CITY LOVERS

Dr. Franz-Josef von Leinsdorf is a geologist absorbed in his work—wrapped up in it, as the saying goes. Year after year, the experience of this work enfolds him, swaddling him away from the landscapes, the cities, and the people of Peru, New Zealand, the United States, or wherever else he may live. He’s always been like that, his mother could confirm from their native Austria. Even as a small boy, he seemed to present only his profile to her: turned away to his bits of rock and stone. His few relaxations have not changed much since then—an occasional skiing trip, listening to music, reading poetry. Rainer Maria Rilke once stayed in his grandmother’s hunting lodge in the forests of Styria, and the boy was introduced to Rilke’s poems while very young.

Now he has been in Africa for almost seven years, first on the Côte d’Ivoire, and then, for the past five years, in South Africa. A shortage of skilled manpower brought about his recruitment here. He has no interest in the politics of the countries he works in. His private preoccupation, within the preoccupation of his work, has been research into underground watercourses, but the mining company that employs him in a senior capacity is interested only in mineral discovery. He is much out in the field—“the veld,” here—seeking new gold, copper, platinum, and uranium deposits. When he is at home, on this particular job, he lives in a three-room flat in a suburban block with a landscaped central garden, and does his shopping at a supermarket across the street. He is not married—yet. That is how his colleagues, and the typists and secretaries at the mining company’s head office, would define his situation. Both men and women would describe him as a good-looking man, in a foreign way. The lower half of his face is dark and middle-aged (his mouth is thin and curving, and no matter how closely he shaves his beard shows like fine shot embedded in the skin around his mouth and chin), and the upper half contradictorily young. He has deep-set eyes (some would say gray, some black) and thick eyelashes and brows. A tangled gaze, through which concentration and thoughtfulness perhaps appear as langour. The women in his office say that he’s “not unattractive.” Although the gaze seems to contain promise, he has never invited any of them to go out with him. There is a general assumption he probably has a girl who’s been picked for him, back home in Europe, where he comes from—that he’s bespoken by one of his own kind. It is understood that many of these well-educated Europeans have no intention of becoming permanent immigrants; colonial life doesn’t appeal to them.

One advantage, at least, of living in underdeveloped or half-developed countries is that most flats are serviced—resident cleaners come in every day. All Dr. von Leinsdorf has to do for himself is buy his own supplies and cook an evening meal if he doesn’t want to go to a restaurant. He simply drops in to the supermarket on his way from his car to his flat after work in the afternoon, and wheels a shopping cart down the aisles. At the cashiers’ counters, there are racks of small, uncategorized items for last-minute purchase. Here, as a Colored girl cashier punches the register (he has quickly accustomed himself to South African use of “Colored” to distinguish people of mixed blood from those of pure African descent), he sometimes picks up cigarettes and perhaps a packet of salted nuts or a bar of nougat. One evening in winter, he saw that the cardboard display board was empty of the brand of razor blades he preferred, and he drew the cashier’s attention to this. These young Colored girls were usually unhelpful, taking money and punching their machines in a manner that asserted, with the timeserving obstinacy of the half-literate, a limit of any responsibility toward customers, but this particular girl glanced over the selection of razor blades, explained that she was not allowed to leave her post, and said she would see that the stock was replenished “next time.” A day or two later, she recognized him as he took his turn before her counter. “I absed them,” she said gravely, “but it’s out of stock. You can’t get it. I did abs about it.” He said it didn’t matter. “When it comes in,” she said, “I can keep a few packets for you.” He thanked her.

He was away with the prospectors the whole of the next week. He arrived back in town just before nightfall on Friday, and was on the way from his car to his flat, arms filled with briefcase, suitcase, and two canvas bags.
when someone stopped him by standing timidly in his path. He was about to dodge round unseemly on the pavement, but she spoke, "We got the blades in now. I didn't see you in the shop this week, but I kept some for when you come. So..."

