

BOOK 1, EMMA  
BOOK 2, MARLA

**THE VASE WITH THE MANY  
COLOURED MARBLES**

JACOB SINGER



Outskirts Press, Inc.  
Denver, Colorado

This is a work of fiction. The events and characters described herein are imaginary and are not intended to refer to specific places or living persons. The opinions expressed in this manuscript are solely the opinions of the author and do not represent the opinions or thoughts of the publisher. The author has represented and warranted full ownership and/or legal right to publish all the materials in this book.

The Vase with the Many Coloured Marbles  
Book 1, Emma. Book 2, Marla  
All Rights Reserved.  
Copyright © 2011 Jacob Singer  
v2.0

Cover Photo by David Crocker

This book may not be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in whole or in part by any means, including graphic, electronic, or mechanical without the express written consent of the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Outskirts Press, Inc.  
<http://www.outskirtspress.com>

ISBN: 978-1-4327-7544-5

Outskirts Press and the “OP” logo are trademarks belonging to Outskirts Press, Inc.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*In Memory of*  
**HOWARD MARTIN SINGER**  
*Howard was shot by an African home invader,*  
*on his 67th birthday,*  
*May 10th 2011,*  
*in his home in Johannesburg, South Africa.*  
*Howard passed away May 13th at 4:30pm.*



*My thanks go to Dr. Jonathan Singer of London, England, who helped with the editing and factual correctness..*

*My thanks also goes to Lynn Thompson of Thompson Writing and Editing Corporation whose editing comments were a great help in teaching me how to write a book.*



# Contents

**Introduction ..... ix**

**Book 1: Emma..... 1**

Chapter 1 ..... 3

Chapter 2 ..... 20

Chapter 3 ..... 40

Chapter 4 ..... 55

Chapter 5 ..... 65

Chapter 6 ..... 79

Chapter 7 ..... 87

Chapter 8 ..... 101

Chapter 9 ..... 106

Chapter 10..... 117

Chapter 11 ..... 132

**Book 2: Marla..... 143**

Chapter 1 ..... 145

Chapter 2 ..... 154

Chapter 3 ..... 161

Chapter 4 ..... 171

Chapter 5 ..... 184

Chapter 6 ..... 195

Chapter 7 ..... 212

Chapter 8 ..... 225

Chapter 9 ..... 236

Chapter 10..... 254

Chapter 11 ..... 265

Chapter 12 .....	271
Chapter 13 .....	282
Chapter 14 .....	292
Chapter 15 .....	303
Epilogue .....	319
<b>The Politics.....</b>	<b>323</b>
<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>South Africanisms .....</b>	<b>333</b>

# Introduction

“The fairest cape in all the world.”

So said Jan van Riebeeck as he established the first permanent European settlement in South Africa, on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1652. The Portuguese explorer, Bartolomeu Dias was the first man to round the Cape in his ship, but it was Vasco da Gama who recorded a sighting of the Cape of Good Hope in 1497. The beauty of Table Mountain with its “tablecloth”, as the thin strip of cloud that forms over the mountain was called, was the perfect way-station for ships travelling to the Dutch East Indies. The city grew slowly at first as it was hard to find adequate labour, prompting the city to import slaves from Indonesia and Madagascar, many of them becoming the ancestors of the first Cape Coloured Communities. Dutch was the first language spoken, but with the arrival of British forces in 1795, English was introduced. The Dutch language spoken in the Cape over the years gradually evolved into Afrikaans, a language that became primary under the National Government of Dr. Malan in the national elections of 1948.

Cape Town today is located at the northern end of the Cape Peninsula, with Table Mountain forming a dramatic backdrop to the city. With its mild, wet winters, and dry very warm summers, it has become the vacation jewel of many South Africans. Cape Town is also where the South African Parliament sits, and is the legislative capital of the country. It is also the city in which the ship you have taken from England will dock, a magnificent welcome to a country that is remarkable in its beauty and diversity.

The Protea, a flower found growing wild in the Cape, attracted the attention of botanists in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The extraordinary richness

and diversity of species characteristic of the Cape Flora are thought to be caused by the diverse landscape where populations can become isolated from each other and over time develop into separate species. Recently, after a major fire that destroyed acres on Table Mountain, *Proteas* appeared that had never been seen before, much the delight of botanists all over the world.

