

Part I - Prisoner Who Wore Glasses Passage Review:

For about two weeks Span One lived in acute misery. The cabbages, tobacco and conversations had been the pivot of jail life to them. Then one evening they noticed that their good old comrade who wore the glasses was looking rather pleased with himself. He pulled out a four-ounce packet of tobacco by way of explanation, and the comrades fell upon it with great greed. Brille merely smiled. After all, he was the father of many children. But when the last shred had disappeared, it occurred to the comrades that they ought to be puzzled. Someone said:

“I say, brother. We’re watched like hawks these days. Where did you get the tobacco?”

“Hannetjie gave it to me,” said Brille.

There was a long silence. Into it dropped a quiet bombshell.

“I saw Hannetjie in the shed today,” and the failing eyesight blinked rapidly. “I caught him in the act of stealing five bags of fertilizer, and he bribed me to keep my mouth shut.”

There was another long silence.

“Prison is an evil life,” Brille continued, apparently discussing some irrelevant matter. “It makes a man contemplate all kinds of evil deeds.”

He held out his hand and closed it.

“You know comrades,” he said. “I’ve got Hannetjie. I’ll betray him tomorrow.

Everyone began talking at once

“Forget it, brother. You’ll get shot.”

Brille laughed

“I won’t,” he said. “That is what I mean about evil. I am a father of children, and I saw today that Hannetjie is just a child and stupidly truthful. I’m going to punish him severely because we need a good warder.”

The following day, with Brille as witness, Hannetjie confessed to the theft of the fertilizer and was fined a large sum of money. From then on Span One did very much as they pleased while Warder Hannetjie stood by and said nothing. But it was Brille who carried this to extremes. One day, at the close of work Warder Hannetjie said:

“Brille, pick up my jacket and carry it back to camp.”

“But nothing in the regulations says I’m your servant, Hanneltjie,” Brille replied coolly.

“I’ve told you not to call me Hanneltjie. You must say Baas,” but Warder Hanneltjie’s voice lacked conviction. In turn, Brille squinted up at him.

“I’ll tell you something about this Baas business, Hanneltjie,” he said. “One of these days we are going to run the country. You are going to clean my car. Now, I have a fifteen-year-old son, and I’d die of shame if you had to tell him that I ever called you Baas.”

Warder Hanneltjie went red in the face and picked up his coat.

On another occasion Brille was seen to be walking about the prison yard, openly smoking tobacco. On being taken before the prison commander he climbed to have received the tobacco from Warder Hanneltjie all throughout the triad from his chief, Warder Hanneltjie failed to defend himself, but his nerve broke completely. He called Brille to warm side.

“Brille,” he said. “This thing between you and me must end. You may not know it, but I have a wife and children, and you’re driving me to suicide.”

“Why don’t you like your own medicine Hanneltjie?” Brille asked quietly.

“I can give you anything you want,” Warder Hanneltjie said in desperation.

“It’s not only me but the whole Span One,” said Brille cunningly. “The whole of Span One wants something from you.”

Warder Hanneltjie brightened with relief.

“I think I can manage if it’s tobacco you want,” he said

Brille looked at him for the first time struck with pity and guilt. He wondered if he had carried the whole business too far. The man was really a child.

“It’s not tobacco we want, but you,” he said. “We want you on our side. We want a good warder because without a good warder we won’t be able to manage the long stretch ahead.”

Warder Hanneltjie interpreted this request in his own fashion, and his interpretation of what was good and human often left the prisoners of Span One speechless with surprise. He had a way of slipping off his revolver and picking up a spade and digging alongside Span One. He had a way of producing unheard-of luxuries like boiled eggs from his farm nearby and things like cigarettes, and Span One responded nobly and got the reputation of being the best work span in the camp. And it wasn’t only taken from their side. They were awfully good at stealing commodities like fertilizer which were needed on the farm of Warder Hanneltjie.