He recognized her. He had never seen her outdoors before, and she was wearing a coat. She was rather small and finely made, for one of them. The coat was skimpy, but she did not show a typical big backside. The cold brought a graining of warm color to her cheekbones, beneath which her very small face was quite delicately hollowed. Her skin was smooth, the subdued satiny color of certain yellow wood. She had crépey hair, but it was drawn back flat into a little knot and pushed into one of the cheap wool nets that he recognized as being among the miscellany of small goods (along with the razor blades) on sale at the supermarket. He said thanks, he was in a hurry—he'd only just got back from a trip. He shifted the burdens he was carrying, to demonstrate. She said, "But if you want, I can run in and get the blades for you quickly. If you want."

He saw at once that all the girl meant was that she would go back to the supermarket, buy the blades, and bring the packet to him there where he stood, on the pavement. It was this certainty that made him say, in the kindly tone used for an obliging underling, "I live just across there. Atlantis—that flat building. Could you drop them by, for me—No. 718, seventh floor?" He gave her a one-rand note.

She had never been inside one of these flat buildings. She lived a bus-and-train ride away, to the west of the city but this side of the black townships, in a township reserved for people her tint. In the entrance of the building called Atlantis there was a pool with real ferns, not plastic, and even a little waterfall pumping over rocks. She didn't wait for the lift marked "Goods" but took the one for whites. A white woman with one of those sausage dogs on a leash got in with her but did not pay her any attention. The corridor leading to the flats were nicely glassed in, not drafty.

He decided he should give her a twenty-cent piece for her trouble—ten cents would be right for a black—but she said, "Oh, no... please," standing outside his open door and awkwardly pushing back into his hand the change from the money he'd given her. She was smiling, for the first time, in the dignity of refusing a tip. It was difficult to know how to treat these people, in this country, difficult to know what they expected. In spite of her embarrassing refusal of the tip, she still stood there, unassuming, with her fists thrust down the pockets of her cheap coat. Her rather pretty thin legs were neatly aligned, knee to knee, ankle to ankle. "Would you like a cup of coffee or something?" he said.

He couldn't very well take her into his living room and offer her a drink. She followed him to his kitchen, but at the sight of her pulling out the single chair there to drink her cup of coffee at the kitchen table he said, "No, bring it in here," and led the way into the big room, where, among his books and his papers, his files of scientific correspondence (and the cigar boxes of stamps from the envelopes), his racks of records, and his specimens of minerals and rocks, he lived alone.

It was no trouble to her. She saved him the trips to the supermarket and brought him his groceries two or three times a week. All he had to do was leave a list and the key under the doormat, and she would come up in her lunch hour to collect them, returning after work to put away his supplies in the flat. Sometimes he was home and sometimes not. He bought a box of chocolates and left it, with a note, for her to find. That was acceptable, apparently, as a gratuity.

When they were there together, he saw that her eyes went over everything in the flat, although her body seemed to try to conceal its sense of being out of place by remaining as still as possible. Sitting in a chair, she was like a coat laid there until its owner takes it up to go.

"You collect?" she said one day, looking at the stones and bits of rock that took the place of the pretty ornaments she would have expected in such a setting.

"Well, these are specimens—connected with my work."

"My brother used to collect. Minia-
The flowers drying in the garden are the body. My wife raises the fallen arm and binds the forehead. She goes on her knees before a rose blackened at the center, she rests in the shadow of sunflowers. At 8:30 there is a carnival of blue morning glories; the mockingbird squawks their sudden thoughts, the hummingbird steals their intuitions. If I love the body that is yours for a time, wild phlox, marigold, weed, if I love the cactus that holds on and the thistle burning alone, if we are our bodies, naked in the sun of 'Tater Hill, tipped with sweat and chilled in the winds, will we come at last to dirt and stone and love them? I ask with this tongue which makes words and is itself a word, this breath humming among the 22 graves of my mouth. If the body’s hair moves in a slow dance, one part fire, three parts water, if the eye is an island that beholds, 

"Autumn Again"

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If I held her head now it would be clay, it would be a clear ache of blue. If I asked why, my tongue would curl back and be swallowed. Covered with dust, rags over their mouths, our sisters go out in open trucks to burn in the fields. Everyone inches up or down, step by step. The heart of a peach glows on its tree, at dusk a worm calls itself by a name no one knows. Everyone brings some piece of himself to the table, and the old wood groans. Even I heal and become new again. Under the scar the skin is pink and shiny, and though the hand kinks until the fingers are a cup of five pains that once held water and flesh, I will sleep and wake by the road below the Renault garage. Down the oiled path of cans and inner tubes in the field by the river, the young mechanic ties up his jeans at dawn, weeds his herb garden fenced with string, marjoram, costmary, dill, and warps one part more than another because they are his. 