Within approximately a thousand-mile radius of Cape Town, you can drive from the semiarid plateaus of the Little Karoo separated from the Great Karoo by the Swartberg Mountain range. You rise to an altitude of 2000 – 3000 feet of the Western Cape along the Atlantic coast, to Namaqualand on the west and the Komsberg and Roggeveldt escarpments on the southwest, merging with the high veldt of the Free State and Transvaal provinces.

As you drive, air conditioners at maximum cold, the red dust somehow seeps through the closed doors and windows of the car, causing you to cough and cover your nose and mouth with a handkerchief. The wind, unchecked by trees or shrubs, blows it about as it ruffles the wool of the sheep that thrive here. If you are lucky, and drive through a flash rainstorm, you will be overwhelmed by the botanical garden of flora not seen anywhere else in the world that seems to spring out of desert sand as the rain drops hit the dry earth. If you are unlucky you will catch a swarm of locusts that fills the outside of your car with their sticky corpses before you pull to the side of the road, waiting for the swarm to pass. You are overwhelmed as they batter themselves unceasingly into your windshield and side windows. At the nearest garage, you stop to wipe the sticky mess off your car, allowing the engine to breathe as you fill up with petrol before you continue on to the alluvial diamond fields of the Orange River Delta in the Richtersveldt.

Or you can drive along the coast of the Indian Ocean through the beautiful and captivating garden route, visiting the ostrich farms of Oudtshoorn whose farmers made untold fortunes when ostrich

feathers were the rage of the European fashion market. You would make a detour and visit the Cango Caves, one of the world's great natural wonders on the way to George and Knysna before stopping at Plettenburg Bay, a prime holiday resort known for the unusual pansy shell that washes up on its beaches.

If you want to, you can continue on to Port Elizabeth, where you would sit on the rocks, opening oyster shells or mussels and slurping their contents after dipping them into the ocean for flavor, or you would decide to spend the cash you have in its large shopping centre that caters to tourists. Eventually you reluctantly tear yourself away and drive along the coast, crossing the Sundays River in an inland detour to visit the University town of Grahamstown on the way to East London, where you can spend a few days enjoying the warm water of the Indian Ocean.

You can then drive on into the Transkei, officially known as the Republic of Transkei and inhabited by the Xhosas, one of South Africa's many African tribes, a tribe that gave birth to Nelson Mandela. You would visit Umtata, its capital, today known as Mthatha, or you could decide to continue on into the heights of Hogsback, with its artist colonies, where the climate is like that of England. You would look for a room at one of the few hotels and spend your days walking the trails through forests full of blooming azaleas and rhododendrons as waterfalls thunder in the background. The adventurous can shower in the falling water like a nude nymph, the solitude broken only by a hiker whistling to warn of their approach, allowing you to quickly cover nudity and hide in the bushes. More often than not the crashing water of the falls would drown out the whistling and as the hiker came closer to the falls he would pause and rub his eyes in disbelief at the mirage of a water nymph.

Then again, you can continue north to the subtropical Province of Natal warmed by the Agulhas current, past the towns of Margate into Durban surrounded by its fields of sugar plantations and banana trees.

You would enjoy the sight of avocado trees full of monkeys that captivate your heart and make off with whatever article you may leave lying around. Driving north through Natal, you can pass through the holiday resorts of Umhlanga rocks, to the Umfolozi, and visit the Hlululwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve, and St. Lucia Bay before driving north into Piet Retief making your way slowly to Johannesburg. Or you could continue north around the border of Zululand to Nelspruit, and the start of the Kruger National Park.

Then again you could have preferred to drive through the vineyards of the Cape, sampling wine as you slowly make your way to the town of Stellenbosch that hosts the fourth largest university in the country. You would enjoy having lunch in any one of the many early houses built in the Cape Dutch Architectural style, unique to this small area of the world and without question magnificently beautiful. With heartfelt regret you would pull yourself away from this beauty and continue on to the frontier town of Beaufort West, the oldest town in the Central Karoo and the world's richest collecting grounds for reptile fossils that today are displayed in museums throughout Europe.