Part 2 - Dead Man's Path Passage Review:

Ndume School was backward in every sense of the word. Mr. Obi put his whole life into the work, and his wife hers too. He had two aims. A high standard of teaching was insisted upon, and the school compound was to be turned into a place of beauty. Nancy's dream gardens came to life with the coming of the rains, and blossomed. Beautiful hibiscus and allamanda hedges in brilliant red and yellow marked out the carefully tended school compound from the rank neighborhood bushes.

One evening as Obi was admiring his work he was scandalized to see an old woman from the village hobble right across the compound, through a marigold flower bed and the hedges. On going up there he found faint signs of an almost disused path from the village across the school compound to the bush on the other side.

"It amazes me," said Obi to one of his teachers who had been three years in the school, "that you people allowed the villagers to make use of this foot path. It is simply incredible." He shook his head.

"The path," said the teacher apologetically, "appears to be very important to them. Although it is hardly used, it connects the village shrine with their place of burial."

"And what has that got to do with the school?" asked the headmaster.

"Well, I don't know," replied the other with a shrug of the shoulders. "But I remember there was a big row some time ago when we attempted to close it."

"That was some time ago. But it will not be used now," said Obi as he walked away. "What will the Government Education Officer think of this when he comes to inspect the school next week? The villagers might, for all I know, decide to use the schoolroom for a pagan ritual during the inspection."

Heavy sticks were planted closely across the path at the two places where it entered and left the school premises. These were further strengthened with barbed wire.

Three days later the village priest of Ani called on the headmaster. He was an old man and walked with a slight stoop. He carried a stout walking stick which he usually tapped on the floor, by way of emphasis, each time he made a new point in his argument.

"I have heard," he said after the usual exchange of cordialities, "that our ancestral footpath has recently been closed . . ."

"Yes," replied Mr. Obi. "We cannot allow people to make a highway of our school compound."

"Look here, my son," said the priest bringing down his walking stick, "this path was here before you were born and before your father was born. The whole life of this village depends on it. Our dead relatives depart by it and our ancestors visit us by it. But most important, it is the path of children coming in to be born . . . "

Mr. Obi listened with a satisfied smile on his face.

"The whole purpose of our school," he said finally, "is to eradicate just such beliefs as that. Dead men do not require footpaths. The whole idea is just fantastic. Our duty is to teach your children to laugh at such ideas."

"What you say may be true," replied the priest, "but we follow the practices of our fathers. If you reopen the path we shall have nothing to quarrel about. What I always say is: let the hawk perch and let the eagle perch." He rose to go.

"I am sorry," said the young headmaster. "But the school compound can not be a thoroughfare. It is against our regulations. I would suggest your constructing another path, skirting our premises. We can even get our boys to help in building it. I don't suppose the ancestors will find the little detour too burdensome."

"I have no more words to say," said the old priest, already outside.

Two days later a young woman in the village died in childbed. A diviner was immediately consulted and he prescribed heavy sacrifices to propitiate ancestors insulted by the fence.

Obi woke up next morning among the ruins of his work. The beautiful hedges were torn up not just near the path but right round the school, the flowers trampled to death and one of the school buildings pulled down . . . That day, the white Supervisor came to inspect the school and wrote a nasty report on the state of the premises but more seriously about the "tribal war situation developing between the school and the village, arising in part from the misguided zeal of the new headmaster."

Part 3 - The Jay:

Since daybreak, the jay had been singing noisily.

When they'd slid open the rain shutters, it had flown up before their eyes from a lower branch of the pine, but it seemed to have come back. During breakfast, there was the sound of whirring wings.

"That bird's a nuisance." The younger brother started to get to his feet.

"It's all right. It's all right." The grandmother stopped him. "It's looking for its child. Apparently the chick fell out of the nest yesterday. It was flying around until late in the evening. Doesn't she know where it is? But what a good mother. This morning she came right back to look."

"Grandmother understands well," Yoshiko said.

Her grandmother's eyes were bad. Aside from a bout with nephritis about ten years ago, she had never been ill in her life. But, because of her cataracts, which she'd had since girlhood, she could only see dimly out of her left eye. One had to hand her the rice bowl and the chopsticks. Although she could grope her way around the familiar interior of the house, she could not go into the garden by herself.

