

# THE DUBE TRAIN BY CAN THEMBA

## 1. Summary



The narrator is at Dube Station in Soweto on a cold Monday morning, waiting for the train to Johannesburg. All his descriptions of the station and people emphasise his depression, which he feels is shared by all the people around him.

When he gets onto the train he sits opposite a huge man. When the train gets to Pheloni Station a young woman enters the carriage and sits next to the narrator. Soon afterwards a tsotsi jumps onto the train and begins verbally harassing the girl. When the girl reaches her stop and wants to get off the train the tsotsi prevents her and slaps her. She tries to get away from him by jumping over the narrator but the tsotsi follows her.

No one dares to say anything to stop the tsotsi, until an older woman starts shouting at the men and calling them cowards. This causes the tsotsi to swear at the woman. This angers the huge man sitting opposite the narrator and he gets up and moves towards the tsotsi. The tsotsi pulls out a knife and cuts the big man's chest and arm. The big man is enraged and, in spite of his injuries, he grabs the tsotsi and lifts him up. He throws him out of the train window.

Everyone is shocked, but the incident soon becomes just another event on the morning Dube train.

## 2. Title

The title focuses on the train journey rather than on any characters in the story. The writer intends us to see the train journey as a comment on the lives people experience. Even when bad things happen people just accept them. The incident on the train happens to people no one knows or is concerned about. It soon becomes: Just an incident in the morning Dube train.



## 3. Themes

The main themes of this story are:

- Violence, crime and barbarism in the townships; and



# The Dube Train

**Clemens Wendtner**



## The Dube Train:

South Africa's Alternative Press Les Switzer, 1997-02-13 Collection of essays on the South African alternative press from the 1880s to the 1960s     *The South African Short Story in English, 1920-2010* Marta Fossati, 2024-09-05 Through detailed close readings alongside investigations into the history of print culture Marta Fossati traces the development of the South African short story in English from the late 1920s to the first decade of the twenty first century She examines a selection of short stories by important Black South African writers Rolfes and Herbert Dhlomo Peter Abrahams Can Themba Alex La Guma Mtutuzeli Matshoba Ahmed Essop and Zo Wicomb with an alertness to the dialogue between ethics and aesthetics performed by these texts This new history of Black short fiction problematises and interrogates the often polarised readings of Black literature in South Africa that can be torn between notions of literariness protest and journalism Due to material constraints short fiction in South Africa circulated first and foremost through local print media which Fossati analyses in detail to show the cross fertilisation between journalism and the short story While rooted in the South African context the short stories considered also hold a translocal dimension allowing us to explore the ethical and aesthetic practice of intertextuality These are writings that complicate the aesthetics ethics binary generic classifications and the categories of the literary and the political Theoretically eclectic in its approach although largely underpinned by a narratological analysis *The South African Short Story in English 1920 2010 When Aesthetics Meets Ethics* offers a fresh perspective on the South African short story in English spotlighting several hitherto marginalised figures in South African literary studies     **Fact - Fiction - "faction"** Horst Zander, 1999     *Requiem for Sophiatown* Can Themba, 2006 Requiem for Sophiatown is a collection of 25 short stories and sketches from Can Themba's creative work     *The World of Can Themba* Can Themba, 1985     A Vision of Order Ursula A. Barnett, 1983     Worst Journeys , 2005     **Looking for a Rain God and Other Short Stories from Africa** Ian Gordon, 1995 A collection of short stories from Africa covering a range of subjects from the conflict between traditional and new ways of life and values to the role of women in society The main introduction provides a background for discussion as well as ideas for students to use in their own writing     Let's Talk Writing Es'kia Mphahlele, 1985     **Nigeria Magazine** , 1967     Ourselfs in Southern Africa , 1988     **Railway and Locomotive Engineering** , 1910     **The Chosen Tongue** Gerald Moore, 1970     Sounding Wings Rosemary Gray, Stephen M. Finn, 1994 This collection of stories from South Africa is conceived as a companion to Broken Strings the anthology of South African poetry     **Southern African Update** , 1992 A bibliographical survey     **Area Repression Report** , 1993     *A Select Index to South African Literature in English* , 1991     Dictionary Catalog of the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and History Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and History, 1967     Dictionary Catalog of the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature & History Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1962     *Dictionary Catalog of the Jesse E. Moorland Collection of Negro Life and History*, Howard University Library, Washington, D.C. Moorland Foundation, 1970

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