



**education**

Department:  
Education  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**CURRICULUM GRADE 10 -12 DIRECTORATE**

**NCS (CAPS)**

**ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE**

**GRADE 11**

**LEARNER SUPPORT DOCUMENT**

***TSOTSI***

***JUST IN TIME (JIT) PROGRAMME***

**MARCH 2024**





## PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

In the novel "Tsotsi" by Athol Fugard, there are important themes like redemption, understanding who we are, and what it means to be human. This guide is here to help you, the learners, to really get into the heart of the story. We want to give you the tools you need to help you understand the characters and the important ideas in the book. First, to make sure you know what's happening in the story and who the main characters are. Then, to help you learn about the time and place the story is set in – South Africa during apartheid – and how that affected the people who lived there. We're here to make sure you get the most out of reading "Tsotsi"!



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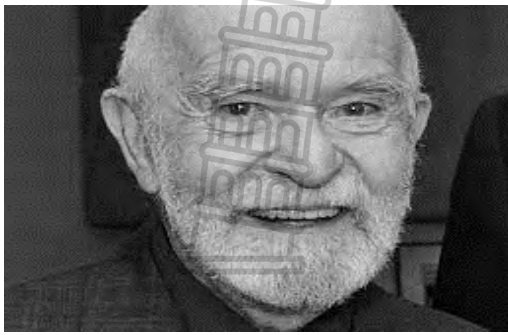
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# *TSOTSI*



- Athol Fugard



- South African playwright, novelist, and director.
- Known for his works addressing apartheid and its aftermath in South Africa.
- Fugard's works often focus on human relationships, oppression, and social justice.
- Characters struggle with issues of identity, morality, and reconciliation.

The Author: **Athol Fugard**

## A HISTORICAL CONTEXT / SETTING

### APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA



*Inequality*



*Migrant Labour*



*Group Areas*



*Violence*



## Passbooks and Pass Laws

- Form of internal passport system
- Black populations required to carry
- Pass Laws Act (1952) instituted nation-wide pass
- Entries documented permission, requests and behavior
- Any governmental employee could cancel permission
- No valid entry → prison
- Symbolic of apartheid

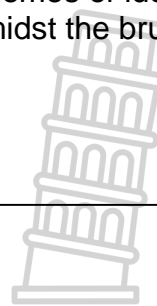


[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pass\\_laws](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pass_laws)

Tsotsi takes place against the backdrop of apartheid South Africa. The migrant labour system, the pass laws and land dispossession were some of the harsh realities of apartheid. Poverty, inequality, and social unrest, provide the backdrop against which the characters grapple with themes of identity, redemption, and the search for humanity amidst the brutality of their environment.

### **TITLE: TSOTSI**

- Slang that refers to a thug/gangster/criminal
- Connotations of violence, lawlessness, social disruption
- Symbolizes poverty, crime, legacy of Apartheid.



**Chapter 1**

- The murder of Gumboot Dlamini by Tsotsi and the gang.

**Chapter 2**

- Boston questions Tsotsi
- Tsotsi brutally beats Boston.

**Chapter 3**

- Young woman thrusts shoebox into Tsotsi's hands
- Tsotsi discovers baby in the box

**Chapter 4**

- Memory triggers of a yellow dog

**Chapter 5**

- Gumboot is buried
- Boston awakes from his unconscious state
- Butcher and Die Aap are concerned about the future of the gang.
- Tsotsi decides that they head for the city.

**Chapter 6**

- Morris Tshablala's backstory
- Lost his legs in the mines when a beam fell.
- Cannot get a job.
- Has to resort to begging to survive.

