

# MEMORANDUM

## Multiple-choice quiz

- |   |   |    |   |    |   |    |   |
|---|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | B | 6  | B | 11 | C | 16 | C |
| 2 | C | 7  | D | 12 | B | 17 | B |
| 3 | B | 8  | B | 13 | D | 18 | C |
| 4 | C | 9  | A | 14 | C | 19 | D |
| 5 | D | 10 | D | 15 | A | 20 | C |

[20]

## Unpacking the story

### Placing in sequence

3	<i>Naledi meets Kitsano at the school social.</i>
9	The fated rugby match takes place.
4	Basi brings Moipone home for the first time.
19	<i>Aus' Johanna tells Naledi the whole story about the dead woman in the woods.</i>
6	Naledi discusses love with Ole, who reveals that she is lesbian.
8	Basi and Naledi see Ole on the street with her arm around Moipone.
15	Five Bop announces that Moipone has gone to the police.
13	Naledi admits the truth to Ole about what Basi did.
11	The "hideous incident" (p. 117): Basi rapes Moipone.
16	Basi's parents rush him away by car and Naledi's mom tells her: "You shame us".
20	<i>Naledi talks to Basi about the past while he washes his car.</i>
1	<i>Basi and Kgosi play together with their friends in the woods.</i>
5	Kitsano asks Naledi to the matric dance.
10	The welcome-home party is held for Aus' Nono.
12	Basi has a tantrum after seeing Ole and Moipone sitting close together.
18	<i>Basi leaves home to finish his matric at a private school in Cape Town.</i>
17	Basi reassures Naledi: "It's OK, Nedi!"
14	Naledi gets dressed for the matric dance.
2	<i>The decomposed body is found in the woods.</i>
7	Basi and Naledi's mom takes them clothes shopping for the matric dance.

[14]

## Matching columns

- |   |   |    |   |
|---|---|----|---|
| 1 | H | 6  | A |
| 2 | E | 7  | D |
| 3 | I | 8  | B |
| 4 | J | 9  | G |
| 5 | F | 10 | C |

[10]

### How well do you know the characters?

- |   |           |    |           |
|---|-----------|----|-----------|
| 1 | Moipone   | 6  | Basimane  |
| 2 | Aus' Nono | 7  | Dineo     |
| 3 | Kgosi     | 8  | Limakatso |
| 4 | Kitsano   | 9  | Naledi    |
| 5 | Bra Speed | 10 | Ole       |

[10]

### Close analysis of a passage

- |   |                |   |                       |
|---|----------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | short sentence | 5 | matter-of-fact tone   |
| 2 | repetition     | 6 | descriptive           |
| 3 | simile         | 7 | dangerous connotation |
| 4 | irony          |   |                       |

[7]

### Extension exercise

- 1 The short sentence, used after a long one, highlights the freedom the boys enjoy.
- 2 The repetition highlights the contrast between the girls' and boys' playtime activities.
- 3 The image of the lion, in a simile here, is used throughout the novel to convey the sense of men as hunters.
- 4 It is ironic that Naledi says she is lucky to have a brother who trusts her, when even the title tells us she will betray her brother.
- 5 The matter-of-fact tone makes reference to the inequality inherent in South Africa's segregated past.
- 6 This sentence is very descriptive; it refers to colour and uses a simile, adjectives and adverbs to describe the hill.
- 7 "The wild" has dangerous connotations; it suggests untamed nature and dangerous animals.

[6]

### Contextual questions

#### Passage 1

- 1 She is being raped by Basi. ✓ (1)
- 2 She is watching the rape through the back-room window. ✓ (1)
- 3 It is literally the lion on Basi's T-shirt. ✓ Figuratively, it is the idea of Basi as the aggressor or hunter ✓ devouring his victim, Moipone. ✓ (3)
- 4 a) strength, power, royalty, fear, respect ✓✓ (Any four) ( $4 \times \frac{1}{2} = 2$ )

b) They play in groups as if they are hunting in packs. ✓ The boys command respect as the strong, powerful and valued gender ✓ but there is a warning that they are also to be feared. ✓ (Any two) (2)

c) Fear is dominant. ✓

Basi warns Nedi and the reader to be scared and not to go near them. ✓

OR

The wild, dangerous side of the lions is emphasized. ✓ (2)

d) The lion image suggests something primal or dangerous ✓ in the boys. It is effective as it foreshadows the rape incident, ✓ increases suspense ✓ and warns the reader. ✓ (Any three) (3)

