

## **A Chip of Glass Ruby**

Short Story by Nadine Gordimer

## **The Question of South Africa**

Speech by Desmond Tutu

## **Stop Apartheid Now!**

Poster by Trocaire

# What would you **SACRIFICE** for justice?

### **COMMON CORE**

**RL 1** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RL 2** Determine a theme of a text and analyze in detail its development, including how it is refined by specific details. **RL 6** Analyze a particular point of view reflected in a work of world literature.

During times of injustice, change often comes from ordinary people who are willing to sacrifice their comfort or security to stand up for an ideal. “A Chip of Glass Ruby” portrays one such person, a housewife who struggles against South Africa’s system of racial segregation.

### **What’s the Connection?**

In the following literary selection, you will consider the theme of sacrifice and how it affects not only the individual but also families. After you read “A Chip of Glass Ruby” you’ll read an expository selection and a visual that explore similar themes.



## ● TEXT ANALYSIS: THEME AND PERSUASION

Just as essayists and speech writers can **persuade** readers to take action or adopt a certain position, fiction writers can persuade readers to feel differently about important issues. By creating stories in which characters must grapple with injustice, for example, a fiction writer can develop important **themes** about society and its values.

As you read “A Chip of Glass Ruby,” notice how Nadine Gordimer makes use of narrative techniques to tell a story that is both interesting and persuasive.

## ● READING SKILL: DRAW CONCLUSIONS

When you **draw conclusions** about elements in a story, you use information from the story and your own prior knowledge to make judgments. For example, if a character often exaggerates his own problems and does not show sympathy for other characters, you would probably conclude that the character is self-centered.

As you read “A Chip of Glass Ruby,” note the behavior of the main characters and their attitudes toward events. Use a chart like the one shown to organize your observations.

Event	Behavior/Attitude	
	Bamjee	Mrs. Bamjee
Arrival of duplicating machine		

## ▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Gordimer uses the following boldfaced words to help illuminate the faults of racial segregation in South Africa. Use context clues to determine the meaning of these words. Write your answers in your *Reader/Writer Notebook*.

1. I was **disarmed** by his friendly smile.
2. She looked **morose** after hearing the bad news.
3. Don't **patronize** people just because they lack experience.
4. The stranger's **presumption** caused great offense.
5. His fine **repute** was ruined by scandal.



Complete the activities in your *Reader/Writer Notebook*.

## Nadine Gordimer

born 1923

### A Voice Against Racism

One of South Africa's leading authors, Nadine Gordimer often explores the destructive influence of racism on people's daily lives. Gordimer's highly acclaimed novels and short stories deliver a powerful political message; several of her books were banned in her homeland for many years. Although Gordimer has stated that she does not consider herself to be a political writer, she recognizes that her work has been strongly affected by the extreme politics she experienced in South Africa when it was racially segregated. Gordimer won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1991.

### BACKGROUND TO THE STORY

#### Life Under Apartheid

“A Chip of Glass Ruby” is set in South Africa during the period of apartheid, a system of racial segregation and discrimination that was formally established in the 1950s. Every citizen was classified as either white, colored (mixed race), Asian (of East Indian ancestry), or Bantu (native black). Strictly enforced laws set limits on the lives of the nonwhite majority. The Group Areas Act forced nonwhites to live in certain areas, and “pass laws” required black South Africans to carry passes identifying where they could and could not go. Although Asians did not have to carry passes, their movements were restricted. For decades, activists struggled to overturn apartheid. Many blacks died during strikes and protests; others were imprisoned. Apartheid was officially abolished in 1991.

