**CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY CHAPTER TWO**

### Summary — Chapter 2

The Reverend Stephen Kumalo, a native Zulu, sits in his house writing when a young girl appears with a letter. After sending the girl to the kitchen for some food, Kumalo wonders who may have sent the letter. It is from Johannesburg, but so many members of his family have been in the city for so long without word that it could be from any of them, and he cannot recognize the handwriting. Among others, Kumalo’s brother, John, lives in Johannesburg, as does their sister Gertrude, who is twenty-five years younger than Kumalo, and Kumalo’s son, Absalom, who went to the city in search of Gertrude and has never returned.

Apprehensive, Kumalo calls to his wife, who confirms that the letter is not from their son. Finally, Kumalo’s wife musters the courage to open the letter and reads it aloud in faltering English. It is from a minister in Johannesburg named Theophilus Msimangu, who reports that Gertrude is ill and who requests that Kumalo come to the Sophiatown section of Johannesburg.

Kumalo’s wife asks what Kumalo intends to do, and he reluctantly tells her to bring him the money they have saved for Absalom’s education at St. Chad’s, the local school. Kumalo’s resolve falters when he holds the money in his hand, but his wife comments that there is no longer any point in saving it—Absalom has gone to Johannesburg, and those who go there do not return. Kumalo reacts angrily to his wife’s suggestion that their son will never come back, and although she protests, saying that Kumalo is hurting himself, he continues to deny her claim angrily. When he realizes that his words are wounding his wife, however, Kumalo calms down and reconciles himself to the inevitable. He and his wife pool the St. Chad’s money with the rest of their savings, resignedly giving up the money they intended to spend on clothes and a new stove. Kumalo apologizes humbly to his wife for his unkindness, then heads off to his church to pray for guidance and forgiveness. His wife watches him through the window with a weariness born from years of suffering.

**What happens in Chapter 2 and who is involved?**

**•** The Reverend Stephen Kumalo sits in his housewriting.

• A young girl brings a letter, Kumalo sends the girl to the kitchen for some food.

• Kumalo wonders who may have sent the letter. He is reluctant to open the letter. It is from Johannesburg, where three of his close relatives have gone, never to be heard from again.

• Kumalo’s brother, John, lives in Johannesburg, as does their sister Gertrude, who is twenty-five years younger than Kumalo, and Kumalo’s son, Absalom, who went to the city in search of Gertrude and has never returned.

• Kumalo is hesitant to open the letter, he calls to his wife, who confirms that the letter is not from their son. Kumalo’s wife encourages him to open the letter, and she herself finally does so.

• The letter is from Reverend Theophilus Msimangu in Johannesburg, who reports that Gertrude is ill and who asks that Kumalo come to the Sophiatown section of Johannesburg.

• Kumalo’s wife asks what Kumalo wants to do, and he unwillingly tells her to bring him the money they have saved for Absalom’s education at St. Chad’s, the local school.

• Kumalo’s determination weakens when he holds the money in his hand. Mrs Kumalo tells her husband that it is pointless to keep or save the money - Absalom has gone to Johannesburg, and those who go there do not return.

• Kumalo gets angry that his wife thinks that their son will never come back.

• He realizes that he has hurt his wife’s feelings and decides to face the truth about the possibility that Absalom may not come back home.

• They decide to use their other savings and the college money to travel to Johannesburg.

• Kumalo apologizes to his wife for his unkindness, then goes off to his church to pray for guidance and forgiveness.

• His wife watches him through the window with a tiredness born from years of suffering.