Sometimes, standing or sitting in front of the sliding-glass door, she would spread out her hands, fanning out her fingers against the sunlight that came through the glass, and gaze out. She was concentrating all the life that was left to her into that many-angled gaze.

At such times, Yoshiko was frightened by her grandmother. Though she wanted to call out to her from behind, she would furtively steal away.

This nearly blind grandmother, simply from having heard the jay's voice, spoke as if she had seen everything. Yoshiko was filled with wonder.

When, clearing away the breakfast things, Yoshiko went into the kitchen, the jay was singing from the roof of the neighbor's house.

In the back garden, there was a chestnut tree and two or three persimmon trees. When she looked at the trees, she saw that a light rain was falling. It was the sort of rain that you could not tell was falling unless you saw it against the dense foliage.

The jay, shifting its perch to the chestnut tree, then flying low and skimming the ground, returned again to its branch, singing all the while.

Part 4 - An Astrologer's Day Passage Review:

PUNCTUALLY at midday he opened his bag and spread out his professional equipment, which consisted of a dozen cowrie shells, a square piece of cloth with obscure mystic charts on it, a notebook, and a bundle of palmyra writing. His forehead was resplendent with sacred ash and vermilion, and his eyes sparkled with a sharp abnormal gleam which was really an outcome of a continual searching look for customers, but which his simple clients took to be a prophetic light and felt comforted. The power of his eyes was considerably enhanced by their position placed as they were between the painted forehead and the dark whiskers which streamed down his cheeks : even a half-wit's eyes would sparkle in such a setting. To crown the effect he wound a saffron-coloured turban around his head. This colour scheme never failed. People were attracted to him as bees are attracted to cosmos or dahlia stalks. He sat under the boughs of a spreading tamarind tree which flanked a path running through the Town Hall Park. It was a remarkable place in many ways : a surging crowd was always moving up and down this narrow road morning till night. A variety of trades and occupations was represented all along its way : medicine sellers, sellers of stolen hardware and junk, magicians, and, above all, an auctioneer of cheap doth, who created enough din all day to attract the whole town. Next to him in vociferousness came a vendor of fried groundnut, who gave his ware a fancy name each day, calling it " Bombay Ice-Cream " one day, and on the next " Delhi Almond," and on the third " Raja's Delicacy," and so on and so forth, and people flocked to him. A considerable portion of this crowd dallied before the astrologer too. The astrologer transacted his business by the light of a flare which crackled and smoked up above the groundnut heap nearby. Half the enchantment of the place was due to the fact that it did not have the benefit of municipal lighting. The place was lit up by shop lights. One or two had hissing gaslights, some had naked flares stuck on poles, some were lit up by old cycle lamps, and one or two, like the astrologer's, managed without lights of their own. It was a bewildering criss-cross of light rays and moving shadows. This suited the astrologer very well, for the simple reason that he had not in the least intended to be an astrologer when he began life ; and he knew no more of what was going to happen to others than he knew what was going to happen to himself next minute. He was as much a stranger to the stars as were his innocent customers. Yet he said things which pleased and astonished everyone : that was more a matter of study, practice, and shrewd guesswork. All the same, it was as much an honest man's labour as any other, and he deserved the wages he carried home at the end of a day. He had left his village without any previous thought or plan. If he had continued there he would have carried on the work of his forefathers namely, tilling the land, living, marrying, and ripening in his corn field and ancestral home. But that was not to be. He had to leave home without telling anyone, and he could not rest till he left it behind a couple of hundred miles. To a villager it is a great deal, as if an ocean flowed between.

