

9th Grade
ELA/Reading
Crunch Time



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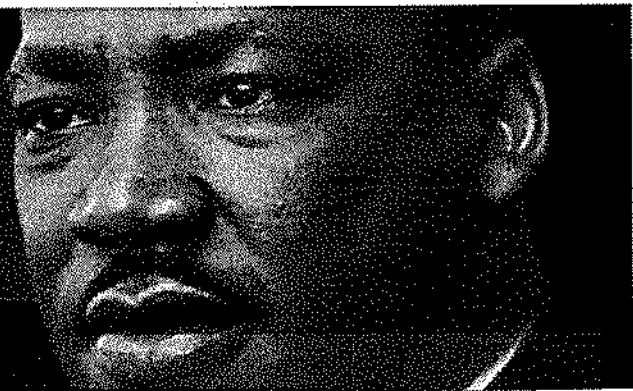
The Struggle for Freedom



Background On April 4, 1968, hundreds of African Americans gathered in Indianapolis, Indiana, for what they thought would be an exciting political event. Presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy was coming to speak to them. Before he was to deliver his speech, Kennedy was informed that civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. had been assassinated earlier that day. Kennedy nevertheless went to the rally, where he found the audience upbeat in anticipation of his appearance. Realizing they were unaware of the tragic events, he began his speech with the following words.

A Eulogy for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Speech by Robert F. Kennedy



CLOSE READ
Notes

1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–13, begin to collect and cite text evidence.
 - Underline examples of repetition and parallelism.
 - In the margin, note what questions Kennedy poses.

I have bad news for you, for all of our fellow citizens, and people who love peace all over the world, and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and killed tonight.

Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to justice for his fellow human beings, and he died because of that effort.

In this difficult day, in this difficult time for the United States, it is perhaps well to ask what kind of a nation we are and what direction we want to move in. For those of you who are black—considering the evidence there evidently is that there were white people who were responsible—
 10 you can be filled with bitterness, with hatred, and a desire for revenge. We can move in that direction as a country, in great polarization—black people amongst black, white people amongst white, filled with hatred toward one another.



Martin Luther King Jr., leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Council; Attorney General Robert Kennedy; Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the NAACP; and Vice President Lyndon Johnson after a special White House conference on civil rights (June 1963).

Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand and to comprehend, and to replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand with compassion and love.

For those of you who are black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and distrust at the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I can
20 only say that I feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man. But we have to make an effort in the United States, we have to make an effort to understand, to go beyond these rather difficult times.

My favorite poet was Aeschylus. He wrote, "In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."

2. **REREAD** Reread lines 6–13. How does Kennedy use parallelism to emphasize the potential for American society to become more divided?

3. **READ** As you read lines 14–26, underline the options Kennedy offers his audience.

“ *We will have difficult times. We’ve had difficult times in the past. We will have difficult times in the future.* **”**

What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence or lawlessness but love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice towards those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or they be black.

So I shall ask you tonight to return home, to say a prayer for the family of Martin Luther King, that’s true, but more importantly to say a prayer for our own country, which all of us love—a prayer for understanding and that compassion of which I spoke.

We can do well in this country. We will have difficult times. We’ve had difficult times in the past. We will have difficult times in the future. It is not the end of violence; it is not the end of lawlessness; it is not the end of disorder.

4. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 18–23. What is Kennedy referring to when he says he “had a member of my family killed . . .”?

5. **▶ READ** As you read lines 27–46, underline the advice that Kennedy gives to his audience.

40 But the vast majority of white people and the vast majority of black people in this country want to live together, want to improve the quality of our life, and want justice for all human beings who abide in our land.
Let us dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: to tame the savageness of man and to make gentle the life of this world.
Let us dedicate ourselves to that, and say a prayer for our country and for our people.

6. **◀ REREAD AND DISCUSS** With a small group, discuss the central idea Kennedy brings up in his speech. Do you think it's an effective eulogy? Do you think it adequately honored Dr. King?

