

Marguerite Poland
Shades
Chapter 1:
Contextual questions!

Worksheet by:
Keith Tankard
Knowledge4Africa.com

Father Charles straightened and said to Walter, "Take the lad down to Mrs Farborough, will you, Brownley? I shouldn't wonder if we have to call on Dr Fraser for stitches." He turned back to Truter. "Perhaps, Mr Truter, you should come down to the office and we'll have a word in private."

"In private, you say?" and Truter's eyes blazed red. "What's there to say in private? There's a lot of 'private' going on here indeed," and he laughed, the gin strong in the air about him. "This fellow," indicating Benedict, "has his own 'private' at night, don't you, Master-High-And-Mighty? Scratch the surface of a popinjay nigger like him and you'll find a heathen underneath, running about in the dark, singing songs with red-blanket kaffirs." He insinuated himself closer and said, breathing heavily, "And what's more" and a cunning in the way he looked up and sideways at Father Charles "if we're discussing 'private' now, you'll not blame me if I take the quince stick to my own daughter. It's a father's right, wouldn't you say? For I will, you see, if I get another whiff of 'private' with regard to her and a certain gentleman and neither will live to tell the tale."

Father Charles regarded him a moment and then he said, "Will you come with me, Mr Truter? I'll discuss nothing with you here." He looked around at the apprentices. "Back to work, lads. Tom Pumani, take charge till recess."

As Walter helped Sonwabo Pumani away, he heard Father Charles say to Benedict, "I'll speak to you after evensong, Benedict. Go to the church now and read with the class."

The next day, as Walter went to his duties in the schoolroom, he saw an old Scotch cart drawn up outside the wheelwright's cottage. A shabby pair of mules stood drooping in the traces. A meagre load of household goods was piled in the back.

By midday, when he passed that way again, the cottage stood empty, the door padlocked at the bolt.

There was no more word of nightly ramblings.

-
1. "He turned back to Truter. 'Perhaps, Mr Truter, you should come down to the office and we'll have a word in private.' "
 - Who was Mr Truter? (2)
 - Explain briefly the events leading up to this incident. (4)
 2. " 'This fellow,' indicating Benedict, 'has his own "private" at night, don't you, Master-High-And-Mighty?' "
 - What does Truter mean when he says that Benedict has his own "private" at night? (4)
 3. Read the commentaries on RACISM and COLONIALISM before you answer the following question:
 - Would you regard Mr Truter as a racist or simply as a typical colonialist? Give reasons for your answer. (4)

4. " 'And what's more' and a cunning in the way he looked up and sideways at Father Charles 'if we're discussing "private" now, you'll not blame me if I take the quince stick to my own daughter. It's a father's right, wouldn't you say? For I will, you see, if I get another whiff of "private" with regard to her and a certain gentleman.' "
- What reason does Mr Truter have for taking a quince stick to his own daughter? (4)
 - Whom does Truter mean when he speaks about a "certain gentleman"? What was happening when that "certain gentleman" went on his "nightly ramblings"? (2)
5. "There was no more word of nightly ramblings."
- What reason is there for the fact that Mr Truter's daughter is never given a name? (2)
 - Why did the "nightly ramblings" stop? (4)
 - What effect did this affair and its conclusion have on Victor? (6)

<www.knowledge4africa.com>

This worksheet is copyrighted. No part of it may be copied or printed in any form whatever without the express permission in writing of the author. The sole exception is for non-profit educational purposes.