He had a working analysis of mankind's troubles : marriage, money, and the tangles of human ties. Long practice had sharpened his perception. Within five minutes he understood what was wrong. He charged three pies per question, never opened his mouth till the other had spoken

for at least ten minutes, which provided him enough stuff for a dozen answers and advices. When he told the person before him, gazing at his palm, " In many ways you are not getting the fullest results for your efforts," nine out of ten were disposed to agree with him. Or he questioned : " Is there any woman in your family, maybe even a distant relative, who is not well disposed towards you ? " Or he gave an analysis of character : " Most of your troubles are due to your nature. How can you be otherwise with Saturn where he is ? You have an impetuous nature and a rough exterior." This endeared him to their hearts immediately, for; even the mildest of us loves to think that he has a forbidding exterior.

Part 5 - Informational Text:

Wars, poverty and greed keep millions enslaved

By Los Angeles Times, adapted by Newsela staff
10.18.13

JOHANNESBURG — Nearly 30 million people remain enslaved around the world, a new report said on Thursday. African countries dominated the Global Slavery Index. It showed that 38 of the 50 countries where the practice is at its worst are found on the continent.

But slavery was also found elsewhere, including in the United States.

Mauritania has the poorest record. Some 150,000 people in a population of 3.8 million are held captive in the country in West Africa. Many were born into slavery to parents who were also slaves.

Other African countries with high rates of slavery also are located in West Africa: Benin, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Gabon and Senegal.

Children Sold Into Labor Or Militias

West Africa has a somber place in the history of transatlantic slavery. It was the departure point for many slaves who were seized from other parts of the continent. Then they were shipped to the New World. Today children are bought and sold around the region. They are forced into domestic service, farm labor or sold into the sex trade.

The index was created by anti-slavery group Walk Free Foundation.

“In 2013, modern slavery takes many forms, and is known by many names,” the report said. Whatever the name, “victims of modern slavery have their freedom denied, and are used and controlled and exploited by another person for profit, sex or the thrill of domination,” the report said.

In many African countries, children are sold into labor by poor rural parents. Some are sent to Islamic schools where they are forced to beg on the streets by religious leaders. They are also recruited as unpaid porters or child soldiers by armed militias. Girls are often married off young and denied an education, or forced to be sex slaves, porters and cooks by armed groups.

More than 16 percent of slaves are in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the report.

The risks of becoming a slave are high in many African countries, the report said. Extreme poverty, wars and government corruption are some of the reasons people fall victim to slavery. The world's hunger for Africa's natural resources such as gold and diamonds also puts people at risk.

20 Percent of Mauritians Enslaved

Forced marriages and the marriage of children are still tolerated by some traditional legal systems, the report said.

As many as 20 percent of the population in Mauritania is enslaved, according to an organization there interviewed by the Walk Free Foundation. A 2013 U.S. report on human trafficking gave a similar estimate.

Slavery in Mauritania goes back generations. The country has banned the practice and signed international conventions against slavery and child labor. But slavery still has deep roots.

Adults and children from slave social classes in Mauritania usually cannot read. They do not know their rights and are enslaved in domestic labor and as cattle herders. They are regarded as the property of their masters. Slaves can see their children sold to other masters, or given away as gifts.

They do not have education or access to a different way to survive. So "many believe that it is God's wish for them to be slaves," the report said.

The report called on Mauritania to conduct a nationwide investigation into continuing forms of slavery. It also called on the country to do more to support slaves leaving their masters and to help them mount legal action to be paid back for their work as slaves.

U.S. Has Nearly 60,000 Slaves

In Ivory Coast, many children work without pay in fishing, farming, building, domestic service and the cocoa industry, one of country's major exports. Up to 800,000 children work on small family farms. Their working conditions are "akin to the worst forms of child labor," according to the report.

Of the countries that have the highest rates of slavery, the United States is ranked 134th. Nearly 60,000 people are estimated to be in modern slavery in the U.S.

The Walk Free Foundation was founded last year by a wealthy Australian businessman, Andrew Forrest. Its goal is to campaign against slavery and pay for programs to end the practice. One of its campaigns focuses on pressing companies to ensure their suppliers do not use slave labor.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the report was not a perfect measure of global slavery but was a good starting point.

“I urge leaders around the world to view this index as a call to action, and to stay focused on the work of responding to this crime,” she said.