After filling up your car with petrol, you would continue driving until, crossing the Orange River and driving through the dry grassland, you would eventually reach the city of Bloemfontein, the judicial capital of South Africa, a city poetically known as "the city of roses" because of its yearly rose festival. The city also boasts the University of the Free State, one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

Should you have driven further to the west, you would have reached the city of Kimberley, home of the largest man-made hole in the world, where the early settlers dug for diamonds.

You could continue on by crossing the Vaal River at Parys and driving through the small university town of Potchefstroom to visit the gold mines of Johannesburg with its yellow mountains of processed sand, the result of mining the vast gold fields. Johannesburg has a

wonderful climate, almost 1,753 meters above sea level, shaded by cumulus clouds that look like stairways to the heavens as the sun sets in the evening. The Highveldt of the Transvaal, today known as Gauteng, is where your blood thickens to handle the lower oxygen levels in the atmosphere, a climate visited by athletes from all over the world to train months before an Olympic event; a climate where your skin tans golden brown in the ever present sun.

From Johannesburg you could travel North to Pretoria, the administrative capital and the *de facto* national capital, a city where Winston Churchill was imprisoned during the Anglo Boer war of 1899 to 1902. You could then continue East to the Lowveldt and the Kruger National Park, teeming with wild game. You would try to sleep under mosquito nets to escape the bite of the *Anopheles malaria* mosquito that keeps you awake all night with its singing. You could drive to, and gasp at the dramatic view of, the Blyde River Canyon, the largest Grand Canyon in the world.

Then again you could slowly make your way north to Pietersburg, and the scenic Magoebaskloof mountains, and drive on to Tzaneen with the road dropping some 600 meters in less than 6 kilometers, as you reach the northernmost point of the great Drakensburg Mountain Range that runs South and West, its influence felt in all four Provinces.

Or, instead of driving to Johannesburg, you could have veered off to the Drakensburg Mountains, that in winter are more than often covered in snow. The beautiful Drakensburg mountain range, the border between Bechuanaland, today known as Lesotho, and South Africa, in the centre of the country where one can play in the snow in the morning and after a 500 kilometer drive into Durban, sunbathe on the beautiful sandy beaches in the afternoon, with the crashing waves a picture of surfers.

This is South Africa, an ancient land at the tip of Africa unequalled in its rich diversity of fauna and flora, a country where many argue that man's ancestors walked erect for the first time. South Africa, a

land where the different cultures of Africa, Europe and the East clash almost without respite even to this day; a land all the cultures agree, is richly endowed with culture, mineral wealth, natural splendour, wilderness and wildlife that is the envy of the world.

This is South Africa, a country into which Emma was born.

Book 1  
Emma



# Chapter 1

“**W**here the hell do you think you are going?” Nellie looked at her boss. He had shouted at her in Afrikaans as she left the table where she sorted and wrapped the peaches for the market. She looked down as she felt her water break, the fluid dribbling slowly down her leg.

“Baas,” she cried out, “I have to go. The baby is coming.” She had always thought that she was only eight months pregnant, which was why she continued going to work. “I have to get home,” she shouted, her face a picture of horror at what had happened, “and quickly.”

“Well, see that you are back at work tomorrow,” he shouted after her as she hurried out the door, hiding the wet spot on her dress with her coat. She started running down the road towards her house as the first labour pain hit her. ‘*Liewe Hemel, Good heavens*’ she thought as she gritted her teeth, bending over in agony. ‘*but this one is different from Jonas. It wants to come, and quickly. I hope I make it home.*’

Jonas was her first baby, born a year and a half earlier. She had delivered him in her bed at home, with her neighbour Patricia, as the midwife.

Another labour pain hit her, and she doubled over with the cramp, a cry of pain escaping from her lips. Her home was not that far from where she worked, but as the labour pains started to come quicker, it seemed like 100 miles away.

Nellie’s meager diet had kept her weight down, and her pregnancy had not been that obvious to anyone. She started feeling the pressure of a child wanting to be born. As she passed the Peninsula Maternity

Home, she decided to walk into it rather than attempt to walk home and have Patricia help her deliver it.