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# *A Chip of Glass Ruby*

Nadine Gordimer

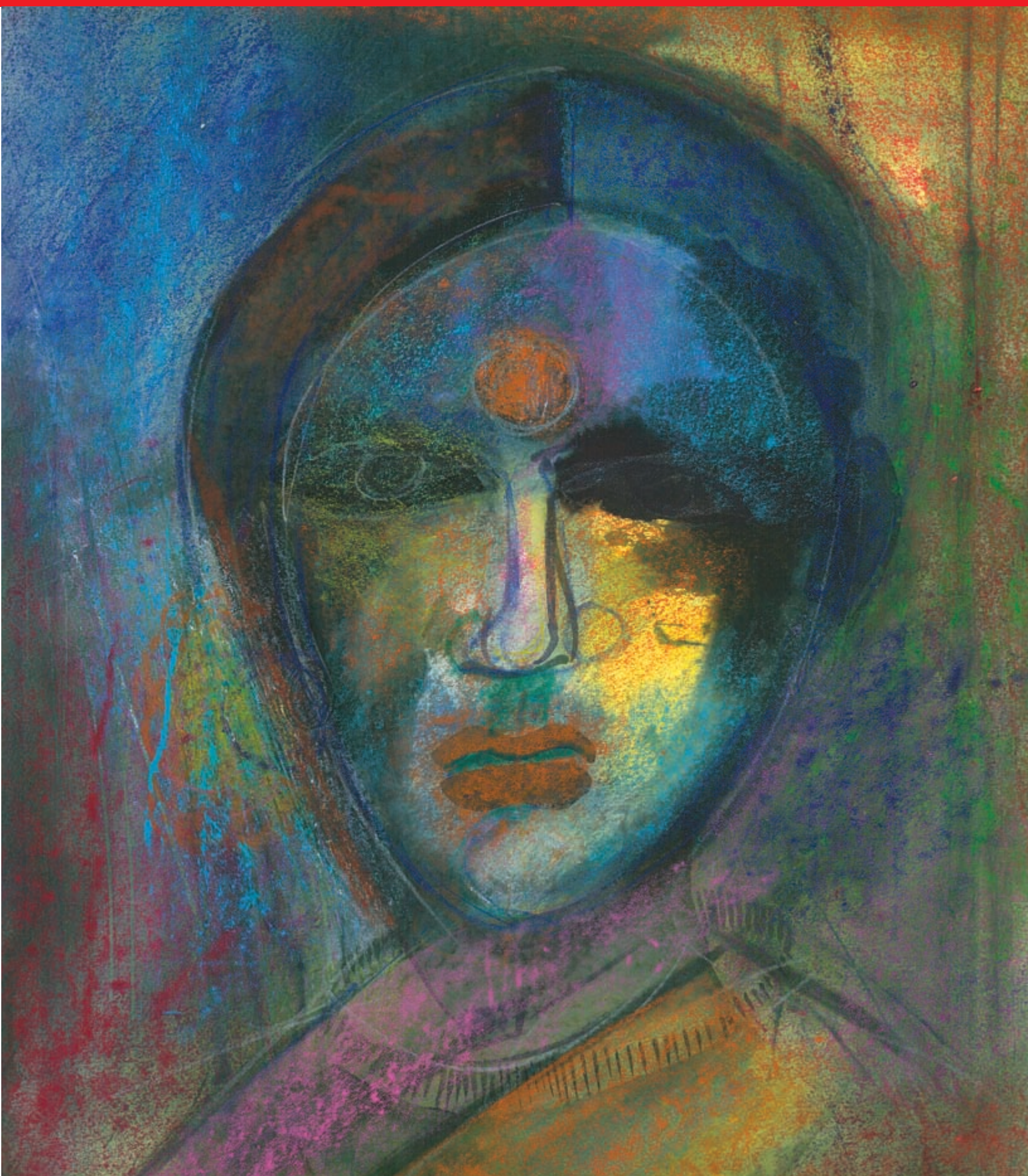
When the duplicating machine was brought into the house, Bamjee said, “Isn’t it enough that you’ve got the Indians’ troubles on your back?” Mrs. Bamjee said, with a smile that showed the gap of a missing tooth but was confident all the same, “What’s the difference, Yusuf? We’ve all got the same troubles.”

“Don’t tell me that. We don’t have to carry passes; let the natives protest against passes on their own; there are millions of them. Let them go ahead with it.” **A**

The nine Bamjee and Pahad children were present at this exchange as they were always; in the small house that held them all there was no room for  
10 privacy for the discussion of matters they were too young to hear, and so they had never been too young to hear anything. Only their sister and half-sister, Girlie, was missing; she was the eldest, and married. The children looked expectantly, unalarmed and interested, at Bamjee, who had neither left the room nor settled down again to the task of rolling his own cigarettes, which had been interrupted by the arrival of the duplicator. He had looked at the thing that had come hidden in a washbasket and conveyed in a black man’s taxi, and the children turned on it too, their black eyes surrounded by thick lashes like those still, open flowers with hairy tentacles that close on whatever touches them.

## **A** DRAW CONCLUSIONS

How do Bamjee and Mrs. Bamjee differ in their attitudes toward native black people?