5 Moipone sees Naledi / is aware of her presence at the window. ✓ (1)

6 a) Split infinitive ✓ to convey Naledi's vernacular / colloquial speech. ✓ (2)

b) A list of present participles that are synonyms ✓ to capture the extent of Naledi's emotional response – her shock and horror. ✓ (2)

7 a) Alliteration ✓ – “watched the water ... float around me, felt ... soothing sound ... turned the tap ... basin for balance ... world of water ... sounds of screams.” (“cold ceramic” is not alliteration. Do not accept assonance “small ball” – not often used.) ✓ (Any one example) (2)

b) It creates a lyrical effect ✓ and conveys the surreal, slow-motion experience when one is underwater and sound is muffled. ✓ (2)

8 It is credible – rape is traumatic and one needs to remember that she is an impressionable thirteen year old who idolises her brother up until that point. He has always been her protector; his aggressive behaviour turns her world upside down. ✓✓

OR

It is over-the-top, an overreaction. The rape is not as violent or aggressive as some rapes are reported to be. Moipone stops screaming and fighting Basi – after all, he is her boyfriend. (This answer is the more controversial one – teacher and students should be sensitive to the experience of others. An insensitive answer could be marked down. As a marker, one might disagree with the latter answer, but if handled sensitively this answer can be used as a platform for discussion.) ✓✓ (2)

[25]

## Passage 2

1 Nedi is a person he can trust ✓ – a person who will remain loyal ✓ to her brother no matter what. (2)

2 She has carried this guilt ✓ of betrayal for fifteen years and it is as if Basi has just forgiven her. ✓ (2)

3 Basi labels Naledi's alleged “lie” (namely her admission of his guilt, which is not a lie at all) despicable, ✓ when in fact he did something truly despicable when he raped someone. ✓ (2)

- 4 a) rhetorical questions ✓ (1)  
 b) It is climactic ✓ because it is a short sentence after a whole string of long questions. ✓ Furthermore, it is the opposite of what the rhetorical questions lead us to expect. ✓ (3)  
 c) It is her brother ✓ whom she loves that we are talking about. She was only thirteen ✓ when this happened so it is understandable that she would have wanted him to clarify what happened all those years ago. ✓ (3)
- 5 a) He thinks he has got away with it ✓ – he feels unrepentant ✓ and without remorse for what he did. (2)  
 b) She remembers the sound of Basi and Moipone walking on the pebbles the night of the rape. ✓ (1)  
 c) Onomatopoeia ✓ (1)
- 6 a) Naledi claims that she was raped ✓, as Moipone was. (1)  
 b) She wants to force ✓ her brother to feel remorse ✓ – to suffer the consequences of his actions. (2)  
 c) Yes and no. Yes, because his reaction suggests that he realises how serious rape actually is, ✓ and he even says he will kill the rapist. No, because he does not confess completely – although he is the most honest he has ever been. ✓ (2)
- 7 Expected ✓ (1)
- 8 They have now lost the trust and loyalty ✓ – they now know where they stand with one another and can no longer pretend that they misunderstand each other. ✓ (2)
- [25]

### Literature essay topics

Assess these essays by using a marking rubric. For examples of rubrics, go to the NCS Guidelines on <http://www.education.gov.za/>. For Home Language, the total is 25 marks and for First Additional Language the total is 35 marks.

The points below are given as a guideline to highlight some important points. You might have other valid points to add. Learners must substantiate their points by referring to the text where relevant.

- 1 Basimane is guilty as charged! Give both sides of the argument and then your verdict.
- The argument that Basimane is guilty hinges on the fact that Moipone clearly said no and that Basi then took advantage of her because he was physically stronger.
  - A counter-argument would say that Moipone's short skirt was a clear invitation, and that by going willingly in Basi's car to his house and then to the back room, she knew what Basi wanted. If she really did not want to have sex, she could have continued screaming and fighting. It could also

be argued that Basi was a respected young man with a sterling reputation and that bad behaviour would be “*out of character*” (p. 164).