Two hours after Emily had been born, her delivery helped by nurses at the Home, Nellie dressed herself, collected her belongings and with a newborn baby cradled in her right arm, walked unseen out the back door of the Home. She hobbled slowly along the cobbled Hostley street, a road climbing toward Table Mountain that dominated District Six, to her house, a three-roomed home shaded by a grapevine at the front door. The house boasted a verandah that on a long humid summer evening would see the whole family enjoying supper watching the activities of the street and waiting for the sea breeze to cool the air as the sun set over the bay. No-one was at home. She walked in, placed Emily in a cot that she brought in from the verandah, and lay down in her bed.

*'Ag Hemel,'* she thought as she closed her eyes, *'what a day.'*

She looked at Emily sleeping in the cot.

*'Somehow she looks anders (different') and she hasn't cried for a nipple yet. I hope there is nothing wrong with her.'*

District Six, as it was commonly known, was named in 1867 as the Sixth Municipal District of Cape Town. By the turn of the nineteenth century it was a lively community made up of former slaves, artisans, merchants and Jewish immigrants mainly from Eastern Europe, as well as many Malay people brought to South Africa by the Dutch East India Company during its administration of the Cape Colony. Situated within sight of the docks, where many of the Cape Malays who were Muslims and other Coloureds worked, it gradually, over the years, saw many of the Whites leave the area, moving to more affluent parts of Cape Town, areas restricted to Whites only.

Emily was classified by the South African race laws of that time as being a Coloured, a term that referred to an ethnic group of mixed race people, who possessed some sub Saharan African ancestry, but

not enough to be considered Black under the laws of South Africa. Coloureds are a mixed race, more than often possessing ancestry from Europe, Indonesia, India, Madagascar, Malaya, Mozambique, Mauritius, St Helena and Southern Africa. In the Western Cape, where Emily was born, the Coloured community developed distinctive Cape Coloured and affiliated Cape Malay cultures. They constituted the majority of the population of the Western and Northern Cape provinces, most being bilingual, that speak both English and Afrikaans, but with Afrikaans as their mother tongue. They developed a distinctive dialect, a creolized mixture of Afrikaans and English.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Coloured people of South Africa had similar rights to the Whites in the Cape Colony, though income and property qualifications affected them disproportionately. In the rest of South Africa, they had far fewer rights, and although the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 gave them the right to vote, they were restricted to electing White representatives only.

When Emily turned six years old, she attended the George Golding Primary school, leaving home at seven thirty in the morning after a breakfast of Cornflakes. Every morning she would walk with her brother Jonas and their friends up Constitution Street of District Six. Her father, Jeremy, would walk with them part of the way before turning off to the tobacco factory where he worked. The street would echo with laughter and shouts as the workers greeted each other on their way to work.

“Hey, Jannie,” Emily looked around to see who was shouting, “we are having a braai tonight. You and the missus must come, hey?”

Jannie, who was walking in front of them, without turning around shouted out an answer, “Sure man, we will be there.”

“Just bring your own beer, hey,”

“OK... see you at seven.”

Nellie, Emily’s mother, was still housebound, looking after Emily’s two younger sisters and brother. The street was always a friendly hive

of activity even that early in the morning, irrespective of whether or not the cold northeasterly wind, was sweeping off Table Mountain.

Most Saturdays she and her friends would walk through Hanover Street, the soul and life of District Six, with its Peoples Dairy, fish market, Maxims Sweeteries and Jangra's grocery store and spend the one or two pennies they managed to coax out of their parents. If there were no pennies, they would look to see which way the wind was blowing and decide whether it was a good day for fishing or better yet, enjoy a swim at Woodstock Beach. They all spent many hours perched on the rocks at the beach, there to watch ships from all over the world sail in to Cape Town harbor, erupting into screams of laughter as the odd wave burst in a froth of white foam and splashed them. They would often write down the names of the ships as they steamed past, wondering which country each ship belonged to and daydreaming as to whether they would ever visit that country and what it would be like to live there.

On Sundays the family always attended the Holy Cross Church, wearing their finery. Enthused by the minister's sermon, when the service was over, they would stand in the grounds of the Church, gossiping with friends. They would slowly amble home, and sit down to a small lunch on the verandah, with a glass of homemade wine, greeting their friends as they walked past.