20 “A fine thing to have on the table where we eat,” was all he said at last. They smelled the machine among them; a smell of cold black grease. He went out, heavily on tiptoe, in his troubled way.

“It’s going to go nicely on the sideboard!” Mrs. Bamjee was busy making a place by removing the two pink glass vases filled with plastic carnations and the hand-painted velvet runner with the picture of the Taj Mahal.<sup>1</sup>

After supper she began to run off leaflets on the machine. The family lived in that room—the three other rooms in the house were full of beds—and they were all there. The older children shared a bottle of ink while they did their homework, and the two little ones pushed a couple of empty milk bottles in and out the chair legs. The three-year-old fell asleep and was carted away by one of the girls. They all drifted off to bed eventually; Bamjee himself went before the older children—he was a fruit-and-vegetable hawker<sup>2</sup> and was up at half past four every morning to get to the market by five. “Not long now,” said Mrs. Bamjee. The older children looked up and smiled at him. He turned his back on her. She still wore the traditional clothing of a Moslem woman, and her body, which was scraggy and unimportant as a dress on a peg when it was not host to a child, was wrapped in the trailing rags of a cheap sari,<sup>3</sup> and her thin black plait was greased. When she was a girl, in the Transvaal<sup>4</sup> town where they lived still, her mother fixed a chip of glass ruby in her nostril; but she had abandoned that adornment as too old-style, even for her, long ago.

40 She was up until long after midnight, turning out leaflets. She did it as if she might have been pounding chilies.

**B**amjee did not have to ask what the leaflets were. He had read the papers. All the past week Africans had been destroying their passes and then presenting themselves for arrest. Their leaders were jailed on charges of incitement,<sup>5</sup> campaign offices were raided—someone must be helping the few minor leaders who were left to keep the campaign going without offices or equipment. What was it the leaflets would say—“Don’t go to work tomorrow,” “Day of Protest,” “Burn Your Pass for Freedom”? He didn’t want to see. **B**

50 He was used to coming home and finding his wife sitting at the table deep in discussion with strangers or people whose names were familiar by **repute**. Some were prominent Indians, like the lawyer, Dr. Abdul Mohammed Khan, or the big businessman, Mr. Moonsamy Patel, and he was flattered, in a suspicious way, to meet them in his house. As he came home from work next day, he met Dr. Khan coming out of the house, and Dr. Khan—a highly educated man—said to him, “A wonderful woman.” But Bamjee had never

COMMON CORE RL.4

Language Coach

Multiple-Meaning

**Words** Some words, such as *fixed* and *chip* (line 39), have multiple meanings. In this sentence *fixed* means “attached” and *chip* means “a small piece.”

Write a sentence for each word using one of its other meanings. Use a dictionary if necessary.

**B** DRAW CONCLUSIONS

What does Bamjee’s reaction to the leaflets suggest about him?

**repute** (rĭ-pyōōt’) *n.*  
reputation; fame

1. **Taj Majal** (täzh mä-häl’): a beautiful white marble building in India.
2. **hawker**: a peddler who sells goods by calling out.
3. **sari** (sä’rē): a garment worn by East Indian women and girls, consisting of a long cloth wrapped around the body, with one end draped over the shoulder.
4. **Transvaal** (träns-väl’): a province in northeast South Africa.
5. **charges of incitement**: accusations that the defendants have tried to persuade others to commit illegal actions.

caught his wife out in any **presumption**; she behaved properly, as any Moslem woman should, and once her business with such gentlemen was over would never, for instance, have sat down to eat with them. He found her now back  
60 in the kitchen, setting about the preparation of dinner and carrying on a conversation on several different wavelengths with the children. “It’s really a shame if you’re tired of lentils, Jimmy, because that’s what you’re getting—Amina, hurry up, get a pot of water going—don’t worry, I’ll mend that in a minute; just bring the yellow cotton, and there’s a needle in the cigarette box on the sideboard.”

“Was that Dr. Khan leaving?” said Bamjee.

“Yes, there’s going to be a stay-at-home on Monday. Desai’s ill, and he’s got to get the word around by himself. Bob Jali was up all last night printing leaflets, but he’s gone to have a tooth out.” She had always treated Bamjee as  
70 if it were only a mannerism that made him appear uninterested in politics, the way some woman will persist in interpreting her husband’s bad temper as an endearing gruffness hiding boundless goodwill, and she talked to him of these things just as she passed on to him neighbors’ or family gossip. **C**

“What for do you want to get mixed up with these killings and stonings and I don’t know what? Congress<sup>6</sup> should keep out of it. Isn’t it enough with the Group Areas?”

