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Cry the beloved country free online book

Cry, the Beloved Country A Novel Alan Paton “Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear. Let him not love the earth too deeply. Let him not laugh too gladly when the water runs through his fingers, nor stand too silent when the setting sun makes red the veld with fire. Let him not be too moved when the birds of his land are singing, nor give too much of his heart to a mountain or valley. For fear will rob him of all if he gives too much.” Te most famous and important novel in South Africa’s history, and an immediate worldwide bestseller when it was published in 1948, Alan Paton’s impassioned novel about a black man’s country under white man’s law is a work of searing beauty. Te eminent literary critic Lewis Gannett wrote, “We have had many novels from statesmen and reformers, almost all bad; many novels from poets, almost all thin. In Alan Paton’s Cry, the Beloved Country the statesman, the poet and the novelist meet in a unique harmony.” Cry, the Beloved Country is the deeply moving story of the Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo and his son, Absalom, set against the background of a land and a people riven by racial injustice. Re-markable for its lyricism, unforgettable for character and inci-dent, Cry, the Beloved Country is a classic work of love and hope, courage and endurance, born of the dignity of man. Note on the 1987 Edition Cry, the Beloved Country , though it is a story about South Africa, was not written in that country at all. It was begun in Trondheim, Norway, in September 1946 and finished in San Francisco on Christmas Eve of that same year. It was first read by Aubrey and Marigold Burns of Fairfax, California, and they had it put into typescript and sent it to several American publishers, one of them being Charles Scribner’s Sons. Scribner’s senior editor, Maxwell Perkins, accepted it at once. Perkins told me that one of the most important characters in the book was the land of South Africa itself: He was quite right. The title of the book confirms his judgment. How did it get that title? After Aubrey and Marigold Burns had read it, they asked me what I would call it. We decided to have a little competition. We each took pen and paper and each of us wrote our proposed title. Each of us wrote “Cry, the Beloved Country.” Where did the title come from? It came from three or four passages in the book itself, each containing these words. I quote one of them: Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear. Let him not love the earth too deeply. Let him not laugh too gladly when the water runs through his fingers, nor stand too silent when the setting sun makes red the veld with fire. Let him not be too moved when the birds of his land are singing, nor give too much of his heart to a mountain or a valley. For fear will rob him of all if he gives too much. Cry, The Beloved Country ALAN PATON First published in 1948 BOOKS BY ALAN PATON Cry, the Beloved Country Ah, But Your Land Is Beautiful Too Late the Phalarope South Africa in Transition Tales from a Troubled Land Sponono South African Tragedy For You Departed Apartheid and the Archbishop Knocking on the Door Towards the Mountain Journey Continued SCRIBNER 1230 Avenue of the Americas New York, NY 10020 This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. Copyright 1948 by Alan Paton To Aubrey & Marigold Burns of Fairfax, California Note on the 1987 Edition Cry, the Beloved Country, though it is a story about South Africa, was not written in that country at all. It was begun in Trondheim, Norway, in September 1946 and finished in San Francisco on Christmas Eve of that same year. It was first read by Aubrey and Marigold Burns of Fairfax, California, and they had it put into typescript and sent to several American publishers, one of them being Charles Scribner’s Sons. Scribner’s senior editor, Maxwell Perkins, accepted it at once. Perkins told me that one of the most important characters in the book was the land of South Africa itself. He was quite right. The title of the book confirms his judgment. How did it get that title? After Aubrey and Marigold Burns had read it, they asked me what I would call it. We decided to have a little competition. We each took pen and paper and each of us wrote our proposed title. Each of us wrote Cry, the Beloved Country. Where did the title come from? It came from three or four passages in the book itself, each containing these words. I quote one of them: Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear. Let him not love the earth too deeply. Let him not laugh too gladly when the water runs through his fingers, nor stand too silent when the setting sun makes red the veld with fire. Let him not be too moved when the birds of his land are singing, nor give too much of his heart to a mountain or a valley. For fear will rob him of all if he gives too much. This passage was written by one who indeed had loved the earth deeply, by one who had been moved when the birds of his land were singing. The passage suggests that one can love a country too deeply, and that one can be too moved by the song of a bird. It is, in fact, a passage of poetic license. It offers no suggestion as to how one can prevent these things from happening. What kind of