- It is easy to see how the victim’s account of the rape can be undermined by the facts of the counter-argument. However, as Ole says, “if ... a girl ... says a guy did something awful *to* her, and that that something is *illegal*” (p. 161) then her story should be believed. Unfortunately, there are many social pressures working against the victims of rape. As one female character says, “I’m still shocked at what some women will do to one of our own men” (p. 174), failing to note the irony in her own words. The same irony is evident in Basi suggesting it would have been “despicable” if Naledi had betrayed him by calling it rape – when the real “despicable” act is the rape itself.
- Verdict: it is complicated – Basi is guilty but it is not easy to convince society.
- Nevertheless, it is very telling that Basi knows he is guilty: “That’s the difference between Basi and anyone else. He knows. He knows it was wrong ...” (p. 180). Therefore, he is guilty.

2 As Naledi narrates her story, she reveals ambivalent or mixed feelings towards her brother. Describe her feelings towards Basi and explain how they change over the course of the novel.

- Before witnessing the rape, Naledi adores her brother – when they are young children, he tells her secrets and shares the “boys’ world” with her, and she hangs on his every word. As they get older, they continue to look after each other and are each other’s closest allies. For example, Basi covers for Naledi at the school social and does not tell their mother that she was kissing Kitsano. She does not tell their mother when Basi is out with Kgosi.
- The rape is the turning point because up until then, Naledi believed that Basi could do no wrong.
- After the rape, Naledi’s feelings are ambivalent – she still holds a deep love for her brother, but she is also disgusted by his actions.
- Nevertheless, after witnessing the rape, her first reaction is to “save” Basi – she doesn’t try to stop Basi in the act, and instead she tries to ignore what is happening.
- After the rape, Naledi’s feelings are in turmoil. She needs to adjust her view of her brother from one of unconditional love when she realises that he is capable of inflicting such pain on an innocent girl.
- Naledi is able to develop empathy with Moipone because she is also a woman. Naledi intuitively realises that if someone like Basi could commit rape, then it is possible that the same thing could happen to her.
- It is possible that, as a result of what she saw Basi do, she also goes through a period of disillusionment about all men – this is evidenced by the clothes she wears to cover herself with in the years following the event.
- Despite all her strong feelings against Basi’s actions, she still loves him deeply. It is with great pain and deep regret that she eventually “betrays” her brother by writing the story. It takes many years before she is ready to get to this point and she takes great care to look at the events as objectively

as possible. The reader gets the feeling she desperately wishes the story wasn't true.

- Her feelings are ambivalent because after many years her love for her sibling is still incredibly strong, but so is her conscience and her need to recognise the truth of his despicable actions.

3 Naledi is accused of being a tattletale. Do you agree with this accusation?

- Naledi is our narrator so she is clearly a storyteller. The question is: does she tell secrets she is meant to keep?
- She is sensitive to Ole when she reveals that she is lesbian, and never gossips about her.
- She covers for Basi in his friendship with Kgosi, even though the friendship is frowned upon by her mother.
- She covers for Basi in not telling her friends too much about Moipone.
- She wants the shop workers to trust her so she "never saw anything" (p. 67) at work either.
- She does not actually speak about her brother raping Moipone.
- She says to Ole that "Everyone makes mistakes" (p. 164) and calls the rape a mistake. She says, "It was only one time. Probably a misunderstanding ... I'm sure he's very sorry ... That's not who he is ... A mistake ..." (p. 164). In doing so, she is admitting Basi's guilt in order to comfort Moipone when no one will believe her.
- She is definitely neither a malicious or sycophantic tattletale nor a silly gossip.
- Naledi loves Basi deeply, even though she has strong feelings against his actions. It is with great pain and deep regret that she eventually "betrays" her brother by writing the story. It takes many years before she is ready to get to this point and she takes great care to look at the events as objectively as possible. The reader gets the feeling she desperately wishes the story wasn't true.

4 *This Book Betrays My Brother* introduces us to victims of classism, racism, sexism and gender-based violence. Identify and discuss the victims in this novel. Describe each of their situations and then look at the similarities and differences that exist between these victims.