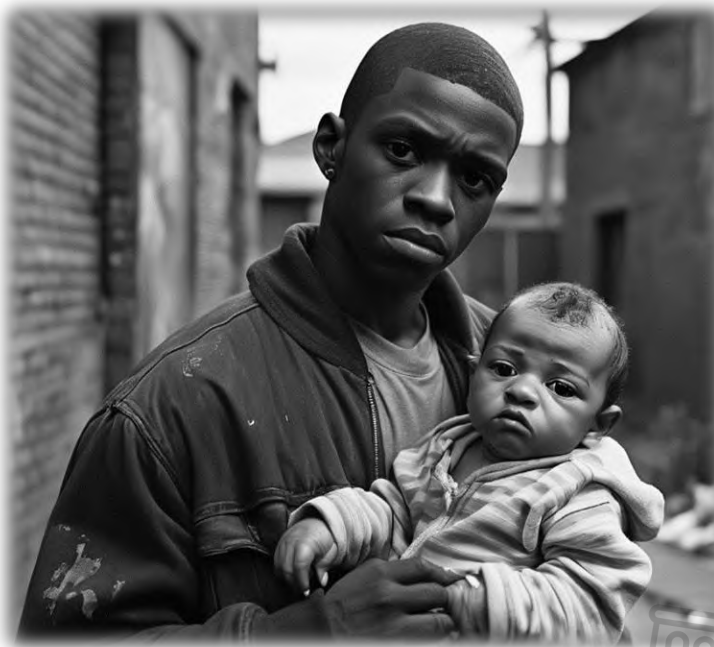
**Chapter 12**

- Tsotsi goes to church to seek redemption- meets Isaiah.
- Watches Miriam feed the baby - realises that mothers really love their children.
- He goes back to church and on his return hears the bulldozers -runs to save the baby but both he and the baby are crushed in his attempt.
- He dies with a beautiful smile.

**Chapter 11**

- Finds Boston passed out at a bar.
- Carries him to his room.
- Boston's backstory – expelled from teacher's college, sold fake passbooks, joined the gang.
- Tsotsi questions him about the changes he is experiencing.
- Boston tells him to seek God.

**TSOTSI-PLOT**



**Chapter 10**

- The gang is disbanded.
- Miriam offers to take the baby but Tsotsi refuses.
- He names the baby David.
- Leaves the baby in the ruins.
- Goes in search of Boston.

**Chapter 9**

- Tsotsi experiences Flashbacks
- Mother's arrest
- Father's return
- Kicking of the dog
- Birth of stillborn pups
- Joining Petah's gang of street children

**Chapter 7**

- Tsotsi realizes that he has a choice – does not have to kill the victim.
- Able to choose to let him live.

**Chapter 8**

- Tsotsi finds the baby covered in ants- cleans him.
- Finds Miriam – takes her to the room.
- Forces her to feed the baby.
- She feeds and cleans the baby.



## **MAIN CHARACTERS**



### ***I am David Madondo***

- I am 10 years old.
- My mum's name is Tondi. She was taken by the police.
- A horrible man (Father) kicked our pregnant dog to death.
- I am running away from this horror.



### ***I am Tsotsi / David Madondo***

- A criminal/gangster/ street thug!
- Lawless, Violent, Killer, merciless and unapologetic
- ASK NO QUESTIONS AND I WILL NOT BEAT YOU UP!!!



## ***I am Butcher***

- Butcher is my name and killing is my game!!!
- No conscience, no compassion, definitely no mercy just a cold-blooded killer. Grrrrrrr.



## ***Ek is die Aap!***

- I am big and strong.
- Tsotsi is my leader. I do as he says.



## ***I am Walter 'Boston' Nzuza***

- I have a drinking problem.
- I was expelled from a teacher's training college – accused of rape,
- Joined a life of crime – forging documents, before being chosen as part of the gang.



## ***I am Gumboot Dlamini***

- I am a mine worker. I collected my pay packet.
- I have been saving my money, next week I will be going home to my wife.
- I was murdered by Butcher on the train. Die Aap held me down and Butcher stabbed me with a bicycle spoke. And then he – Tsotsi - whispered an obscenity about my mother!



## ***I am Morris Tshabalala***

- I am a crippled amputee – lost my legs- accident in the mines- poverty-stricken and jobless- I want to live!