After a nap, they would often walk to a friend's house, usually just down the road, or they would invite them over for afternoon tea, enjoying a cake that Nellie had baked in her coal stove that Saturday morning. Their parents would all sit in the shade of the grape vine and discuss the politics of the day, while the children played in the back yard, enjoying the sound of the birds singing in the trees, a serenade broken only by the Muslim call to prayer. It was all part of the daily noise and bustle of living in District Six

Emily's grandfather, unknown to her, had been a White farmer with a farm just outside Beaufort West. Her grandmother was one

## THE VASE WITH THE MANY COLOURED MARBLES

of the black maids that looked after his house. She worked in the farm house as the maid by day and as the farmer's mistress by night. Whether or not the farmer's wife knew about his nightly exploits is immaterial. She probably did know, but was happy to escape his sexual demands as they both aged.

Emily's mother, Nellie, was the eldest daughter. She ran away from the farm when she was 14 years old, and made a life for herself in Cape Town. A year later, she met and married Jeremy, and raised a family of five children. Emily was the oldest daughter, with a brother Jonas, older than she.

She grew up a very happy child, loved by her parents, and adored by her brothers and sisters who looked up to her for help as they grew older, more so than to their mother. She never knew her grandparents on her mother's side, and never really missed them. Her father's parents lived a short distance from them, and she enjoyed walking with her grandfather whenever he took part in the "Coon Carnival", as the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival was called. She would dress up in a dazzling array of shining colours, a dress her mother altered every year as she grew taller. With her grandfather looking dapper in his bright red jacket and shiny white trousers; a red top hat on his head and his face painted black and white with green polka dots on each cheek, she would bang her tambourine as he played his banjo. They would walk in the parade, singing, dancing and enjoying the crowds that lined the streets to watch them. Music and a keen sense of rhythm came naturally to her.

Emily's Coloured status in South African society as a second class citizen never bothered her. She loved her life and believed it to be the norm.

"Somewhere, sometime in your past, you had a White and a Black as a great grandparent," the teacher one day told the class at school during a history lesson, "which is why you are known as a member of the Cape Coloured Community."

That night during supper, she shocked her parents by asking, “Ma, was my grandfather a white man?”

Her mother nearly dropped the plate she was holding.

“Why... where did you hear that from?” her father asked her, looking carefully at her mother.

“Well, teacher told all of us in school today, that we all had a white man as a great grandfather, and that is why we are coloured, and not black or white. She said that this is why we are different to the Whites, who treat us badly. Is that why Jonas’ hair is kroes, and mine is straight?”

Her mother sat down in her chair, her face a picture of shock. She looked at her daughter, not quite believing what she had just heard. Emily was only fifteen years old and here she was asking to explain why they were different.

Her father cleared his throat.

“You must understand, Emily,” he mumbled, “as part of the Coloured Community in South Africa, we are classified as second class citizens by the government.”

“What does that mean?” Emily asked, not quite understanding what he was saying.

“You have grown up in District Six, amongst both Blacks and Whites, and you have been treated as equals by them. South Africa as a whole does not treat us as equals. The Whites come first, we the Coloureds with the Indians second, and the Blacks are at the bottom with the Coolies and Chinese somewhere in-between. When you go into Cape Town proper, you have seen benches marked, ‘For Whites Only.’ We as Coloureds are not allowed to sit on those benches.”

“But I have often sat on them, and no-one has bothered me,” Emily interrupted.

“I know,” her father answered, “that is because you were born with a lighter skin than any of us, and with hair that is light brown, long and straight. No White would think you were a Coloured. I know of many in our community who are angry at these laws, where the Whites

squeeze us from the top, while the Blacks squeeze us from the bottom. We have to take cheap work, because the Whites do not believe that we are as clever as they are. They treat us like slaves, while many of our women are treated like whores at night, and our children age and die long before they should.”

“Jeremy, that is enough,” Nellie shouted at him.

“But Ma,” Jeremy began looking imploringly at Nellie, “let her find it out from us, rather than in the street.”

“No... that is enough,” Nellie repeated. “Come on, finish your supper Emily, and then off to bed,” and she looked at Emily angrily.