- Kgosi is a victim of Basi's family's classist attitudes. It's not that Basi's mother disapproves of his character – she disapproves of where he comes from and because his family is not as wealthy as hers is. She doesn't consider the loyalty evident in his friendship with her son.
- Basi is a victim of overt racism during the rugby match. His exclusion from the rugby match is incredibly unfair, and is based on nothing but the colour of his skin – the reader knows that he is dedicated, well prepared and skilled. The incident is made even worse by the comments of the white spectators and the assumptions they make about his character.
- There are a number of other incidents of racism: Basi and his mother experience racism during their shopping trip when white shoppers make assumptions about them. Naledi also notices the black man who is forced

to sit on the back of the bakkie while the white driver shares the cab with his dog.

- Sexism is prevalent in the theme of the story, which shows how men are empowered to get their own way, often at the expense of women and girls, and how women are often unfairly held accountable for gender-based sexual violence. The victims of male aggression are: Moipone, Ole, Aus' Nono, Vera-the-Ghost and the unknown woman whose body is found in the woods. Moipone is raped, Ole endures threats of rape, Nono experiences domestic abuse, Vera is murdered and the nameless woman is raped and killed.
- Although Naledi does not experience gender-based violence directly, she perceives this threat in her environment and changes her behaviour accordingly. Naledi is nevertheless the victim of a family and society that prizes men – a theme which is also at the root of the other female victims' stories.

5 “A sister’s guilt” (p. 10): Discuss.

- Naledi is an accidental witness of the rape.
- Does one really understand date rape at thirteen years old, when one hardly knows what sex is?
- Her whole reality is shattered when it happens because she adores Basi and has always believed him to be her protector, not the perpetrator of such aggression.
- Does she betray her brother? It is honestly not her intention to hurt him. She says nothing initially and when she first talks about it to Ole, it is in his defence: “Everyone makes mistakes” (p. 164). She calls it “a misunderstanding ... A mistake” (p. 164).
- Her motivation for this admission of Basi’s guilt is not to hurt Basi but to comfort his victim, Moipone, when no one will believe her.
- How can one blame a thirteen year old for trying to be truthful while also protecting her brother and supporting an innocent victim, all at the same time?

6 To what extent can one blame Basi’s parents for what happened to Moipone? Discuss.

- Basi’s parents are to blame in the sense that they buy into the stereotypical view of the prized son who is held in higher esteem than a daughter.
- They are also more interested in upholding their own image of their son than in uncovering the truth.
- Basi’s mother is particularly to blame in this regard. She is blinded by pride, and her “wonder at her boy” (p. 89). She goes so far as to say to her young daughter “You shame us” (p. 167), placing her pride in her son above her love for her daughter and her own integrity.
- Nevertheless, the dad can also be criticised for his reaction when he hears the rumours of Basi’s alleged behaviour – he says that the family’s integrity is at stake, instead of considering whether another person has been wronged.

- The parents display a blind pride in their son. A societal mindset that values men above women can also share the blame, as must the perpetrator, Basi.

### More advanced essay topics

- 7 “Let’s call them *ditori*, a popular way of saying ‘lies’ where I’m from.” (p. 8) Discuss lying and keeping secrets (the appearance versus reality theme) in the novel.
  - Naledi is accused of lying mainly by her mother.
  - In order to be loyal to one’s family one is expected to keep their secrets, as Naledi and Basi do. Naledi keeps Basi’s secret about Kgosi and he keeps her secret about Kitsano.
  - Naledi learns from Basi to keep the shop workers’ secrets so that they will trust her and like her better.
  - Naledi must also keep it secret when Basi tells her that Aus’ Nono killed her husband because he beat her.
  - And then the big secret: Basi has raped Moipone. Naledi does try to keep this secret – until she feels compelled to admit something to Ole for Ole and Moipone’s sake.
  - Moipone is labelled a liar for tarnishing Basi’s name. She is accused of lying in order to cover for losing her virginity. The community believes that she is guilty of lying and this is seen as the crime, not the rape.
  
