

# The mean blues and the mean reds

Literature



The Mean Blues and the Mean Reds is a short story I wrote, based on the collection of short stories written by Nadine Gordimer within her collection called “ Jump”. I chose to write a short story as my passion has always been Creative writing. The story encloses several issues regarding racial apartheid, a political set of rules given for the leadership and supremacy of white people in South Africa during the late 20th century. I decided to create a story on a man falling in love with a woman of a “ superior” race, to highlight the cruelty in the unjust world of racial differences.

In my short story, the tragedy of the love story allows the reader to empathize with the protagonist, The short story conveys to the style of writing of Nadine Gordimer’s style of writing by the topics it evolves around, from racial supremacy to the empathy the reader feels, by the end of the story, to the main character or the person involved in ethical moral violence regarding political, economical and social inequities within the population of the state at the time. As for literary features, symbolism and personification are the main concepts that make the reader question the justice of the political environment the characters live in.

The tone is also significant within the story, as it starts with a calm and enjoyable mood, switching by the end of the passage to a desperate, lonely and resigned tone. The Mean Blue’s and The Mean Reds I sat down, lonely and tired. I don’t remember the last time I slept. Gazing over Johannesburg’s sunset, I forget what is all the hatred for. How is it that a city so beautiful can be filled by such unanimous cruelty? I look around for a familiar face, a detail within one’s expression that will tell me it’s her.

I check myself out, my blue jacket, my tie and my shaved head, that my father helped me cut this morning for this special date. I turn my head again, trying to spot a beautiful woman. I see many of them, dressed in their best clothes for a pleasant Saturday night with their friends. High-class businessmen with their fresh shirts and glossy watches talking drunk nonsense, widows drowning inside their diamonds and martini cocktails, and teenagers in hope of drinking a beer without letting the bartender realize they were much too young for anything of the sort.

But they all seemed very happy with their lives, except the widows. I suddenly see a woman enter the bar, looking tense and confused at the same time. I had never seen such beauty. Blue eyes, the prettiest I had ever seen, that fit perfectly with her white dress. You could see from the look of her shiny brown hair and her beautiful figure that was complemented with her futuristic dress that she had a lot of money. It took one look for me to realize: our story was about to end. Frustrated and desperate, I try to look for the nearest way out, before a hand grasps me, and I can tell it's a man's hand.

I turn around and it's the waiter: he tells me kindly that my table is ready, and my date has arrived. He gazes at me, puzzled, asking me if the woman has met me before. I answer laughing, as sadness falls upon me like a ton of bricks. Of course she hasn't met me, I think, she wouldn't be here if she did. I try to catch her eye, and as we make eye contact she smiles politely then looks away, horrified. Must she be another one of them? What if she is nothing like I thought she was over the phone? What was I thinking, falling in love over a wrong dial and a sentiment of loneliness on a rainy day.

I want to go home. I am pushed to the table, where I sit down and pretend to be confused. She looks at me, confused mostly, and kindly says that the place is already booked by her date. One look makes her realize that I did not sit there by mistake, and by desperation I feel ashamed for not having told her before that... I wasn't like her. We were not meant to be, something went wrong. She grabs my hand, and looking deeply into my eyes, she introduces herself politely and takes me out of the restaurant with her.

I feel the warmth of the summer breeze again, my cheeks filling up with blood and tumult. What is she doing? Does she not understand where I come from? She takes me to her car, and tells me to jump in. Me? Now, I start to feel the rush of adrenaline and excitement I only ever felt standing close to her, feeling that never trespassed my skin before. I feel different, special. We drive to the seaside, and take a long walk on the beach. I enter my house crying. My father sees me. He opens the fridge to check if there are any leftovers. He pulls out vegetable soup, the one he made yesterday.

He doesn't say a word for all of the meal, I stand up clean the table and go to my bedroom, where I cried all night until I was too tired to cry more tears. She had been taught by her family everything a white family could teach a girl since the age of 6. Being it hard to breathe, I lie on my bed, and look up to the white wall. I see her face, bright and happy. I already miss her. I will always miss her. I look closely at the dots on the hard cement surface up top, spotting all the dots within the white paint. I must clean them up one day, I must do it tomorrow.

They look very ugly against the white walls, almost destroying the atmosphere of the color. I want to paint the whole room of red, the color

brings joy to the room, to anything. It was the color of my cheeks when I was truly joyful, I say thinking to myself without any fear of resentment. I get a sudden flashback of the widows at the bar, sitting in the big white sofa's, looking down at their silk gowns and filling their mouths with Martini's, yet staring at a beautiful sunset on another day, a different one than yesterday but the will be tomorrow.