SHORT RESPONSE

Cite Text Evidence How does Kennedy's use of rhetoric advance his argument? How does his use of parallelism help speak to a racially divided audience? Cite evidence from the text in your response.

Please use RACE



Background *Apartheid—systematic racial segregation—was initiated in South Africa in 1948 when Bessie Head was eleven years old. Under apartheid’s rigid classification system, she was designated a “colored” person and was denied the full privileges of citizenship in her homeland. Raised from birth by a child welfare agency, she was later placed with foster parents. After training in a missionary school, she worked as a teacher and journalist before emigrating to Botswana, a neighboring country that was then under British rule. Many of her writings explore the tragedies and injustices of South Africa under apartheid rule.*

The Prisoner Who Wore Glasses

Short Story by Bessie Head

CLOSE READ
Notes

1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–24, begin to collect and cite text evidence.
 - Underline language that describes the prisoner.
 - Circle text that describes the warder.
 - In the margin, summarize the descriptions.

Scarcely a breath of wind disturbed the stillness of the day and the long rows of cabbages were bright green in the sunlight. Large white clouds drifted slowly across the deep blue sky. Now and then they obscured the sun and caused a chill on the backs of the prisoners who had to work all day long in the cabbage field. This trick the clouds were playing with the sun eventually caused one of the prisoners who wore glasses to stop work, straighten up and peer short-sightedly at them. He was a thin little fellow with a hollowed-out chest and comic knobby knees. He also had a lot of fanciful ideas because he smiled at the clouds.

- 10 “Perhaps they want me to send a message to the children,” he thought, tenderly, noting that the clouds were drifting in the direction of his home some hundred miles away. But before he could frame the message, the warder in charge of his work span¹ shouted: “Hey, what do you think you’re doing, Brille?”

¹ work span: a group or unit of workers.

The prisoner swung round, blinking rapidly, yet at the same time sizing up the enemy. He was a new warder, named Jacobus Stephanus Hanneltjie.

His eyes were the color of the sky but they were frightening. A simple, primitive, brutal soul gazed out of them. The prisoner bent down quickly and a message was quietly passed down the line: "We're in for trouble this
20 time, comrades."

"Why?" rippled back up the line.

"Because he's not human," the reply rippled down and yet only the crunching of the spades as they turned over the earth disturbed the stillness.

This particular work span was known as Span One. It was composed of ten men and they were all political prisoners. They were grouped together for convenience as it was one of the prison regulations that no black warder should be in charge of a political prisoner lest this prisoner convert him to his view. It never seemed to occur to the authorities that this very reasoning
30 was the strength of Span One and a clue to the strange terror they aroused in the warders. As political prisoners they were unlike the other prisoners in the sense that they felt no guilt nor were they outcasts of society. All guilty men instinctively cower, which was why it was the kind of prison where men got knocked out cold with a blow at the back of the head from an iron bar. Up until the arrival of Warder Hanneltjie, no warder had dared beat any member of Span One and no warder had lasted more than a

2. **REREAD** Reread lines 12–20. State the conflict in your own words.

3. **READ** As you read lines 25–42, continue to cite textual evidence.

- Underline descriptions of Span One.
- Circle adjectives that describe why Span One is unique.

week with them. The battle was entirely psychological. Span One was assertive and it was beyond the scope of white warders to handle assertive black men. Thus, Span One had got out of control. They were the best
 40 thieves and liars in the camp. They lived all day on raw cabbages. They chatted and smoked tobacco. And since they moved, thought, and acted as one, they had perfected every technique of group concealment.

Trouble began that very day between Span One and Warder Hanneltjie. It was because of the short-sightedness of Brille. That was the nickname he was given in prison and is the Afrikaans² word for someone who wears glasses. Brille could never judge the approach of the prison gates and on several occasions he had munched on cabbages and dropped them almost at the feet of the warder and all previous warders had overlooked this. Not so
 50 Warder Hanneltjie.

“Who dropped that cabbage?” he thundered.

Brille stepped out of line.

“I did,” he said meekly.

“All right,” said Hanneltjie. “The whole Span goes three meals off.”