She laughed. “Now, Yusuf, you know you don’t believe that. Look how you said the same thing when the Group Areas started in Natal. You said we should begin to worry when we get moved out of our own houses here in the  
80 Transvaal. And then your own mother lost her house in Noorddorp,<sup>7</sup> and there you are; you saw that nobody’s safe. Oh, Girlie was here this afternoon; she says Ismail’s brother’s engaged—that’s nice, isn’t it? His mother will be pleased; she was worried.” **D**

“Why was she worried?” asked Jimmy, who was fifteen, and old enough to **patronize** his mother.

“Well, she wanted to see him settled. There’s a party on Sunday week at Ismail’s place—you’d better give me your suit to give to the cleaners tomorrow, Yusuf.”

One of the girls presented herself at once. “I’ll have nothing to wear, Ma.”

Mrs. Bamjee scratched her sallow face. “Perhaps Girlie will lend you her  
90 pink, eh? Run over to Girlie’s place now and say I say will she lend it to you.”

The sound of commonplaces often does service as security, and Bamjee, going to sit in the armchair with the shiny armrests that was wedged between the table and the sideboard, lapsed into an unthinking doze that, like all times of dreamlike ordinariness during those weeks, was filled with uneasy jerks and starts back into reality. The next morning, as soon as he got to market, he heard that Dr. Khan had been arrested. But that night Mrs. Bamjee sat up making a new dress for her daughter; the sight **disarmed** Bamjee, reassured him again, against his will, so that the resentment he had been making ready

### presumption

(prĭ-zŭmp’shən) *n.*  
behavior or language that is boldly arrogant or offensive

### COMMON CORE RL 2

#### **C** THEME AND PERSUASION

Reread lines 69–73.

Mrs. Bamjee compares her husband’s attitude toward her political activities to a husband’s “endearing” bad temper. Why would Mrs. Bamjee be so casual when talking about important matters? This comment about Mrs. Bamjee might be a clue to the story’s theme.

#### **D** THEME AND PERSUASION

Reread lines 66–83.

What does this dialogue suggest about the responsibilities of individuals?

**patronize** (pā’trə-nīz’) *v.*  
to behave in a manner that shows feelings of superiority

**disarm** (dĭs-ärm’) *v.* to win over; to make less hostile

6. **Congress**: the African National Congress (ANC), one of the main groups that opposed apartheid.

7. **Natal** (nə-tāl’) . . . **Noorddorp** (nōrt’dōrp): provinces in South Africa.

all day faded into a **morose** and accusing silence. Heaven knew, of course, who  
100 came and went in the house during the day. Twice in that week of riots, raids,  
and arrests, he found black women in the house when he came home; plain  
ordinary native women in doeks,<sup>8</sup> drinking tea. This was not a thing other  
Indian women would have in their homes, he thought bitterly; but then his  
wife was not like other people, in a way he could not put his finger on, except  
to say what it was not: not scandalous, not punishable, not rebellious. It was,  
like the attraction that had led him to marry her, Pahad's widow with five  
children, something he could not see clearly.

**morose** (mə-rōs') *adj.*  
gloomy; sullen

**W**hen the Special Branch<sup>9</sup> knocked steadily on the door in the small  
hours of Thursday morning, he did not wake up, for his return to  
110 consciousness was always set in his mind to half past four, and that was more  
than an hour away. Mrs. Bamjee got up herself, struggled into Jimmy's raincoat  
which was hanging over a chair, and went to the front door. The clock on  
the wall—a wedding present when she married Pahad—showed three o'clock  
when she snapped on the light, and she knew at once who it was on the other  
side of the door. Although she was not surprised, her hands shook like a very  
old person's as she undid the locks and the complicated catch on the wire  
burglar-proofing. And then she opened the door and they were there—two  
colored policemen in plain clothes. “Zanip Bamjee?”

“Yes.”