a book is it? Many other people have given their own answers to this question, and I shall give my own, in words written in another book of mine, For You Departed, published, also by Charles Scribner’s Sons, in the year 1969 (published in London by Jonathan Cape with the title Kontakion for You Departed). So many things have been written about this book that I would not add to them if I did not believe that I know best what kind of book it is. It is a song of love for one’s far distant country, it is informed with longing for that land where they shall not hurt or destroy in all that holy mountain, for that unattainable and ineffable land where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, for the land that cannot be again, of hills and grass and bracken, the land where you were born. It is a story of the beauty and the terror of human life, and it cannot be written again because it cannot be felt again. Just how good it is, I do not know and I do not care. All I know is that it changed our lives. It opened the doors of the world to us, and we went through. And that is true. The success of Cry, the Beloved Country changed our lives. To put it in materialistic terms, it has kept us alive ever since. It has enabled me to write books that cost more to write than their sales could ever repay. So I write this with pleasure and gratitude. Alan Paton NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA Note on the 1959 Edition IT IS SOME eleven years since the first Author’s Note was written. The population of South Africa today is estimated to be about 15,000,000, of whom 3,000,000 are white, 1 ¼ millions are colored people, nearly ½ million are Indians, and the rest are Africans. I did not mention the Indians in the first Author’s Note largely because I did not want to confuse readers unnecessarily, but the existence of this minority is now much better known throughout the world because their position has become so desperate under apartheid legislation. The City of Johannesburg has grown tremendously and today contains about 1 ¼ million people. Sir Ernest Oppenheimer died in 1958, and his place has been taken by his very able son, Mr. Harry Oppenheimer. Alan Paton NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA Note on the 1948 Edition IT IS TRUE that there is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. It is true that it runs to Carisbrooke, and that from there, if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest scenes of Africa, the valley of the Umzimkulu. But there is no Ndotsheni there, and no farm called High Place. No person in this book is intended to be an actual person, except two, the late Professor Hoernle and Sir Ernest Oppenheimer; but nothing that is said about these two could be considered offensive. Professor Hoernle was Professor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, and a great and courageous fighter for justice; in fact he was the prince of Kafferboeticks. Sir Ernest Oppenheimer is the head of a very important mining group, a man of great influence, and able to do as much as any one man to arrest the process of deterioration described in this book. That does not mean of course that he can do everything. Various persons are mentioned, not by name, but as the holders of this or that position. In no case is reference intended to any actual holder of any of these positions. Nor in any related event is reference intended to any actual event; except that the accounts of the boycott of the buses, the erection of ShantyTown, the finding of gold at Odendaalsrus, and the miners strike, are a compound of truth and fiction. In these respects therefore the story is not true, but considered as a social record it is the plain and simple truth. The book was begun in Trondheim and finished in San Francisco. It was written in Norway, Sweden, England and the United States, for the most part in hotel-rooms, during a tour of study of the penal and correctional institutions of these countries. In San Francisco I was invited to leave my hotel, and to stay at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Aubrey Burns, of Fairfax, California, whom I had met two days before. I accepted the invitation on condition that they read the book. But I was not prepared for its reception. Mr. Burns sat down and wrote letters to many publishers, and when I was in Toronto (which fact they discovered) Mrs. Burns telephoned me to send the manuscript to California to be typed. They had received some encouraging response to their letters, and were now determined that I should have a typescript and not a manuscript to present to the publisher, for I had less than a week to spend in New York before sailing to South Africa. I air-mailed the manuscript on a Tuesday, but owing to snow-storms no planes flew. The package went by train, broke open and had to be rewrapped, and finally reached an intermediate Post Office on the Sunday, three days before I was due in New York. My friends traced this package to this intermediate Post Office, and had the office opened and the package delivered, by what means I do not know. In the meantime they had friends standing by to do the typing, and they worked night and day, with the result that the first seventeen chapters arrived at the house of Scribner’s on Wednesday, a few minutes before myself. On Thursday