“But I told you I did it,” Brille protested.

The blood rushed to Warder Hanneltjie’s face.

“Look ‘ere,” he said. “I don’t take orders from a kaffir.³ I don’t know

² **Afrikaans:** a South African language that developed from Dutch.

³ **kaffir:** a disparaging term for a black African.

4. **REREAD** Reread lines 25–42. How does the author foreshadow trouble in the prison? Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

5. **READ** As you read lines 43–102, continue to cite textual evidence.

- Underline the text that hints at racial conflict.
- Circle words that show a shift from the present to the past.
- In the margin of lines 73–94, explain what Brille remembers.

what kind of kaffir you think you are. Why don't you say Baas. I'm your Baas, Why don't you say Baas, hey?"

60 Brille blinked his eyes rapidly but by contrast his voice was strangely calm.

"I'm twenty years older than you," he said. It was the first thing that came to mind but the comrades seemed to think it a huge joke. A titter swept up the line. The next thing Warder Hanneltjie whipped out a knobkerrie and gave Brille several blows about the head. What surprised his comrades was the speed with which Brille had removed his glasses or else they would have been smashed to pieces on the ground. That evening in the cell Brille was very apologetic.

"I'm sorry, comrades," he said. "I've put you into a hell of a mess."

70 "Never mind, brother," they said. "What happens to one of us, happens to all."

"I'll try to make up for it, comrades," he said. "I'll steal something so that you don't go hungry."

bedlam:
80 Privately, Brille was very philosophical about his head wounds. It was the first time an act of violence had been perpetrated against him but he had long been a witness of extreme, almost unbelievable human brutality. He had twelve children and his mind traveled back that evening through the sixteen years of **bedlam** in which he had lived. It had all happened in a small, drab little three-bedroomed house in a small, drab little street in the Eastern Cape, and the children kept coming year after year because neither he nor Martha ever managed the contraceptives the right way, and a teacher's salary never allowed moving to a bigger house, and he was always taking exams to improve his salary only to have it all eaten up by hungry mouths. Everything was pretty horrible, especially the way the children fought. They'd get hold of each other's heads and give them a good bashing against the wall. Martha gave up somewhere along the line so they worked out a thing between them. The bashings, biting and blood were to operate in full swing until he came home. He was to be the bogeyman and when it worked he never failed to have a sense of godhead at the way in which his presence could change savages into fairly reasonable human beings.

90 Yet somehow it was this chaos and mismanagement at the center of his life that drove him into politics. It was really an ordered, beautiful world with just a few basic slogans to learn along with the rights of mankind. At one stage, before things became very bad, there were conferences to attend, all very far away from home.

“Let’s face it,” he thought ruefully. “I’m only learning right now what it means to be a politician. All this while I’ve been running away from Martha and the kids.”

100 And the pain in his head brought a hard lump to his throat. That was what the children did to each other daily and Martha wasn’t managing and if Warder Hannetjie had not interrupted him that morning he would have sent the following message: “Be good comrades, my children. Cooperate, then life will run smoothly.”

The next day Warder Hannetjie, caught this old man of twelve children stealing grapes from the farm shed. They were an enormous quantity of grapes in a ten-gallon tin and for this misdeed the old man spent a week in the isolation cell. In fact, Span One as a whole was in constant trouble. Warder Hannetjie seemed to have eyes at the back of his head. He uncovered the trick about the cabbages, how they were split in two with the spade and immediately covered with earth and then unearthed again and 110 eaten with split-second timing. He found out how tobacco smoke was beaten into the ground and he found out how conversations were whispered down the wind.

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

pivot:

6. **◀ REREAD** Reread the dialogue between Brille and Hannetjie (lines 50–62). From what you know about apartheid, make an inference about why Brille stands up to Hannetjie.

7. **▶ READ** As you read lines 103–138, continue to cite textual evidence.
- Underline the crimes Hannetjie uncovers.
 - Circle the text that describes a turning point of the story.
 - Underline text that refers to Brille as a father.

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
120 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."

130 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."