—PHILIP LEVINE

SHE remade the bed every late afternoon when they left it and she dressed again before she went home. After a week, there was a day when late afternoon became evening and they were still in the bed. 

"Can’t you stay the night?"

"My mother," she said.

"Phone her. Make an excuse." He was a foreigner. He had been in the country five years, but he didn’t yet understand that where she lived people didn’t have telephones in their houses. She got up to dress. He didn’t want that tender body to go out in the night cold and kept hindering her with his hands, saying nothing. Before she put on her coat, when the body had

...
already disappeared, he spoke. “But you must make some arrangement.”

“Oh, my mother!”

Her face showed a fear and vacancy he could not read. Did the mother still think of her daughter as some pure and unsullied virgin?

“Why?” he said.

The girl said, “S’ell be scared. S’ell be scared we got caught.”

“Don’t tell her anything,” he said.

“She’s employing you,” In his building there were rooms on the roof for tenants’ servants.

She said, “That’s what I told the caretaker.”

She ground fresh coffee beans whenever he wanted a cup while he was working at night. She never attempted to cook anything until she had watched him do it the way he liked, and she learned to reproduce exactly the simple dishes he preferred. Sometimes she handled his pieces of rock and stone, at first admiring the colors: “It’d make a beautiful ring or a necklace, ay.” Then he showed her the striations, the formation of each piece, and explained what each stone was, and how, in the long life of the earth, it had been formed. He named the mineral it yielded and what that was used for. He worked at his papers, writing, writing, every night, so it did not matter that they could not go out together to public places. On Sundays, she got into his car in the basement garage, and they drove to the country and picnicked away up in the Ma-
October 13, 1975

foreigner (although so clever, she saw), she was less inhibited than she might have been by the words she knew she misspelled in her typing. While she sat at the typeewriter, she thought how one day she would type notes for him, as well as making coffee the way he liked it and taking him inside her body without saying anything and sitting (even if only through the empty streets of quiet Sundays) beside him in his car, like a wife.

On a summer night near Christmas—he had already bought and hidden a slightly showy but good watch he thought she would like—there was a knocking at the door that brought her out of the bathroom and him to his feet, at his worktable. During the day, it might have been a canvasser or a hawk, but no one ever came to the flat at night; he was not at home to friends. The summons was an imperious hanging that clearly would not stop until the door was opened.

Wearing a big bath towel, she stood in the bathroom doorway, gazing at him across the passage into the living room; her feet and shoulders were bare. She said nothing, did not even whisper. The flat seemed to shake with the strong, unhurried blows.

He made as if to go to the door at last, but now she ran and clutched him by both arms. She shook her head wildly. Her lips drew back, but her teeth were clenched. She didn't speak. She pulled him into the bedroom, snatched some clothes from the clean laundry laid out on the bed, and got into the built-in wardrobe, thrusting the key at his hand. His arms and calves felt weak and cold, but he was distinctly embarrassed at the sight of her crouching there under his suits and coats; it was horrible and ridiculous. "Come out!" he whispered. "No! Come out!"

"Where?" she said. "Where can I go?"

"Never mind! Get out of there!" He put out his hand to grasp her. At bay, baring the gap in her teeth, she said in a terrible whisper, "I'll throw myself out the window!"

"Granted, we don't want to overcommercialize the Bicentennial. On the other hand, we don't want to undercommercialize it, either."

ders of the dark jacket that sat so well on him, she saw a huge room, all chandeliers, and people dancing some dance from a costume film—stately, hand in hand. She supposed he was going to fetch a partner for the evening, to sit in her place in the car. They never kissed when either of them left the flat. Suddenly, kindly, passing as he picked up cigarettes and keys, he said, "Don't be lonely." And added, "Wouldn't you like to visit your family sometimes, when I have to go out?"