the next thirteen chapters arrived; and on Friday the last seven chapters, which I had kept with me, were delivered by the typing agency in the afternoon. There was only that afternoon left in which to decide, so it will readily be understood why I dedicate with such pleasure the American edition of this book to these two unselfish and determined friends. For the benefit of readers I have appended a list of words at the end of the book, which includes by no means all the strange names and words that are used. But it contains those, a knowledge of the meaning and approximately correct pronunciation of which, should add to the reader’s enjoyment. I add too for this same purpose the information that the population of South Africa is about eleven millions, of these about two and a half million are white Afrikaans-speaking, and three-quarters of a million are white English-speaking. There are also about 250,000 Indians, mostly in Natal, and it is the question of their status that has brought South Africa into the lime-light of the world. The rest, except for one million colored people, by which we mean of mixed blood, are the black people of the African tribes. Johannesburg is referred to as the great city; this is judged by South African standards. Its population is about 700,000, but it is a fine modern city, to be compared with any American city except the very greatest. The Umzimkulu is called the great river, but it is in fact a small river in a great valley. And lastly, a judge in South Africa presides over a Supreme Court; the presiding officer of a lower court is called a magistrate. Alan Paton NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA Foreword ONE OF THE standard items of conventional wisdom in book publishing is that no worthwhile book ever comes in unsolicited out of nowhere or, as publishers are likely to put it, over the transom. There is, of course, a mountain of sad but practical experience behind this principle, but as with all such rules there are exceptions. One of the most dramatic of these was Alan Paton’s novel Cry, the Beloved Country, which was mailed to Maxwell Perkins by an acquaintance of Paton’s in California. At that time, Alan Paton was the superintendent of a reformatory for native youths in South Africa and was visiting prisons in different parts of the world to study their methods and experiences. Perkins was very much impressed by this book with its strange title, Cry, the Beloved Country, but he did not live long after reading it, and few of us were aware of his enthusiasms although we knew that he had told Paton that one of the most important characters in the book was the land of South Africa itself. When the book was published, it virtually exploded on the literary scene. Review after review heralded it as a literary classic, and sales began to climb at an extraordinary rate. Scribner noted that there was a spontaneous chorus of praise for the novel, and that was no exaggeration. The book became an instant bestseller and has sold thousands of copies every year in the forty years since its publication. Cry, the Beloved Country is a classic work now and has found its place in school and college curriculums side by side with Ethan Frome, The Great Gatsby, and The Old Man and the Sea. It has also become a cultural force of great power and influence insofar as it has depicted the human tragedies of apartheid and brought readers all over the world to an understanding of the perversity and evil of that tragically misguided political system. A book of such unique beauty and power is, of course, an extremely rare event, still rarer when one considers the chain of circumstances that brought an unknown writer to world fame. How fortunate we are that the idea that such publishing events never happen proved to be magnificently wrong. CHARLES SCRIBNER, JR. Introduction I THE PRESENT REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA known until 1961 as the Union of South Africa had its distant origins in a Dutch East India Company settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. In time, former company servants and new immigrants set up as independent farmers hence the name Boers (i.e., farmers) given to their descendants. These people eventually came to refer to themselves as Afrikaners and to their language as Afrikaans. Britain occupied the Cape during the Napoleonic Wars and took permanent possession in 1806. During the 1830s, groups of Boers, angered by the abolition of slavery, trekked inland beyond the reach of British rule. Blocked to the east by the pastoral Xhosa tribes, they moved northward and founded the republics of Orange Free State and Transvaal the latter consolidated after a victory over the Zulu armies. When gold was discovered in the Transvaal in 1886, outsiders flocked in. The new arrivals demanded enfranchisement, but the Boers, fearing they might be swamped by newcomers, refused. British intervention in this dispute led to the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) in which armies from the British colonies of Natal and Cape Province invaded, and eventually defeated, the Boer republics. In 1906 the British returned self-rule to the Boer territories. Four years later these joined their recent adversaries, Natal and the Cape Province, to form the Union of South Africa, in which the