## ***I am Miriam Ngidi***

- I am Miriam Ngidi, single mum.
- Caught in the struggle of poverty.
- I will help Tsotsi take care of the baby. It is the humane thing to do.



## ***Do you know who I am?***

Match each description with the correct character from the novel "Tsotsi."

**Boston Butcher Tsotsi Die Aap Isaiah Miriam**  
**Gumboot Dhlamini Morris Tshabalala**

a. The protagonist and leader of a gang of township criminals who undergoes a transformation after finding a baby. \_\_\_\_\_

b. A member of Tsotsi's gang who questions Tsotsi about his past and suggests he has a soul.  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. A cold-blooded killer and designated hitman of Tsotsi's gang. \_\_\_\_\_

d. Another member of Tsotsi's gang, known for his loyalty and obedience.  
\_\_\_\_\_

e. A young woman who helps care for the baby and shows kindness to Tsotsi.  
\_\_\_\_\_

f. A beggar whom Tsotsi stalks in the city but ultimately spares. \_\_\_\_\_

g. One of the gang's victims, brutally murdered on a train. \_\_\_\_\_

h. The church gardener who offers Tsotsi some tea and explains about God.  
\_\_\_\_\_





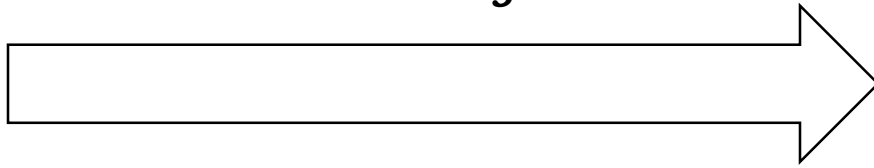
# **THEMES**



## **Tsotsi**

- Hardened criminal
- Encounter with the baby & memories of the past.

**1. Redemption** – *Can be achieved by the most corrupt if one is willing to change.*



## **Tsotsi**

- Grappling with his capacity for empathy and compassion

## **2. Survival**



- Encounters with the baby

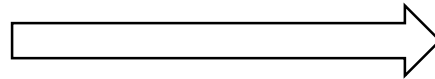


- Memories of the past – arrest of his mother, father kicking yellow dog, joining street gang -prompt him to confront his own identity and the consequences of his action.



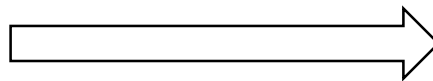
- Grapples with his past
- Life as a gangster
- Violence
- Robbery
- Murderer
- Seeks to understand who he truly is beyond his life as a gangster.

### 3. *Apartheid & Racism*



- Apartheid
- Poverty
- Inequality
- Pass laws.
- Land dispossession.
- Absence of parental figure
- Migrant Labour System

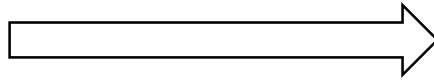
### 4. *Parents & Children*



- DAVID MADONDO- the child experiences abandonment - separated from parent - because of apartheid.
- He learns the importance of human connection
- Finds his capacity for kindness.
- MIRIAM + THE BABY

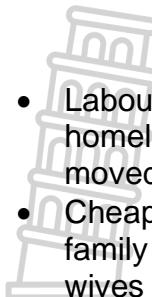
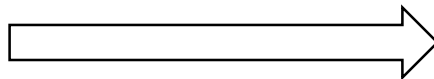


## 5. Truth



- Confronts his past.
- Seeks to atone for his crimes.
- Searches for meaning in his life.
- Goes in search of God – encounters Isaiah at the church.
- Accepts invitation to attend worship.
- Acknowledging the harm he has caused and making amends.
- Striving to make peace within himself and those he has wronged.

