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# *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton

***Check off study guide information and questions as you discuss / answer them.***

_____ *Cry the Beloved Country* is set in South Africa just after WWII. The population was 20% white and 80% black (referred to as natives). However, the whites – primarily the Dutch/Boers, who came to establish trade, and the British who had defeated the Boers – feared that the black majority could rise up against them.

**Book I - Chapters 1-17**

_____ 1. Typically, one would not write in second person. Notice how Paton uses this technique as if giving a tour to the reader. What does he "lay out" for you in chapter 1? Look for this in later chapters.

_____ 2. What three relatives (by name & relation) does Stephen Kumalo go to Johannesburg to find?

_____ 3. How does the reference to the mines crying (beginning of ch. 4) shed light on the title of the novel? Also, "cry for the broken tribe" in ch. 11? Finally, "cry the beloved country" in ch. 12?

_____ 4. In ch. 14, John Kumalo refers lightly to finding "the prodigal." Note the biblical allusion. How does he use this term to mock his upbringing and his brother?

_____ 5. As his father questions him, Absalom answers many questions and then begins to weep. Paton suggests several possible reasons for his weeping. Which do you think is the reason?

_____ 6. What is Father's Vincent's advice about how Stephen Kumalo should pray (ch.15)?

_____ 7. Why does Stephen paint a picture of everything working out for his son?

**Book II - Chapters 18-29**

_____ 8. What irony do you see when you find out more about Absalom's victim, Arthur Jarvis?

_____ 9. What significance do you see in the pictures hanging in Arthur Jarvis's home (ch.20)?

_____ 10. In chapter 20, James Jarvis reads what his son considered permissible and not permissible. Does he understand how his son believes the whites have crossed the line?

_____ 11. How did Arthur explain that oppressing the blacks was also thwarting God's design for them?

_____ 12. Why do you suppose Absalom was so candid in his answers in the courtroom? Was it due to his upbringing? His remorse? His trust in the Court?

_____ 13. In ch. 24, James reads the vows his son made. Does the fact that these are the words of a murdered man make them more powerful?

_____ 14. In ch. 26, John's voice is referred to as a "great bull voice." He calls for the blacks to make demands and to strike. Where will this approach lead in contrast to Arthur's more philosophical approach?

_____ 15. After Absalom's sentencing, it seems starnge that he and his father greet one another by asking about one another's health. Why do they do so?

**Book III – Chapters 30-36**

_____ 16. On what basis does Stephen Kumalo believe that Christians will suffer? What is the purpose?

_____ 17. What is happening in the valley that makes the future appear bleak for this and the next genrations?

_____ 18. What two specific things does James Jarvis do that offer help and hope to the young people?

_____ 19. What factors prompt Stephen to think he ought to leave Ndotsheni? What factors encourage him to stay?

_____ 20. Why do the natives distinguish between Africa and South Africa?

_____ 21. At the conclusion of the novel, how do we see that Kumalo and Jarvis both give different gifts, according to the gifts they were given?

_____ 22. In Absalom's letter he said if he were to return, he would never leave again. How is this a grievous reference to the Prodigal Son?

_____ 23. How is Msimangu's statement, "when they turn to loving, they will find we have turned to hating," prophetic of what was to come in South Africa – namely Apartheid?