- 8 Naledi says, “When I was in primary school, when we still lived *ko motseng*, I remember boys twisting my wrist until it was dry and red. It was all part of the games boys and girls played, I was told. I got used to it, and the more a boy twisted my wrist the more I thought he liked me.” (p. 101) Discuss relationships between men and women, boys and girls, as revealed in the novel, with particular reference to Basi, Naledi, Moipone and Ole, as well as Kgosi’s parents. Comment on the word “game” used to describe these dynamics, as well as the notion of pain and the use of force in Naledi’s example.
  - If it is true that “Men and boys were to be adored, as a rule” (p. 102), it means that men expect things to go their way and may resort to aggression if things do not. Women have to live with the consequences of men’s actions.
  - Basi: Basi has always been adored; he takes what he wants from Moipone when she will not give him what he wants. Moipone’s own will is disregarded by Basi, and because he is physically stronger she is unable to fight him off during the rape.
  - Naledi: Because of her brother’s actions, Naledi learns at age thirteen to be afraid of men. She begins to see them as “hunting lions” (p. 184) who can attack at any time to take what they think is their right. She becomes wary and she loses her innocence.



- Moipone: Moipone experiences a traumatic violation of her body and will have to cope with the trauma of Basi's actions for the rest of her life, while he gets away with it. On top of that, she is unfairly judged by society and is blamed for bringing the rape upon herself.
- Ole: Although she might share some of their interests, Ole will never be seen as "one of the boys" – instead, she is threatened by a homophobic element in society: "Eish, this one just needs to be raped. That will fix her." (p. 161)
- Kgosi's parents: Aus' Nono is in jail for murdering her husband, Bra Speed. As a member of MK during the struggle, he was a respected member of his community who nevertheless beat his wife behind closed doors. Aus' Nono's big secret is that she killed him to survive. She cannot use this as a defence, however, because society would blame her, rather than the revered struggle hero.
- There are a number of women in the novel who have fallen victim to gender inequality and sexual violence: Vera-the-Ghost was killed by her husband; the woman whose decomposed body is found in the woods was raped and killed by a male friend. Given the prevalence of female victims in the novel, it is shocking that so many women still come out in support of Basi in the aftermath of the rape – Ole is a notable exception. The culture that reveres men seems to prevail.
- In light of the serious and violent consequences of gender inequality, the use of the word "game" is ironic. In the example, Naledi describes having her wrist twisted by boys as a "game"; the physical pain of having your wrist twisted may suggest the pain inherent in some of the relationships in the novel. "Twisting someone's arm" is also a metaphor for coercing someone – in many of these cases, the women/girls are forced to do things they don't want to do. It is a subtle and clever metaphor in this context.

9 Basimane is a tragic hero. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Substantiate your answer.

- A tragic hero has heroic qualities and is respected in his community. Basi is described as a charismatic and likeable character. He is loved and respected by his family, his friends, his community and his sister, and he is the first-team rugby captain. In the eyes of the community, he can do no wrong.
- A tragic hero has a fatal flaw or weakness. Basi's pride (or male ego) is his weakness.
- A tragic hero succumbs to his weakness, through a catalyst. The catalyst is Moipone, a girl whom Basi adores.
- A tragic hero's life spirals out of control or the hero experiences increased disorder until they die. After Basi rapes Moipone, the life that he is used to is disrupted, but only to the extent that he has to leave his home town and finish matric at a private school in Cape Town. To avoid confronting his shame, the family and community deny that he is guilty – thus, it is not him but his victim and his sister who have to suffer the consequences of his actions. Central to the novel is the notion that men are not held accountable – and that this is a societal flaw.

- There is usually a moment of redemption before a tragic hero dies. Does Basi have a moment of redemption? When he says “It’s OK, Nedi!” (p. 167) after his mother says that Naledi shamed her family, one wants to forgive him – but when he explains later that he is not angry with Naledi, he loses the possibility of redemption.
- Naledi says he has escaped the consequences of his actions to the point that he could be the next president. Ultimately, it is society that seems fatally flawed and women remain the victims.
- Basi is only a tragic hero to an extent – ultimately he is a flawed hero and a poor role model.

10 Discuss the relationship between what happened to Basi on the rugby field and the “hideous incident”. Look specifically at notions of humiliation, aggression and personal power, and place this in the context of Basi’s life experiences. Do Basi’s experiences justify his actions?