## 6. Migrant Labour System

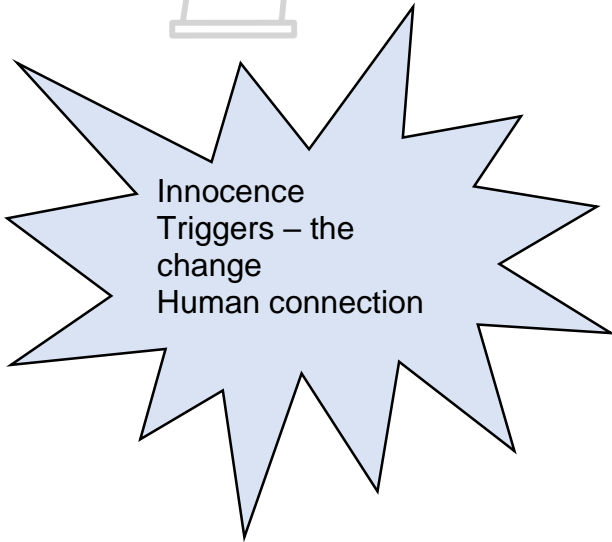


- Labourers from the rural areas/homelands were recruited/moved to work in the mines.
- Cheap labour that impacted on family structure away from wives and children.
- Gumboot Dlamini is a migrant worker – worked for a year – saved money – going home in a week.

