care and feel for.
- 5 No, he was expelled for alleged rape before he could write his final examinations.
- 6 He gets sick after committing murders because his conscience tells him that he is involved in something immoral and unacceptable.
7. His broad, happy smile
- 8 C. Suicidal
- 9 He went to work one day and never returned.
- 10 The baby

Test your understanding of the themes pg 38

1. He is seeing his pain and suffering and feeling sympathy.
2. It is a form of denial. The memory flashes are too disturbing as they touch on a trauma that is too painful.
3. It is a self-willed conscious refusal to allow questions to which he has no answers to intrude into his daily existence.
4. It suggests a kind of non-identity, as "tsotsi" is an informal word for a street thug. It does not denote a personal identity.
5. It is his talisman. It symbolises his violent way of life.
- 6 Until the baby enters his life he believes . all existence is pointless and that human values are worthless. He has no concept of morality, social conventions, religion, *ubuntu* and so on.
- 7 From his childhood nurturing, his mother, his education, religious training and so on
- 8 They are illiterate and live by the law of the "jungle"⁵⁵. They have never been exposed to education, religion, families and so on.
- 9 It puts him on the road to redemption
- 10 ' Own personal response

Test your understanding on diction, imagery symbolism and the role of the narrator pg 39

1. Tsotsi-taal is a mixture of English and Afrikaans and other languages interlaced with colloquialisms and slang expressions. Examples: maag, ja, 's, goed.
2. It is the key to the repressed memories of the night when Tsotsi lost everything at the age of ten.
- 3 It stands for things such as nurturing, education, community values, morals, religious beliefs, that are missing from the lives of Tsotsi and the gangsters
- 4 Morris Tshabalala
- 5 Simile
- 6 They symbolise a world filled with violence, danger, inhumanity and cruelty.
7. Innocence, vulnerability, helplessness, human potential, nurture, love, humaneness, family and caring

8. The narrator knows every character's thoughts, feeling and motives.
9. The third-person narrator describes the characters as "he"⁵⁵, "she"⁵⁵ or "they"⁵⁵.
10. Yes. The narrator is an impartial and trustworthy observer.

Contextual question 1,1 (Extract A)

- 1.1.1 The baby is given to him in the grove: this will be the turning point in his whole life. (2)
- 1.1.2 The metaphor of the "silken thread" indicates that what will determine his fate is going to be like a fragile but also strong and beautiful spider web. (It is possibly also relevant to his memory of the spider in the pipe.) (3)
- 1.1.3.1 Boston had gone too far with asking probing questions about Tsotsi's repressed past. He unleashed a "madness of hate" in which Tsotsi savagely beat him up. (2)
- 1.1.3.2 "Where had it gone wrong?"
- 1.1.4 The image shows how the township masses are like leaves floating without direction or purpose in a dam or pond. (3)
- 1.1.5 The word "virtue" is normally associated with moral goodness but here it refers to immoral criminal behaviour. (3)

Contextual question 1,2 (Extract B)

- 1.2.1 The cry of the baby (2)
- 1.2.2 It seems she does not want the baby. Its crying horrifies her. (2)
- 1.2.3 Personal response. The actions taken could range from resisting and possibly sacrificing herself-to save the baby at all costs or possibly fleeing in order to seek help.
- 1.2.4 The phrase "sudden impulse of her generosity" seems surprising and ironic. Can giving your child away to a gangster be termed "generous"? The description of the baby's face as "old", "wrinkled" and so on is very striking and realistic. The reference to the woman being "saved" (from murder? a rape? having to keep this baby?) by the crying of the baby is surprising/a shock/unexpected/ confusing/ ambiguous.

Contextual question 2.1 (Extract A) page 43

- 2.1.1.1 Morris Tshabalala, the crippled beggar (2)
- 2.1.1.2 Tsotsi does not see him as human: he compares him to a bag full of featureless vegetables like potatoes. (2)
- 2.1.2 Tsotsi's father kicked her and broke her back. (2)
- 2.1.3.1 Tsotsi had chosen him as a target for robbery and murder. (2)
- 2.1.3.2 Opportunities to attack the man (2)