He had told her that after Christmas he was going home to his mother in the forests and mountains of his country, near the Italian border (he showed her on the map). She had not told him how her mother, not knowing there was any other variety, assumed she was a medical doctor, or how she had talked to her mother about the doctor's children and the doctor's wife, who was a very kind lady, glad to have someone who could help out in the surgery as well as the flat.

She remarked wondringly on his ability to work until midnight or later, after a day at work. When she came home from her cash register at the supermarket, she was so tired that once dinner was eaten she could scarcely keep awake. He explained, in a way she could understand, that while the work she did was repetitive, requiring little mental or physical effort, and therefore unrewarding, his work had been his greatest interest; it taxed his mental capacities to their limit, exercised all his concentration, and rewarded him constantly, as much with the excitement of a problem presented as with the satisfaction of a problem solved. Later, putting away his papers, speaking out of a silence, he said, "Have you done other kinds of work?" She said, "I was in a clothing factory before. Sportswear Shirts—you know? But the pay's better in the shop."

Of course. Being a conscientious newspaper reader, he was aware that it was only recently that the retail trade here had been allowed to employ Coloreds as shop assistants; even punching a cash register represented advancement. With the continuing shortage of semi-skilled whites, a girl like this might be able to edge a little further into the white-collar category. He began to teach her to type. He was aware that her English was poor, but because he was a foreigner her pronunciation did not offend him, nor categorize her. He corrected her grammatical mistakes but missed the less obvious ones because of his own sometimes unusual English usage. She continued to use the singular "it" for the plural "they." Because he was a

THE NEW YORKER

She forced the key into his hand like the handle of a knife. He closed the door on her face and drove the key home in the lock, then dropped it among the coins in his trouser pocket.

He unslotted the chain that was looped across the entrance door of the flat. He turned the serrated knob of the Yale lock. Three policemen, two in plain clothes, stood there without impatience, although they had been hanging on the door for several minutes. One of the plainclothesmen—a big, dark man with an elaborate mustache—held out, in a hand wearing a plaited gilt ring, some sort of identity card.

“What is it?” Dr. von Leinsdorf said quietly, the blood coming strangely back to legs and arms.

The sergeant told him they knew there was a Colonel girl in the flat. They had had information. “I been watching this flat three months,” he said. “I know.”

“I am alone here.” Dr. von Leinsdorf did not raise his voice.

“I know, I know who is here. Come.” And the sergeant and his two assistants passed him and moved systematically through the living room, the kitchen, the bathroom (the sergeant picked up a bottle of after-shave cologne and seemed to study the French label), and entered the bedroom. The assistants removed the clean laundry that was laid upon the bed and then turned back the bedding, carrying the sheets over to be examined by the sergeant under the lamp. They talked to one another in Afrikaans, which the doctor did not understand. The sergeant himself looked under the bed and lifted the long curtains at the window. The built-in wardrobe was of the kind that has no knobs; he saw that it was closed, and began to ask in Afrikaans, then politely changed to English, “Give us the key.”

Dr. von Leinsdorf said, “I'm sorry, I left it at my office. I always lock up and take my keys with me in the morning.”

“It's no good, man. You better give me the key.”

He smiled a little, reasonably. “It's on my office desk.”

The assistants produced a screwdriver, and he watched while they inserted it where the wardrobe doors met and gave it a quick leverage. He heard the lock give.

She had been naked, it was true, when he had locked her in, but now she was wearing a long-sleeved shirt with an appliqued butterfly motif on one breast, and a pair of jeans. Her feet were still bare. In the dark, she had managed to get into some of the clothing she had snatched from the bed, but she had no shoes. She had perhaps been weeping behind the door (her cheeks looked stained), but now her face was sullen and she was breathing heavily, her diaphragm contracting and expanding exaggeratedly and her breasts pushing against the cloth. She looked angry, but it might simply have been that she was half suffocated in the wardrobe and needed air. She did not look at Dr. von Leinsdorf. She would not reply to the sergeant's questions.