120 As they talked, Bamjee woke up in the sudden terror of having overslept.  
Then he became conscious of men's voices. He heaved himself out of bed in  
the dark and went to the window, which, like the front door, was covered  
with a heavy mesh of thick wire against intruders from the dingy lane it  
looked upon. Bewildered, he appeared in the room, where the policemen were  
searching through a soapbox of papers beside the duplicating machine. “Yusuf,  
it's for me,” Mrs. Bamjee said.

At once, the snap of a trap, realization came. He stood there in an old shirt  
before the two policemen, and the woman was going off to prison because of  
the natives. “There you are!” he shouted, standing away from her. “That's what  
130 you've got for it. Didn't I tell you? Didn't I? That's the end of it now. That's the  
finish. That's what it's come to.” She listened with her head at the slightest tilt  
to one side, as if to ward off a blow, or in compassion.

Jimmy, Pahad's son, appeared at the door with a suitcase; two or three of the  
girls were behind him. “Here, Ma, you take my green jersey.” “I've found your  
clean blouse.” Bamjee had to keep moving out of their way as they helped their  
mother to make ready. It was like the preparation for one of the family festivals  
his wife made such a fuss over; wherever he put himself, they bumped into  
him. Even the two policemen mumbled, “Excuse me,” and pushed past into  
the rest of the house to continue their search. They took with them a tome

### Analyze Visuals ▶

How does the painting  
reflect what is happening  
in the story?

8. **doeks** (düks): cloth head coverings.

9. **Special Branch**: the South African secret police.





140 that Nehru<sup>10</sup> had written in prison; it had been bought from a persevering traveling salesman and kept, for years, on the mantelpiece. “Oh, don’t take that, please,” Mrs. Bamjee said suddenly, clinging to the arm of the man who had picked it up.

The man held it away from her.

“What does it matter, Ma?”

It was true that no one in the house had ever read it; but she said, “It’s for my children.”

150 “Ma, leave it.” Jimmy, who was squat and plump, looked like a merchant advising a client against a roll of silk she had set her heart on. She went into the bedroom and got dressed. When she came out in her old yellow sari with a brown coat over it, the faces of the children were behind her like faces on the platform at a railway station. They kissed her goodbye. The policemen did not hurry her, but she seemed to be in a hurry just the same.

“What am I going to do?” Bamjee accused them all.

The policemen looked away patiently.

“It’ll be all right. Girlie will help. The big children can manage. And Yusuf—” The children crowded in around her; two of the younger ones had awakened and appeared, asking shrill questions.

“Come on,” said the policemen.

160 “I want to speak to my husband.” She broke away and came back to him, and the movement of her sari hid them from the rest of the room for a moment. His face hardened in suspicious anticipation against the request to give some message to the next fool who would take up her pamphleteering until he, too, was arrested. “On Sunday,” she said. “Take them on Sunday.” He did not know what she was talking about. “The engagement party,” she whispered, low and urgent. “They shouldn’t miss it. Ismail will be offended.” **E**

170 They listened to the car drive away. Jimmy bolted and barred the front door and then at once opened it again; he put on the raincoat that his mother had taken off. “Going to tell Girlie,” he said. The children went back to bed. Their father did not say a word to any of them; their talk, the crying of the younger ones and the argumentative voices of the older, went on in the bedrooms. He found himself alone; he felt the night all around him. And then he happened to meet the clock face and saw with a terrible sense of unfamiliarity that this was not the secret night but an hour he should have recognized: the time he always got up. He pulled on his trousers and his dirty white hawker’s coat and wound his grey muffler up to the stubble on his chin and went to work.

180 **T**he duplicating machine was gone from the sideboard. The policemen had taken it with them, along with the pamphlets and the conference reports and the stack of old newspapers that had collected on top of the wardrobe in the bedroom—not the thick dailies of the white men but the

#### **E** DRAW CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions can you draw about Mrs. Bamjee based on her behavior in lines 160–166?

10. **Nehru** (nā’rōō): Jawaharlal (jə-wā’hər-lāl’) Nehru, nationalist leader in India’s movement for self-governance and the first prime minister of independent India.

thin, impermanent-looking papers that spoke up, sometimes interrupted by suppression or lack of money, for the rest. It was all gone. When he had married her and moved in with her and her five children, into what had been the Pahad and became the Bamjee house, he had not recognized the humble, harmless, and apparently useless routine tasks—the minutes of meetings being written up on the dining-room table at night, the government blue books that were read while the latest baby was suckled, the employment of the fingers of the older children in the fashioning of crinkle-paper Congress rosettes—as activity intended to move mountains. For years and years he had not noticed  
190 it, and now it was gone.