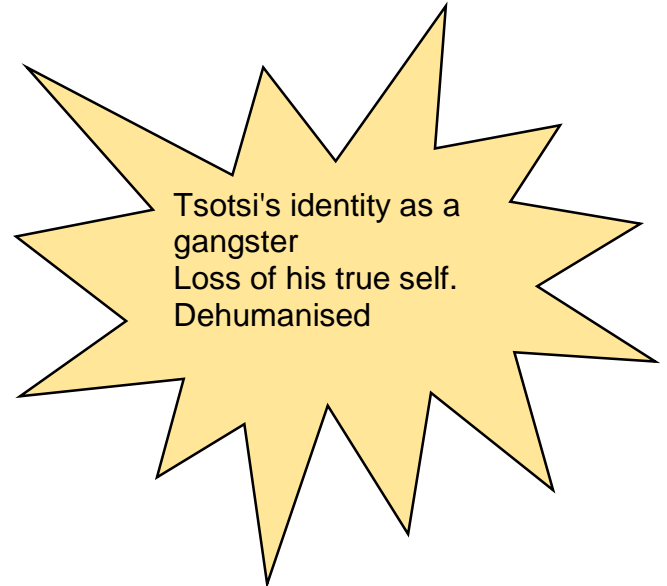


## **Symbols & Motifs**

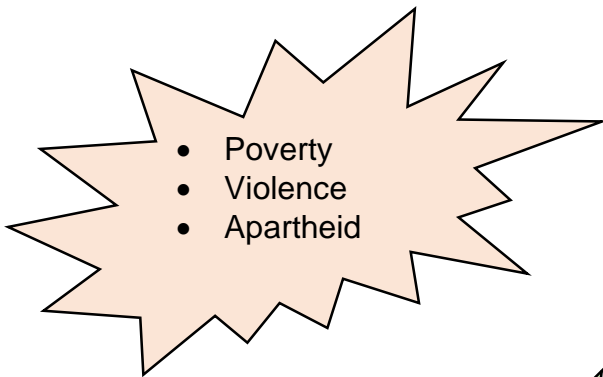
### **DAVID (THE BABY)**



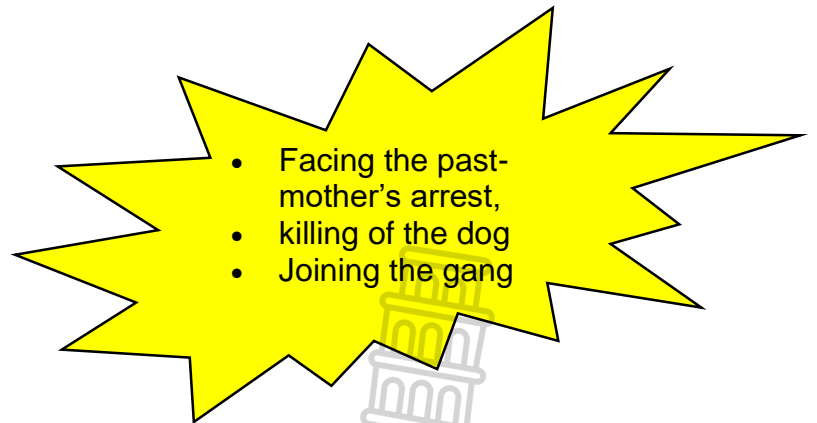
### **TSOTSI'S NAME**



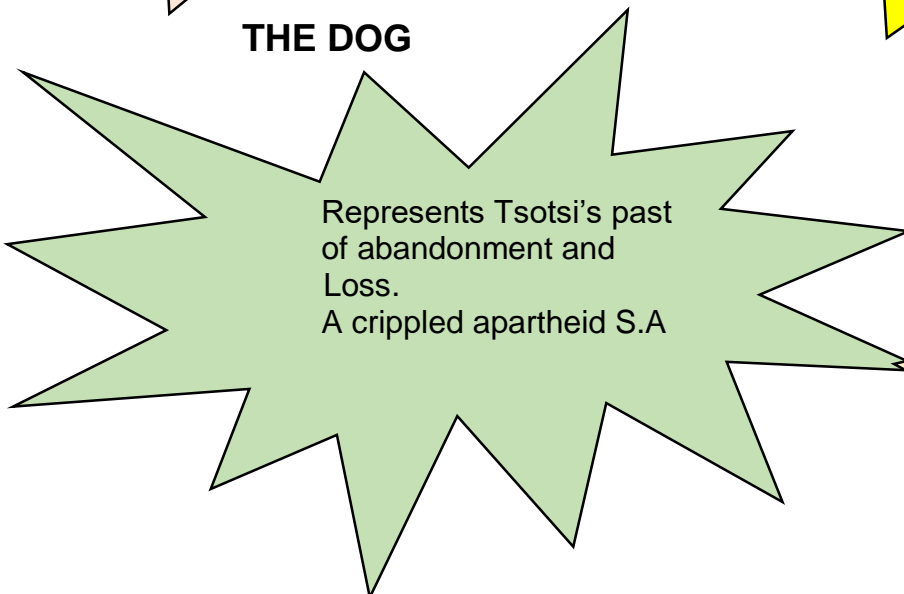
### **THE TOWNSHIP**



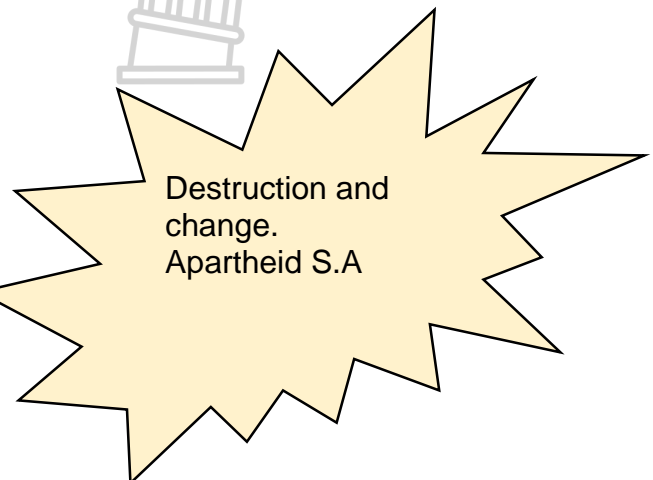
### **FLASHBACKS AND MEMORIES**



### **THE DOG**



### **RUINS AND BULLDOZERS**

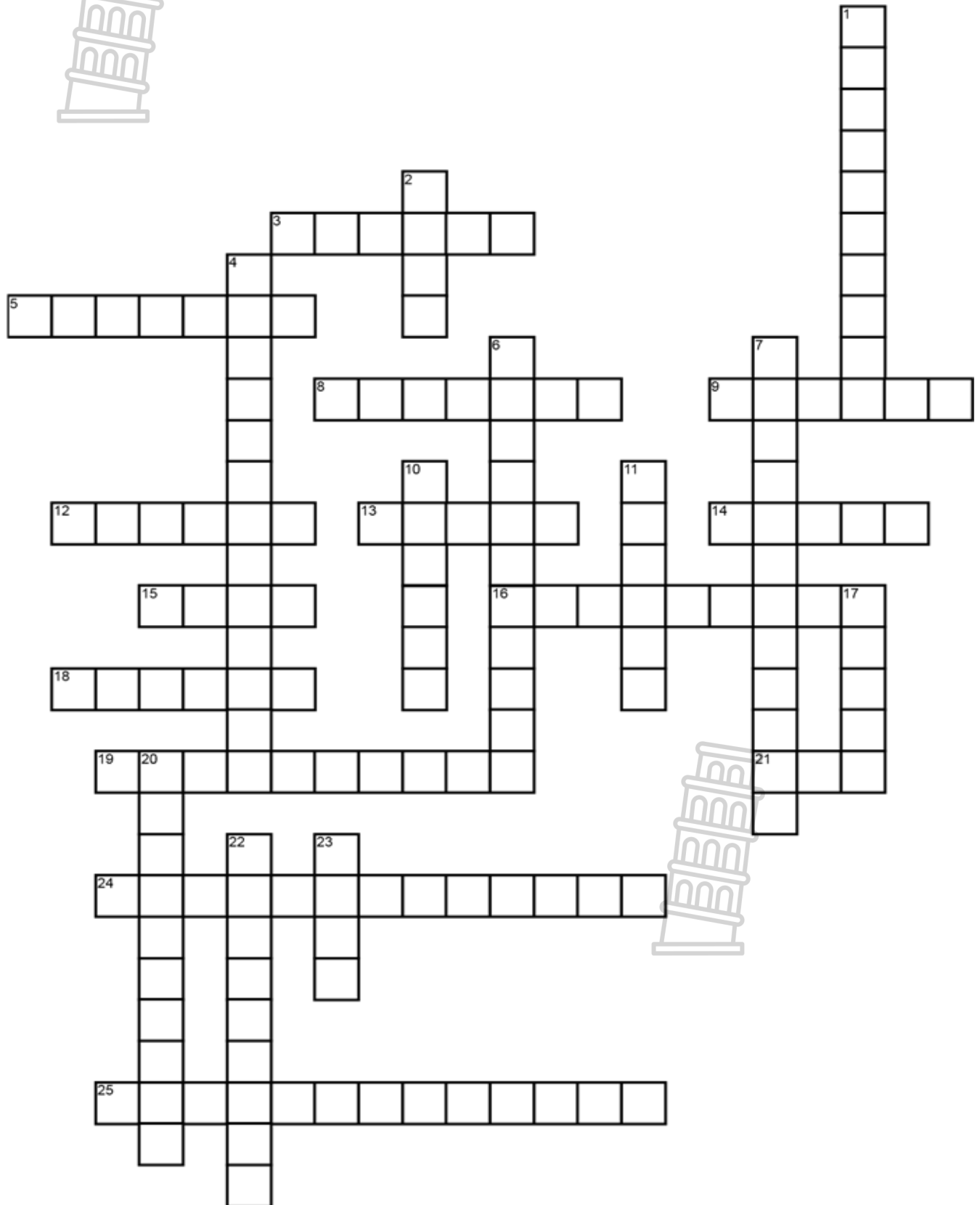




## WORD BANK

<b>Township</b>	A term used to describe the racially segregated areas where black South Africans were forced to live during apartheid.
<b>Apartheid</b>	The system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination that existed in South Africa from 1948 to the early 1990s.
<b>Gangster</b>	A member of a group of violent criminals, especially in an urban setting.
<b>Thug</b>	A violent or criminal person, often associated with street crime.
<b>Redemption</b>	The action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil.
<b>Empathy</b>	The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.
<b>Compassion</b>	Sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.
<b>Identity</b>	The characteristics, beliefs, and expressions that make a person or group unique.
<b>Morality</b>	Principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behaviour
<b>Reconciliation</b>	The restoration of friendly relations; the action of making one view or belief compatible with another.
<b>Inequality</b>	The state of not being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.
<b>Oppression</b>	Prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or control.