They were taken to the police station, where they were at once separated and led in turn for examination by the district surgeon. The man's under- wear was taken away and examined, as the sheets had been, for signs of his seed. When the girl was undressed, it was discovered that beneath her jeans she was wearing a pair of men's briefs, with his name on the neatly sewn laundry tag. In her haste, she had taken the wrong garment to her hiding place.

Now she cried, standing there before the district surgeon in a man's underwear. He courteously pretended not to notice. He handed the briefs, jeans, and shirt to someone outside the door, and motioned her to lie on a white-sheeted high table, where he placed her legs apart, resting in stirrups, and put into her where the other had
made his way so warmly a cold, hard instrument that expanded wider and wider. Her body opened. Her thighs and knees trembled uncontrollably while the doctor looked into her and touched her deep inside with other hard instruments carrying wafers of gauze.

When she came out of the examining room, back to the charge office, Dr. von Leinsdorf was not there; they must have taken him somewhere else. She spent what was left of the night in a cell, but early in the morning she was released and taken home to her mother's house in the Colored township. She was driven by a white man who explained he was the clerk of the lawyer who had been engaged for her by Dr. von Leinsdorf. The clerk said Dr. von Leinsdorf had also been bailed out that morning. She was not told when or if she would see him again.

A STATEMENT made by the girl to the police was handed in.

peared to meet charges of contravening the Immorality Act in a Johannesburg flat. "I lived with the white man in his flat," it read. "He had intercourse with me sometimes. He gave me tablets to take to prevent me becoming pregnant."

Interviewed by the Sunday papers, the girl said, "I'm sorry for the sadness brought to my mother." She said she was one of nine children of a female laundry worker. She had left school in Standard Three because there was no money at home for gym clothes or a school blazer. She had worked as a machinist in a factory and a cashier in a supermarket. Dr. von Leinsdorf taught her to type his notes.

Dr. Franz-Josef von Leinsdorf, described in the newspaper as the grandson of a baroness—a cultured man engaged in international mineralogical research—said he accepted social distinctions between people but didn't think they should be legally imposed. "Even in my own country it's difficult to marry one from a lower class," he said.

The two accused gave no evidence. They did not greet or speak to each other in court. The defense argued that the sergeant's evidence that they had been living together as man and wife was hearsay. (The woman with dachshund had reported suspicions, perhaps, or maybe it was the caretaker.)

The magistrate acquitted them because the state failed to prove that carnal intercourse had taken place on the stated night.

In the Sunday papers there was a photograph of the girl's mother, who was quoted as saying, "I won't let my daughter work as a servant for a white man again." —NAIDINE GODDEMER

Agreed generally that all land use at the airport should relate to aviation, except that which does not. Announcement by the City Airport Commission in the Santa Barbara (Calif.) News-Press.
to the court when she and the man a- for a person from a higher class to Was there much debat-
In an interview published in Women Writers Talk (1989), edited by Olga Kenyon, Nadine Gordimer had this to say about the political evolution of South Africa:

"I believe that combined ideally the size and ferocious aspect of the crocodile with the human being. It's true she sometimes was called to help out in the farmhouse. She told the missus had given these to her as a reward for some work she had done—it was an urge each followed independently. He knew it was she, from a long way..."

Since 1953, when she published her first novel, The Lying Days, Nadine Gordimer has been aligned with the liberal white consciousness of South Africa. She was born in the Transvaal in 1923. Her father was a shopkeeper, her mother a housewife. A childhood illness kept Gordimer out of school until she was 14, by which point she was already an avid reader. By 15 she had published her first short story. It was not until she was somewhat older that she became aware of the South African political situation, and it was not until she was 30 that her first novel was published. Beginning with A World of Strangers (1958), Gordimer's novels focus directly on the South African racial situation. The most famous of these works include A Guest of Honor (1970), The Conservationist (1974), Burger's Daughter (1979), July's People (1981), A Sport of Nature (1987), My Son's Story (1990), None to Accompany Me (1994), and The House Gun (1998). Gordimer has also published 10 volumes of short stories, as well as several volumes of nonfiction. She was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1991.