The house was quiet. The children kept to their lairs, crowded on the beds with the doors shut. He sat and looked at the sideboard, where the plastic carnations and the mat with the picture of the Taj Mahal were in place. For the first few weeks he never spoke of her. There was the feeling, in the house, that he had wept and raged at her, that boulders of reproach had thundered down upon her absence, and yet he had said not one word. He had not been to inquire where she was; Jimmy and Girlie had gone to Mohammed Ebrahim, the lawyer, and when he found out that their mother had been taken—when she was arrested, at least—to a prison in the next town, they had stood about  
200 outside the big prison door for hours while they waited to be told where she had been moved from there. At last they had discovered that she was fifty **F** miles away, in Pretoria.<sup>11</sup> Jimmy asked Bamjee for five shillings to help Girlie pay the train fare to Pretoria, once she had been interviewed by the police and had been given a permit to visit her mother; he put three two-shilling pieces on the table for Jimmy to pick up, and the boy, looking at him keenly, did not know whether the extra shilling meant anything, or whether it was merely that Bamjee had no change.

It was only when relations and neighbors came to the house that Bamjee would suddenly begin to talk. He had never been so expansive in his life as he  
210 was in the company of these visitors, many of them come on a polite call rather in the nature of a visit of condolence. “Ah, yes, yes, you can see how I am—you see what has been done to me. Nine children, and I am on the cart all day. I get home at seven or eight. What are you to do? What can people like us do?”  
“Poor Mrs. Bamjee. Such a kind lady.”

“Well, you see for yourself. They walk in here in the middle of the night and leave a houseful of children. I’m out on the cart all day; I’ve got a living to earn.” Standing about in his shirtsleeves, he became quite animated; he would call for the girls to bring fruit drinks for the visitors. When they were gone, it was as if he, who was orthodox if not devout and never drank liquor,  
220 had been drunk and abruptly sobered up; he looked dazed and could not have gone over in his mind what he had been saying. And as he cooled, the lump of resentment and wrongedness stopped his throat again. **G**

#### **F** GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Reread lines 196–201. Notice how Gordimer forms a **compound-complex sentence** by connecting a series of independent and subordinate clauses.

#### **G** DRAW CONCLUSIONS

Reread lines 208–222. Why does Bamjee feel so resentful about his wife’s imprisonment?

11. **Pretoria** (prĭ-tôr’ē-ə): the administrative capital of South Africa.

Bamjee found one of the little boys the center of a self-important group of championing brothers and sisters in the room one evening. “They’ve been cruel to Ahmed.”

“What has he done?” said the father.

“Nothing! Nothing!” The little girl stood twisting her handkerchief excitedly.

An older one, thin as her mother, took over, silencing the others with a gesture of her skinny hand. “They did it at school today. They made an example of him.”

230 “What is an example?” said Bamjee impatiently.

“The teacher made him come up and stand in front of the whole class, and he told them, ‘You see this boy? His mother’s in jail because she likes the natives so much. She wants the Indians to be the same as natives.’”

“It’s terrible,” he said. His hands fell to his sides. “Did she ever think of this?”

240 “That’s why Ma’s *there*,” said Jimmy, putting aside his comic and emptying out his schoolbooks upon the table. “That’s all the kids need to know. Ma’s there because things like this happen. Petersen’s a colored teacher, and it’s his black blood that’s brought him trouble all his life, I suppose. He hates anyone who says everybody’s the same because that takes away from him his bit of whiteness that’s all he’s got. What d’you expect? It’s nothing to make too much fuss about.” **H**

“Of course, you are fifteen and you know everything,” Bamjee mumbled at him.

“I don’t say that. But I know Ma, anyway.” The boy laughed.

There was a hunger strike among the political prisoners, and Bamjee could not bring himself to ask Girlie if her mother was starving herself too. He would not ask; and yet he saw in the young woman’s face the gradual weakening of her mother. When the strike had gone on for nearly a week, one of the elder children burst into tears at the table and could not eat. Bamjee pushed his own plate away in rage.

250 Sometimes he spoke out loud to himself while he was driving the vegetable lorry.<sup>12</sup> “What for?” Again and again: “What for?” She was not a modern woman who cut her hair and wore short skirts. He had married a good plain Moslem woman who bore children and stamped her own chilies. He had a sudden vision of her at the duplicating machine, that night just before she was taken away, and he felt himself maddened, baffled, and hopeless. He had become the ghost of a victim, hanging about the scene of a crime whose motive he could not understand and had not had time to learn.

