

John fortune



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Many immigrants and refugees have a hard time integrating into western culture and society. That's not always the hardest problem an immigrant has to face when coming to a different culture. If they leave family back home, they often feel guilty being the fortunate one living in a country without persecution, poverty etc. , and it's also often hard for the immigrant to form an identity in a new society. Exactly these problems are what the main character Lindiwe experiences in the extract from the story " John Fortune".

This short story doesn't deal with the very exhausted subject of integration, but with the counterparts of being an immigrant, and the feelings one has towards the home country. The story " John Fortune" starts in medias res, which means the narrative starts in the middle of the story. It is told by a third person narrator whose point of view lies with the main character. This means that not only do we follow the main character physically; we also get to know her thoughts and feelings.

Particularly this is important to notice, because her feelings throughout the story give the reader a good understanding of the ending. The main character is a girl named Lindiwe. She is from South Africa, namely Johannesburg, but she now lives in London, because she has got a scholarship to work and study abroad. The reader doesn't get much knowledge about Lindiwe's looks other than the fact that she is portly built, but the narrator gives one a good perception of how Lindiwe is, by letting the reader in on her thoughts and by describing her actions.

Lindiwe has come to London to work and study, but she doesn't fully enjoy it, because she has a feeling of guilt towards the ones she believes she has

abandoned in the Townships in South Africa: " She could not overcome the sense of guilt she felt at being the fortunate one" (p. 1. l. 11). Lindiwe has a perceptive nature. She sends money back home and lives sparingly herself, which the reader interprets as kindness. This kindness is also showed by the fact that she's employed at a Centre on Poverty, helping denizens in London.

Because of her background in South Africa, she's not afraid to walk in the streets by herself, even when it's after dark. Through the story the reader gets the impression that Lindiwe isn't afraid of too many things. The fact that she's followed by a stranger doesn't scare her, and she jokes about it with her boss, whom she seems very garrulous towards. As mentioned before, Lindiwe is followed by a man through out the story, and in the end this man starts calling her work, and suddenly he shows up at the Centre, and Lindiwe's boss, Ahmad, knows him.

At fist the reader doesn't interpret that he is of vital importance to the story. John Fortune seems at first like a frightening man who is spying on Lindiwe, but then one senses that he might also have problems. At the point when he starts telephoning the Centre to get knowledge about the economy and the work of the centre, he starts to seem more and more intelligent although very clandestine. It is first at the very end, when it is revealed that he is a missionary, that the reader gets the feeling that he has something on his mind.

It is like John Fortune knows that Lindiwe's soul is troubled, and it seems he knows how to settle her, and that is the reason why he follows her. His

strange demeanour seems almost clairvoyant. " "What could be worse," he asked Ahmad, "than a missionary without a mission?" (pp. 3 l. 109) This is what John Fortune says in the end of the story, and he quickly adds: "Unless it is a mission without a missionary?" (pp. 31 l. 10) Exactly this terse sentence enlightens Lindiwe and helps her figure out that there is a way for her to let go of the guilt, and that when it is possible for her to help the denizens in London, why shouldn't it be possible for her to complete a mission in her own country, or at least her own township? She finds out that her money and guilt are not enough to build a general infrastructure in the underdeveloped township Soweto, where she is from.

Obviously there is a paucity of missionaries in Africa, and it is absurd that Lindiwe is helping refugees who have come to England, and who are already away from the greater problems, such as war and persecution in their own countries, while thousands of indigent families are living in shanty towns in her own country, and who are more likely to need help: "She had thought that she could be of use to the denizens of King's Cross, but there was nothing she could do for them, they had gone beyond despair... (p. 1. l. 14-15).

When Lindiwe finally finds her call, it is a catharsis for her, because she has been perplexed for quite a while, only knowing that something didn't feel right. The title of the story might indicate the fact that John Fortune sees right through Lindiwe. His name Fortune can signify many things, but I believe that in this short story, it is defined as fate, meaning that her 'fortune' or 'luck' is to be helpful towards others in her own country.

That is her condition in life, and therefore he comes into the story as a symbol of destiny that follows and guides her. The themes of this story are not obvious when you read it for the first time, but after having explained the role of John Fortune it gets easier to describe the themes. One of them could be identity - meaning that life is a process of learning, and that it is not always easy to figure out what one's vocation in life is. Sometimes you need an older or more experienced person to guide you and sometimes you have to let destiny guide you.

The fact that Lindiwe has seen the world from a different place, seen that not all people live like they do in Africa, and that it is possible to change a place for the better, like John Fortune did it, gives her the courage to do something and makes her realize that the sympathy she feels is no substitute for action. John Fortune plays a big part in this short story, since he is the one who enlightens her and makes her realize the above.