Asked by Olga Kenyon what it means to be a white South African, Gordimer responded as follows:

"You have to show that you support change. In my case that you support a complete revolution, if possible a peaceful one. I use revolution in a broad sense, a complete change of the whole political organisation, from grass roots. It's not enough for a white to say "Right, I'll be prepared to live under black majority rule," and sit back, waiting for it to come. You also have to work positively, in whatever way you can, as a human being."

"Country Lovers," from Soldier's Embrace (1975), a collection of short stories, was originally published paired with another story and jointly titled "Town and Country Lovers."
When Thebedi saw the farmer and his wife drive away on a Saturday afternoon, the boot of their Mercedes filled with fresh-killed poultry and vegetables from the garden that was part of her father's work to tend, she knew that she must come not to the river-bed but up to the house. The house was an old one, thick-walled, dark against the heat. The kitchen was its lively thoroughfare, with servants, food supplies, begging cats and dogs, pots boiling over, washing being damped for ironing, and the big deep-freeze the missus had ordered from town, bearing a crocheted mat and a vase of plastic irises. But the dining-room with the bulging-legged heavy table was shut up in its rich, old smell of soup and tomato sauce. The sitting-room curtains were drawn and the T.V. set silent. The door of the parents' bedroom was locked and the empty rooms where the girls had slept had sheets of plastic spread over the beds. It was in one of these that she and the farmer's son stayed together whole nights—almost: she had to get away before the house servants, who knew her, came in at dawn. There was a risk someone would discover her or trace of her presence if he took her to his own bedroom, although she had looked into it many times when she was helping out in the house and knew well, there, the row of silver cups he had won at school.

When she was eighteen and the farmer's son nineteen and working with his father on the farm before entering a veterinary college, the young man Njabulo asked her father for her. Njabulo's parents met with hers and the money he was to pay in place of the cows it is customary to give a prospective bride's parents was settled upon. He had no cows to offer; he was a labourer on the Eysendyck farm, like her father. A bright youngster; old Eysendyck had taught him brick-laying and was going to have a baby. Two months after her marriage to Njabulo, she gave birth to a daughter. There was no disgrace in that; among her people it is customary for a young man to make sure, before marriage, that the chosen girl is not barren, and Njabulo had made love to her then. But the infant was very light and did not quicken any longer. He told her, each time, when they would meet again. Once or twice it was very early in the morning; the lowing of the cows being driven to the veld. The unfocused eyes it opened were grey flecked with yellow. Njabulo was no particular like her, but there was a pretty blonde who put up her long hair into a kind of doughnut with a black ribbon round it, whom he took to see films when the schoolboys and girls had a free Saturday afternoon. He had been driving tractors and other farm vehicles since he was ten years old, and as soon as he was eighteen he got a driver's licence and in the holidays, this last year of his school life, he took neighbours' daughters to dances and to the drive-in cinema that had just opened twenty kilometres from the farm. His sisters were married, by then; his parents often left him in charge of the farm over the weekend while they visited the young wives and grandchildren.

The head girl of the 'sister' school was said to have a crush on him; he didn't particularly like her, but there was a pretty blonde who put up her long hair into a kind of doughnut with a black ribbon round it, whom he took to see films when the schoolboys and girls had a free Saturday afternoon. He had been driving tractors and other farm vehicles since he was ten years old, and as soon as he was eighteen he got a driver's licence and in the holidays, this last year of his school life, he took neighbours' daughters to dances and to the drive-in cinema that had just opened twenty kilometres from the farm. His sisters were married, by then; his parents often left him in charge of the farm over the weekend while they visited the young wives and grandchildren.

the sound read in their two pairs of eyes, opening so close to each other. The unfocused eyes it opened were grey flecked with yellow. Njabulo was no particular like her, but there was a pretty blonde who put up her long hair into a kind of doughnut with a black ribbon round it, whom he took to see films when the schoolboys and girls had a free Saturday afternoon. He had been driving tractors and other farm vehicles since he was ten years old, and as soon as he was eighteen he got a driver's licence and in the holidays, this last year of his school life, he took neighbours' daughters to dances and to the drive-in cinema that had just opened twenty kilometres from the farm. His sisters were married, by then; his parents often left him in charge of the farm over the weekend while they visited the young wives and grandchildren.