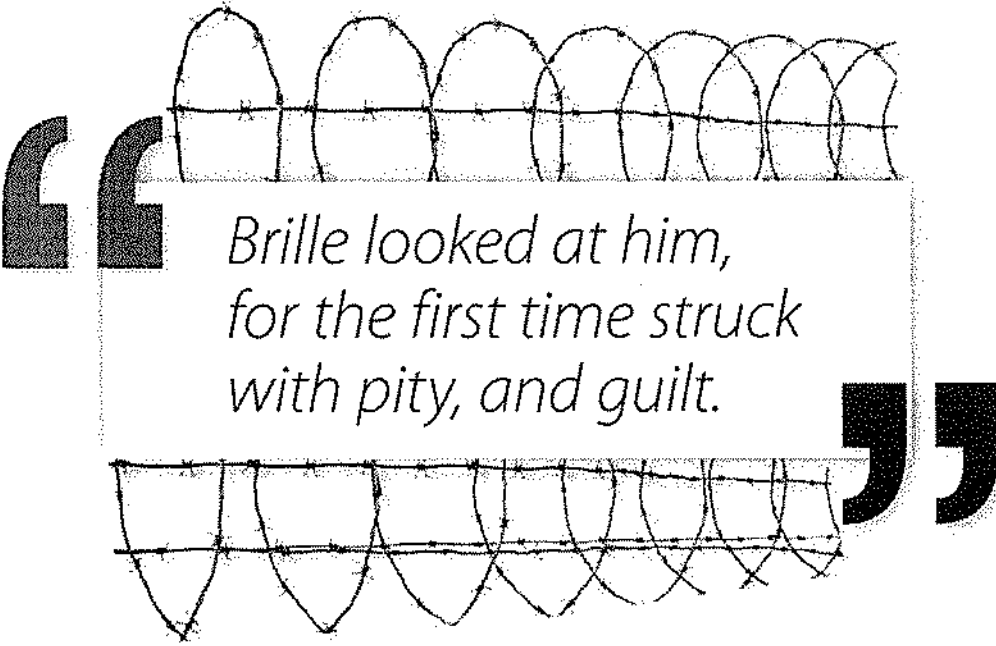
Brille laughed.

"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."

140 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

8. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 113–138. Why does the author keep mentioning Brille's role as a father? Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

9. **▶ READ** As you read lines 139–183, underline text that describes how life changes for Brille, Hannetjie, and Span One. In the margin, explain how Brille betrays Hannetjie.



*Brille looked at him,
for the first time struck
with pity, and guilt.*

the close of work Warder Hannetjie said: "Brille, pick up my jacket and carry it back to the camp."

"But nothing in the regulations says I'm your servant, Hannetjie," Brille replied coolly.

"I've told you not to call me Hannetjie. You must say Baas," but Warder Hannetjie's voice lacked conviction. In turn, Brille squinted up at him.

"I'll tell you something about this Baas business, Hannetjie," he said.

150 "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 Hannetjie 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 claimed to have received the tobacco from Warder Hannetjie. Throughout the tirade from his chief, Warder Hannetjie failed to defend himself but his nerve broke completely. He called Brille to one side.

160 "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, Hannetjie?" Brille asked quietly.

"I can give you anything you want," Warder Hannetjie said in desperation.

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

Warder Hannetjie 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.

170 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."

180 Warder Hannetje 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 take from their side. They were awfully good at stealing certain commodities like fertilizer which were needed on the farm of Warder Hannetje.

10. **◀ REREAD AND DISCUSS** Reread lines 170–183. With a small group, analyze the parallels between Brille’s relationships with his twelve children and his relationships with Hannetje and Span One. Why did the author choose to include Brille’s flashback about life with his wife and children?

SHORT RESPONSE

Cite Text Evidence Head’s writing has been described as “having the dimensions of a parable”—a short, simple story illustrating a moral or spiritual truth. What simple truth does Head illustrate in “The Prisoner Who Wore Glasses”? Why is it particularly meaningful given her cultural point of view? **Cite text evidence** from the story.

Please use RACE