260 **T**he hunger strike at the prison went into the second week. Alone in the rattling cab of his lorry, he said things that he heard as if spoken by someone else, and his heart burned in fierce agreement with them. “For a crowd of natives who’ll smash our shops and kill us in our houses when their time comes.” “She will starve herself to death there.” “She will die there.” “Devils who will burn and kill us.” He fell into bed each night like a stone and dragged himself up in the mornings as a beast of burden is beaten to its feet.

#### **H** THEME AND PERSUASION

How does Jimmy view his mother’s political activity?

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12. **lorry**: truck.

One of these mornings, Girlie appeared very early, while he was wolfing bread and strong tea—alternate sensations of dry solidity and stinging heat—at the kitchen table. Her real name was Fatima, of course, but she had adopted the silly modern name along with the clothes of the young factory girls among whom she worked. She was expecting her first baby in a week or two, and  
270 her small face, her cut and curled hair, and the sooty arches drawn over her eyebrows did not seem to belong to her thrust-out body under a clean smock. She wore mauve lipstick and was smiling her cocky little white girl's smile, foolish and bold, not like an Indian girl's at all.



*A Sketch of Two Figures at a Window*, Nicholai Uvarov. 29.2 cm × 23.4 cm. Bonhams, London. Photo © Bridgeman Art Library.

“What’s the matter?” he said.

She smiled again. “Don’t you know? I told Bobby he must get me up in time this morning. I wanted to be sure I wouldn’t miss you today.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

She came over and put her arm up around his unwilling neck and kissed the grey bristles at the side of his mouth. “Many happy returns! Don’t you  
280 know it’s your birthday?”

“No,” he said. “I didn’t know, didn’t think—” He broke the pause by swiftly picking up the bread and giving his attention desperately to eating and drinking. His mouth was busy, but his eyes looked at her, intensely black. She said nothing but stood there with him. She would not speak, and at last he said, swallowing a piece of bread that tore at his throat as it went down, “I don’t remember these things.”


The girl nodded, the Woolworth baubles in her ears swinging. “That’s the first thing she told me when I saw her yesterday—don’t forget it’s Bajie’s birthday tomorrow.”

290 He shrugged over it. “It means a lot to children. But that’s how she is. Whether it’s one of the old cousins or the neighbor’s grandmother, she always knows when the birthday is. What importance is my birthday, while she’s sitting there in a prison? I don’t understand how she can do the things she does when her mind is always full of woman’s nonsense at the same time—that’s what I don’t understand with her.” **I**

“Oh, but don’t you see?” the girl said. “It’s because she doesn’t want anybody to be left out. It’s because she always remembers; remembers everything—people without somewhere to live, hungry kids, boys who can’t get educated—remembers all the time. That’s how Ma is.”

300 “Nobody else is like that.” It was half a complaint.

“No, nobody else,” said his stepdaughter.

She sat herself down at the table, resting her belly. He put his head in his hands. “I’m getting old”—but he was overcome by something much more curious, by an answer. He knew why he had desired her, the ugly widow with five children; he knew what way it was in which she was not like the others; it was there, like the fact of the belly that lay between him and her daughter. 

### **I** DRAW CONCLUSIONS

How has Mrs. Bamjee been affected by her imprisonment?

## Comprehension

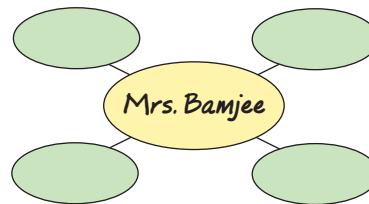
1. **Recall** What political struggle is Mrs. Bamjee engaged in?
2. **Recall** How does Bamjee feel about his wife's political activities?
3. **Recall** What happens when the government finds out about Mrs. Bamjee's activities?
4. **Summarize** How do the members of Mrs. Bamjee's family react to what happens to her?

### COMMON CORE

**RL 1** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RL 2** Determine a theme of a text and analyze in detail its development, including how it is refined by specific details. **RL 6** Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience in a work of world literature.