Njabulo made no complaint. Out of his farm labourer's earnings he bought from the Indian store a cellophane-windowed pack containing a pink plastic bath, six napkins, a card of safety pins, a knitted jacket, cap and booties, a dress, and a tin of Johnson's Baby Powder, for Thebedi's baby.

When it was two weeks old Paulus Eysendyck arrived home from the veterinary school. The head girl of the 'sister' school was said to have a crush on him; he didn't particularly like her, but there was a pretty blonde who put up her long hair into a kind of doughnut with a black ribbon round it, whom he took to see films when the schoolboys and girls had a free Saturday afternoon. He had been driving tractors and other farm vehicles since he was ten years old, and as soon as he was eighteen he got a driver's licence and in the holidays, this last year of his school life, he took neighbours' daughters to dances and to the drive-in cinema that had just opened twenty kilometres from the farm. His sisters were married, by then; his parents often left him in charge of the farm over the weekend while they visited the young wives and grandchildren.

When it was two weeks old Paulus Eysendyck arrived home from the veterinary college for the holidays. He drank a glass of fresh, still-warm milk in the childhood familiarity of his mother's kitchen and heard her discussing with the old house-servant where they could get a reliable substitute to help out now that the girl Thebedi had had a baby. For the first time since he was a small boy he came right into the kraal. It was eleven o'clock in the morning. The men were at work in the lands. He looked about him, urgently; the women turned away, each not wanting to be the
The baby was not fed during the night and although she kept telling Njabulo it was sleeping, he saw for himself in the morning that it was dead. He comforted her with words and caresses. She did not cry but simply sat, staring at the door. Her hands were cold as dead chickens' feet to his touch.

Njabulo buried the little baby where farm workers were buried, in the place in the veld the farmer had given them. Some of the mounds had been left to weather away unmarked, others were covered with stones and a few had fallen wooden crosses. He was going to make a cross but before it was finished the police came and dug up the grave and took away the dead baby's bones—someone—one of the other labourers? their women?—had reported that the baby was almost white, that, strong and healthy, it had died suddenly after a visit by the farmer's son. Pathological tests on the infant corpse showed intestinal damage not always consistent with death by natural causes.

Thebedi went for the first time to the country town where Paulus had been to school, to give evidence at the preparatory examination into the charge of murder brought against him. She cried hysterically in the witness box, saying yes, yes (the gilt hoop ear-rings swung in her ears), she saw the accused pouring liquid into the baby's mouth. She said he had threatened to shoot her if she told anyone.

More than a year went by before, in that same town, the case was brought to trial. She came to Court with a new-born baby on her back. She wore gilt hoop ear-rings; she was calm; she said she had not seen what the white man did in the house.

Paulus Eyendsyck had visited the hut but had not poisoned the child.

The Defence did not contest that there had been a love relationship between the accused and the girl, or that intercourse had taken place, but submitted there was no proof that the child was the accused's.

The judge told the accused there was strong suspicion against him but not enough proof that he had committed the crime. The Court could not accept the girl's evidence because it was clear she had committed perjury either at this trial or at the preparatory examination. There was the suggestion in the mind of the Court that she might be an accomplice in the crime; but, again, insufficient proof.

The judge commended the honourable behaviour of the husband (sitting in court in a brown-and-yellow-quartered golf cap bought for Sundays) who had not rejected his wife and had "even provided clothes for the unfortunate infant out of his slender means."

The verdict on the accused was "not guilty."

The young white man refused to accept the congratulations of press and public and left the Court with his mother's raincoat shielding his face from photographers. His father said to the press, "I will try and carry on as best I can to hold up my head in the district."

Interviewed by the Sunday papers, who spelled her name in a variety of ways, the black girl, speaking in her own language, was quoted beneath her photograph: "It was a thing of our childhood, we don't see each other any more."