Afrikaans and English languages were to have equal recognition. But the framers of this Union failed to agree on a common policy toward the descendants of the conquered African tribes, who greatly outnumbered the whites. Some wanted to extend to the whole Union the voting rights available in the Cape Province to certain blacks and people of mixed race; others were unwilling to surrender the traditional Transvaal policy of no equality in church or state. A number of leading figures in the Cape Province both black and white advocated a federal union to ensure preservation of the Cape franchise. But the convention chose a unitary state, centrally administered. One consequence of this was that the traditional racial attitudes of the Afrikaner republics eventually prevailed, nationwide, over the more liberal outlook of the Cape Province. What Abraham Lincoln had predicted of America’s house divided in 1858, it will become all one thing, or all the other was borne out in South Africa’s case in 1948 when, fearing domination by the black majority, the Afrikaner Nationalist Party introduced the policy of separate development that was to become widely known as apartheid the Afrikaans term for separateness. II ALAN PATON WAS born in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, some seven months after the Boer War ended. His father, a Scottish immigrant, was a court stenographer and an aspiring poet. His mother’s people were third-generation British settlers in Natal. His earliest memories, Paton has said, were of delight in the beauty of the world around him in the brightness of flowers and the sounds of birds. He delighted, too, in words, and in the stories including Bible stories read to him by his parents, who adhered to a strict Christian evangelical sect, the Christadelphians. Paton started school at an early age, and moved rapidly through the grades, always smaller and younger than his classmates. A student leader at Natal University College, he majored in physics and mathematics, and also wrote verse and drama for the student magazine. In 1924 he was sent to England to represent the college at an Imperial Student Conference, and returned to teach mathematics at the high school in Ixopo, where he met and married Dorrie Francis in 1928. While teaching at Ixopo and, later, at Pietermaritzburg, Paton wrote, and discarded, two novels of white South African life. At about the same time, through a common interest in organizations like the YMCA, and in summer camps for disadvantaged white youths, he met Jan Hofmeyr, who was to become South Africa’s most prominent liberal statesman and whose biography Paton was to write. In 1934 Hofmeyr held the cabinet portfolios of Education and Interior. He introduced legislation transferring responsibility for reformatory institutions from the Department of Prisons to the Department of Education. When supervisors were sought to transform the three existing reformatories into schools, Paton applied and was offered Diepkloof, a large black reformatory in Johannesburg that then housed four hundred boys aged nine to twenty-one. Its buildings were old Mahatma Gandhi had been jailed there in 1913 and the sanitary arrangements were primitive. The boys were unable to use even these at night; instead, they were locked in, twenty to a cell, with a container of water and a bucket for bodily needs. There was little in Pat on’s background to prepare him for the task of transforming this virtual prison into a school. Yet, within three years, he was able to report: We have removed all the more obvious aids to detention. The dormitories are open all night; the great barred gate is gone. Paton changed Diepkloof into a place where boys could attend school and learn a trade, and where those who had proved trustworthy could accept paid outside employment. With no precedent to follow, he decided to use freedom as his instrument of reform. Newcomers were housed in closed dormitories. If they proved themselves trustworthy, they were transferred to cottages under the care of a housefather and housemother. In time, free boys were allowed to visit families and friends on weekends; and some like Absalom Kumalo in Cry, the Beloved Country were permitted to live and work outside Diepkloof. Of the ten thousand boys given home leave during Paton’s years at Diepkloof, only 1 percent did not return. One of these killed a white woman who surprised him in the pantry of her home a circumstance that no doubt inspired a somewhat similar incident in Cry, the Beloved Country. Not all observers of Paton’s Diepkloof experiment were impressed by its success. Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, editor of Die Transvaler, who was later to become South Africa’s prime minister, described it as a place for pampering rather than education, the place, indeed, where one said please and thank you to the black misters. In 1958, the year that Dr. Verwoerd became prime minister, Diepkloof was closed down, and its eight hundred boys were scattered to their home areas, where they were set to work on white farms. Diepkloof now survives only as a fictional locale in Cry, the Beloved Country and in some of Paton’s short stories. Cry, the Beloved Country by Alan Paton / History & Fiction have rating 4 out of 5 / Based on32 votes

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