# TSOTSI CROSSWORD



**Across**

3. Tsotsi's friend who can't think for himself but is loyal to him.
5. The character who never misses a strike and is a ruthless killer in Tsotsi's gang.
8. What does Tsotsi have a fear of?
9. Who said, "You must have a soul, Tsotsi. Everybody's got a soul."
12. Character that introduces Tsotsi to God.
13. What symbolizes life and brings the community together for a common act.
14. The first object that Tsotsi looks at every morning.
15. What Boston did that caused him to be expelled from College.
16. The important period the story takes place in whereby there is a segregation of races.
18. The character who teaches Tsotsi to let go of the past by feeding the baby.
19. The theme throughout the story where Tsotsi converts from darkness to light.
21. What colour tie was Gumboot Dhlamini wearing before his death?
24. The dramatic technique used whereby the storm in Chapter 3 is an indication of the release of emotion in the future.
25. What does Tsotsi buy from Cassim in order to feed the baby?

**Down**

1. The character who represents the church but is patronizing towards Isaiah.
2. What does Tsotsi keep that triggers memories of the yellow dog and his past.
4. The place where the journey from the township to city "started" and "ended" everyday.
6. After the Gang murder Gumboot, they see Rosie sitting in the corner of Soekie's bar, what does she symbolize?
7. The story is set in a township near which major city?
10. The owner of Ramadoola, the General Dealer.
11. The first victim that Tsotsi showed compassion towards and let him escape.
17. Tsotsi's real name.
20. The name of the plot structure when we first meet Tsotsi and his gang on a Friday evening in a township.
22. A memory of Tsotsi that represents his past and the crippled apartheid system that South Africa is faced with.
23. The meaning of the word "Tsotsi".

# Tsotsi themes and characters

X P H V H R P Q Z J F A X J A S P D V V C S K Y  
 Y T H A E Y V S O F Q L H A V K P I Z U P H L T  
 Q W J E Q Z Y B B N A I S T X G Y J B I M Y S G  
 E I A V L Y H Z O O J T G U X R D V M N S P A Z  
 W T T N E U F O R E J N B R Q H E G A I F K T M  
 T U F E N G E Q E M V T G C U E Z T U M N H I B  
 N G Z F J J Y U D O A C M S M P H M B A R P T U  
 F F L J H N Y N E W W K X I Q O M Y O L Y B X W  
 Y K C B N B W R M B I W A K L N U K S H M X Q U  
 N L B I A M J A P R Z N G F W O V D T D F Y B B  
 B D C B A V X C T O U S U D J O P I O T J C Q U  
 X G E X T T P Y I J V G B W U L P G N O Q K Y L  
 S H U O F A U X O S A E F V V Y N L V O Q E J Q  
 T L R O A R M L N R T L Y S E V W J K B S C J K  
 U A V E Q V E M D B Q B M R N U D T P M G N A K  
 X J I Z I V J H I X N D Z N O E W P O U N E B B  
 C D R Z F J Y M C U B I W R W Y I W G G G L P Y  
 M I S S A C Y W A T T K C I D F S K H Y L O W B  
 Q G O M P R H C B Z U R P J A X U Q E E U I I C  
 N U U S O R R Q F W Q B G N I K W B M O V V S L  
 J J X A H O P C X M I C P T U V Q T X F S N T H  
 X F J E X B U P B Z V W M I S D P D F S D C O S  
 J E I O O F Y E A Y T I T N E D I N Q I B L S A  
 J J D X N P R T B B M O Q S U J T F C Z Y N T T

