

Tekst 5

De volgende tekst is het eerste hoofdstuk uit The House Gun, een roman van Nadine Gordimer

Something terrible happened.

They are watching it on the screen with their after-dinner coffee cups beside them. It is Bosnia or Somalia or the earthquake shaking a Japanese island between apocalyptic teeth like a dog; whatever were the disasters of that time. When the intercom buzzes each looks to the other with a friendly reluctance; you go, your turn. It's part of the covenant of living together. They made the decision to give up the house and move into this townhouse complex with grounds maintained and security-monitored entrance only recently and they are not yet accustomed, or rather are inclined momentarily to forget that it's not the barking of Robbie and the old-fangled ring of the front door bell that summons them, now. No pets allowed in the complex, but luckily there was the solution that theirs could go to their son who has a garden cottage.

He, she – twitch of a smile, he got himself up with languor directed at her and went to lift the nearest receiver. Who, she half-heard him say, half-listening to the commentary following the images, Who. It could be someone wanting to convert to some religious sect, or the delivery of a summons for a parking offence, casual workers did this, moon-lighting. He said something else she didn't catch but she heard the purr of the electronic release button.

What he said then was, Do you know who a Julian-somebody might be? Friend of Duncan?

He, she – they didn't, either of them. Nothing unusual about that, Duncan, twenty-seven years old, had his own circle just as his parents had theirs, and these intersected only occasionally where interests, inculcated in him as a child by his parents, met.

What does he want?

Just said to speak to us.

Both at the same instant were touched by a live voltage of alarm. What is there to fear, defined in the known context of a twenty-seven-year-old in this city – a car crash, a street mugging, a violent break-in at the cottage. Both stood at the door, confronting these, confronting the footsteps they heard approaching their private paved path beneath the crossed swords of Strelitzia leaves, the signal of the second buzzer, and this young man, come from? for? Duncan. He stared at the floor as he came in, so they couldn't read him. He sat down without a word.

He, she – whose turn.

There's been an accident?

She's a doctor, she sees what the ambulances bring in to Intensive Care. If something's broken she can gauge whether it ever can be put together again.

This Julian draws in his lips over his teeth and clamps his mouth, a moment.

A kind of ... Not Duncan, no no! Someone's been shot. He's arrested. Duncan.

They both stand up.

For God's sake – what are you talking about – what is all this –how arrested, arrested for what–

The messenger is attacked, he becomes almost sullen, unable to bear what he has to tell. The obscene word comes ashamedly from him. Murder.

Everything has come to a stop. What can be understood is a car crash, a street mugging, a violent break-in.

He/she. He strides over and switches off the television. And expels a violent breath. So long as nobody moved, nobody uttered, the word and the act within the word could not enter here. Now with the touch of a switch and the gush of a breath a new calendar is opened. The old Gregorian cannot register this day. It does not exist in that means of measure.

This Julian now tells them that a magistrate was called 'after hours' (he gives the detail with the weight of its urgent gravity) to lay a charge at the police station and bail was refused. That is the practical purpose of his visit: Duncan says, Duncan says, Duncan's message is that there's no point in their coming, there's no point in trying for bail, he will appear in court on Monday morning. He has his own lawyer.

He/she. She has marked the date on patients' prescriptions a dozen times since morning but she turns to find a question that will bring some kind of answer to that word pronounced by the messenger. She cries out.

What day is it today?

Friday.

It was on a Friday.

■ Tekst 5 De volgende tekst...

3p 9 □ Geef van ieder van de onderstaande beweringen aan of deze met betrekking tot het echtpaar in het verhaal juist of onjuist is.

Het echtpaar in het verhaal

1 weet bij het horen van de bel al dat hun een schok wacht.

2 is onlangs verhuisd.

3 heeft geen contact meer met hun zoon.

4 is bang dat hun bezoeker kwaad in de zin heeft.

5 verwacht te horen dat hun zoon iets ergs heeft gedaan.

6 beseft dat hun leven nooit meer zal zijn zoals het was.

7 moet er genoeg mee nemen dat hun zoon hun steun bij voorbaat afwijst.

Noteer het nummer van elke bewering, gevolgd door "juist" of "onjuist".