- Basi’s exclusion from the rugby match is extremely unjust – he is a deeply committed and skilled player and excluding him is an act of pure racism and prejudice.
- The sense of unfairness is heightened by the excitement that he and his family had felt before the match, and the fact that Kgosi and Basi’s new girlfriend, Moipone, have come to the match to support him.
- The stakes are particularly high, since this is the match in which players are selected for Craven Week, and then SA Schools – in other words, being selected might have made his rugby career.
- Being excluded so publicly is a deeply humiliating experience for Basi. It is made even worse by the fact that neither his coach, nor any of his teammates stand up for him and support him. Their apathy is a profound betrayal.
- In this event, Basi is robbed of his personal power – there is nothing he can do to change the situation or prove himself.
- Basi handles himself with dignity during the event. Although he is clearly disillusioned by it, in the week after the match he shows a surprising degree of tolerance and acceptance of his situation. Nevertheless, it is likely that he also feels a simmering resentment.
- It can be argued that it is this resentment that spills over into aggression when Basi takes his feelings out on someone less physically powerful than himself: Moipone.
- She cannot fight back, just as Basi could not fight against the “system” that has excluded him from the rugby match. By overcoming her physically, he again feels powerful.
- Although Basi always seems cheerful and easy-going, there are signs in the novel that he has often been on the receiving end of racial prejudice. Remember that this novel is set in the mid-90s. The story shows characters who are grappling with the after-effects of apartheid – this is evident in the “everyday racism” Basi experiences at the shops, and which he sees around him (like the Black man on the back of the bakkie). It is possible that these experiences have contributed to his reduced sense of personal agency and thus his actions against Moipone.

- Note: The point should be made that although what happened at the rugby match might explain his behaviour, it does not excuse it.
- 11 Sometimes a first-person narrator has limited perspective and their story may be one-sided. Bearing this in mind, is Basi really his mother's favourite or is it in Naledi's imagination? Discuss Naledi's credibility as narrator.
- Naledi questions her own credibility early in the story, which ultimately makes her a more credible narrator as it shows us that she is aware of differences in interpretation. She is aware that stories change depending on who is telling them.
  - She notes that the details of her story never change, and she is very careful about recording exactly what she sees.
  - After revealing what she thinks she saw happening to Moipone, she is very aware that everyone except Ole and Moipone (and Basi, in his heart) thinks that she has misunderstood.
  - She is not gratuitous about revealing what she knows – she does not gossip, manipulate or blackmail and she is not a tattletale.
  - Naledi's perspective may be limited by her age and memory, but she has nothing to gain by remembering "the hideous incident" (p. 117) the way she does – she does not aim to hurt anyone, and she tries to say as little as possible.
  - All these points suggest her credibility as a narrator.
  - Those who want to deny Naledi's version of events are motivated by fear. Naledi's mother fears losing her prized son. Naledi's father fears their family losing their position in the community. In the community there is the fear of having to face society's flawed perception that men and boys are more important than women and girls.
  - Yes, Basi is the mother's favourite, because she believes him without even giving Naledi a chance to explain what she might have witnessed.
- 12 "Easy" is the word most used to describe Basi. Discuss to what extent it is an accurate description of his character, his life experience as a male and his attitude to women.
- His character: Basi seems to be an easy-going young man who is likable and is liked and respected in his family and community. His sister loves him and his mom idolises him.
  - His life experience: When you are well liked, things come to you easily, people want to please you, and you become accustomed to getting your own way. Basi likes it that Dineo, his on-and-off girlfriend, is described as "modern" and "open-minded", euphemisms for willing to have sex any time in his room. When he does take what he thinks is his right, there are no serious consequences because he has always been the prized son. He is used to things going his way, so when he is unfairly excluded from the rugby match, he does not have a healthy way of coping with his feelings – this event can be seen as having influenced his terrible actions. Note: The point should be made that although what happened at the rugby match might explain his behaviour, it does not excuse it.

- His attitude to women: Because so many girls want to be with him, Basi expects girls to be “easy” – in other words, willing and eager to have sex with him. He expects Moipone to want what he wants – to be willing and even keen to have sex with him. When she isn’t, he has sex with her anyway, since society has socialised him into believing this is his right as a man.