Gumboot Dhlamini  
 Identity  
 Butcher  
 Soekie  
 Tsotsi

Athol Fugard  
 Violence  
 Die Aap  
 Maxulu

Redemption  
 The baby  
 Cassim  
 Boston



## TSOTSI – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

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

It was the Saturday Street. The street had as many names as there were days in the week, as many as there were hours in a day. Saturday had one profound meaning. You had got past Friday. You were still alive. After this came the other meanings. You had money in your pocket. Tomorrow was Sunday, and that meant no work. You could live late today, and sleep late tomorrow. So, you put on your best, you jingled your coins and you lounged about the corners watching the girls arm in arm flaunting their skirts the length of the street. That was the Saturday Street. Lots of people, come today gone tomorrow, very hot, making up now for the banshee time around midnight when Saturday night would reach its climax.

5

10

Tsotsi saw it very quickly and closed his mind to it. He had seen it before. Free of the embarrassment and humiliation, he had felt in buying the milk, he was free now to hurry without a loss of pride. He slipped the tin into his coat pocket and pushed forward. People felt safe in the daylight and that made it harder to move through the crowds on the pavement. On Fridays they opened up and made a path for him.

15

When he reached his room, he was sweating. He closed the door behind him, putting a chair against it so that no one could enter unexpectedly. The window, or rather the hole in the wall since there was no glass, he covered up with a thin square of wood which he used for that purpose when it was cold or raining and the wind blew. Only then, feeling safe from inquisitive eyes or interruption, did he takes the shoebox from its hiding place under the bed. He put it carefully on the table, pulled up a chair, sat down, and then took off the lid to examine its contents.

20

[Chapter 4]

1. Place the extract in context.

Consider what has happened before the extract, and show a link to the extract.

Tsotsi goes to Cassim's to buy milk for the baby. He is humiliated and shamed by his illiteracy.  
 Tsotsi thinks of the weekends in the township – the crime and the fear that he instilled in people.  
 Returns to room to feed the crying baby. Baby stops crying when he feeds it condensed milk.  
 Tsotsi starts to think of past events.

2. Refer to lines 3-8 'You had got past Friday... was the Saturday Street.'  
 Discuss what these lines reveal about the township nightlife in context of the novel. 2

DISCUSS=  
 talk about  
 issue in  
 detail

**2. Township Nightlife**

The Saturday street is a time of freedom and fun.

It is energetic and vibrant.

It is different from the rest of the week which is characterised by the continuous threat of violence and desperate attempts at survival.

**Discussion**

For just one-night people have the opportunity to celebrate that they have made it through the week and that they will be able to rest the following day before the relentless cycle begins again.

3. Account for Tsotsi's feelings of 'embarrassment and humiliation' (line 12). (3)

ACCOUNT=  
 GIVE  
 REASONS/  
 WHY

- He had to go into a shop and pay for milk, rather than steal as is normal Tsotsi behaviour.
- It is a matter of pride if a tough man like him is seen buying milk for a baby.
- He is in an unusual situation of being vulnerable and unsure.
- He is humiliated by the fact that he cannot read the writing on the tin of condensed milk.
- He is embarrassed because he has no clue about what a baby would need and needs assistance from the shopkeeper

4. Refer to lines 15-16: 'On Fridays they opened up and made a path for him'.  
 Critically comment on whether this reaction to Tsotsi is justified by referring to earlier events in the novel. 3

Critically comment=  
 examine /good or bad  
 opinion and support  
 with  
 reasons/examples

**Reaction**

- Tsotsi is fearless and feared despite his age.
- His plans never fail as is evidenced by his carefully executed plan to 'take one on the trains'.
- The vitriol he whispers in the dying Gumbot's ear shows that he is merciless and deliberately malicious.
- His brutal beating of Boston for asking too many questions shows the ruthlessness of which Tsotsi is capable