## Text Analysis

5. **Examine Character Traits** What traits does Gordimer give Mrs. Bamjee to make her a sympathetic character? Identify the traits in a graphic organizer like the one shown.
6. **Analyze Theme** What main theme does Gordimer develop in the story to persuade readers? Is she successful? Support your responses.
7. **Interpret a Statement** Reread lines 296–299. What do you make of Girlie's explanation of Mrs. Bamjee's commitment to both her family and the anti-apartheid movement?
8. **Make Inferences** Reread lines 302–306. What does Bamjee come to realize about his feelings for his wife at the end of the story?
9. **Draw Conclusions** Review the chart you created as you read. What conclusion would you draw about the relationship between Bamjee and Mrs. Bamjee? Provide examples to support your conclusion.
10. **Make Judgments** Mrs. Bamjee's family makes sacrifices as a result of the government's actions against her. Should she have avoided political activity out of concern for their welfare? Give reasons for your opinion.



## Text Criticism

11. **Critical Interpretations** The critic Brigitte Weeks once wrote that “Gordimer insists that her readers face South African life as she does: with affection and horror.” How might this statement apply to “A Chip of Glass Ruby”?

### What would you SACRIFICE for justice?

Would you be willing to fight for a cause that does not directly affect you?

## Vocabulary in Context

### ▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Choose the vocabulary word that is a **synonym**, or word that has a similar meaning, for each of the following words.

1. disrespect
2. fame
3. condescend
4. soothe
5. sullen

### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

- cite
- controversy
- convince
- objective
- statistic

How do Mrs. Bamjee’s **objectives** lead to conflict and disagreement? Write a paragraph in which you analyze what Bamjee and Mrs. Bamjee want and the steps they take to achieve those goals. Use at least one Academic Vocabulary word in your response.

### VOCABULARY STRATEGY: USING A THESAURUS

A **thesaurus** is a book of synonyms and antonyms. You can use it to find a replacement for an overused word or to find a word with the precise shade of meaning that you need. The synonyms in a thesaurus entry are not always interchangeable. For example, *assumption* and *impudence* are both synonyms for the word *presumption*, but only *assumption* would be an appropriate replacement in the following sentence:

It is my **presumption** that the plane is late due to the bad weather.

**PRACTICE** Use a thesaurus to find appropriate synonyms for the boldfaced words.

1. The judge was **partial** to the defendant in the case.
2. We received a generous **legacy** from our benefactor.
3. She spoke with impressive **gravity** on the topic.
4. I was completely **immersed** in my studies.
5. His comment **provoked** laughter in the audience.

#### WORD LIST

disarm  
morose  
patronize  
presumption  
repute

#### COMMON CORE

**L.4c** Consult specialized reference materials to determine or clarify a word’s precise meaning or etymology.

Interactive Vocabulary **THINK** central

Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com).  
KEYWORD: HML10-708

## Language

### ◆ GRAMMAR AND STYLE: Vary Sentence Structure

Review the **Grammar and Style** note on page 703. A **compound-complex sentence** consists of two or more independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause. By using this particular sentence structure, Gordimer, in just one sentence, connects ideas and answers such questions as *where*, *why*, *when*, *what kind*, and *which one*. In the following example, notice how Gordimer combines a subordinate clause (in green) with a series of independent clauses (in yellow) to form a compound-complex sentence:

*When the Special Branch knocked steadily on the door in the small hours of Thursday morning, he did not wake up, for his return to consciousness was always set in his mind to half past four, and that was more than an hour away.*  
(lines 108–111)

In the following student model, the revisions in blue demonstrate how a series of simple sentences can be combined to form one compound-complex sentence. Note the use of independent and subordinate clauses, and make similar edits when you revise your own writing.

#### STUDENT MODEL

*Since*  
Mrs. Bamjee sacrifices for the good of others, *and* She is always with those in need in spirit, *and* This keeps her from being lonely.

### READING-WRITING CONNECTION



Explore the themes of “A Chip of Glass Ruby” by responding to this prompt. Then use the **revising tip** to improve your writing.

#### WRITING PROMPT

##### Short Constructed Response: Analysis

A character in one of Gordimer’s novels says, “The real definition of loneliness is to live without responsibility.” Write **one or two paragraphs** in which you discuss how this quotation relates to the main theme of “A Chip of Glass Ruby.”

#### REVISING TIP

Review your response. Have you used compound-complex sentences to vary sentence structure?



**L 1b** Use various types of clauses to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing.

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