Emily never again had the courage to ask her mother about the family history and whether she truly had Black and White blood in her veins. For the first time in her fifteen years, she became aware that being classified a Coloured restricted her to a way of life that she could never be happy with. This was a country that she dearly loved and she began to feel the pain of being rejected in such a way. In one dramatic evening, her life had changed.

The next day at school, she started noticing for the first time that some of the girls and boys were indeed different in both their skin colour and in their hair. It was something that she had never noticed before. She saw all her friends standing in a group under one of the trees in the playground, talking to each other softly.

“What is going on?” she asked Violet as she approached them. Violet was her best friend.

Violet turned to her. “Judy was telling everyone how her brother went to Johannesburg and became a White.”

“He did what?” Emily asked, not sure about what Violet had told her.

“Judy told us that because her brother’s skin was white, and that he had straight hair, just like you, he went to live in Johannesburg. He told everyone there that he is a White and they accepted that he was one. No-one said he was not one.”

“But how did he do that?” Emily asked.

“I don’t know,” Violet answered, “you must ask Judy to tell you how he did it.”

Later that morning, during the school break when she saw Judy alone, Emily approached her.

“How did your brother get away with passing himself off as a White?” she asked Judy.

“He taught himself to talk Afrikaans like the White Afrikaners do, not like we Coloureds talk Afrikaans. He also joined the Dutch Reformed Church,” she said sarcastically. “He told me that it was easier to better his Afrikaans than it was to learn to speak proper English. Can you believe that? I think our Afrikaans is good, but then again he is lucky, his skin and hair are like yours, not like my dark skin, and my kroes hair,” and she twisted a strand that had fallen over her forehead.

What Judy told Emily shocked her. She started to spend a great deal of time looking at the people around her as she walked to and from school. She became quieter, spending less time with her friends, and more time walking the streets of Cape Town looking at everything in a different light. She would walk through the restaurants, pubs and hotels of the city, ignoring the restrictions to people of colour just to see what would happen. Nothing happened.

One afternoon, as she walked through the city, she found that the wind was blowing hard off Devil’s Peak. With the winter rain that started, she was soon chilled to the bone. She looked around her at the comfort of the Whites as they sat eating, drinking and laughing in the numerous restaurants. She was so cold. Hiding her nervousness she boldly walked into one of the restaurants and sat down at a table. After reading the menu, looking carefully at the prices charged, she ordered something to eat. In the past, she would never have thought of visiting these establishments, but now she was rebelling. When she had finished eating, she remained sitting at the table, admiring the view overlooking the harbour.

## THE VASE WITH THE MANY COLOURED MARBLES

*'This is what we are missing'* she thought. *'I could never bring my parents, brothers or sisters here. The only way they could come into this place would be as servants, working in the kitchen.'*

She came to a decision.

*'I must become a White, but not an Afrikaner White, an English White. I don't want to be an Afrikaner White because they hate us Coloureds. As an English White I could get away with it, but I must learn to talk English like they do. From now on, no more Afrikaans, I will only speak English.'*

She stood up from her table and paid the bill when the waitress gave it to her. She spoke to her in her broken English, stuttering as she struggled to remember the words. This caused the waitress to look at her curiously. She walked home slowly, pleased with her decision and determined to see it through.

Her parents had raised her to be a devout Christian, and although she still attended the small church every Sunday down the road from where they lived, she had gradually started to reject Christian teachings as being faulty.

*'How can the devout White with their Christian religion discriminate against people based on the colour of their skin?' she thought to herself. 'Why has God allowed this to happen?'*

Their family traditions, passed down through the generations, made her feel as much a South African as she believed the Voortrekkers felt, and she started challenging the right of the Government to discriminate against her.

*'They, the Voortrekkers', she reasoned, 'ran away from the Cape to the Transvaal, because they wanted to escape British rule. My parents, on the other hand, accepted Britain, accepted the King and the Monarchy and the British way of life as adapted to South Africa. In my mind, I am more South African than the Boers who live up in the North, in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.'*

She felt that her heritage was part of the British Empire, and the fact that she had mixed blood in her veins should not be a discrimina-

tory fact. Visiting a library close to District Six, she boldly opened a library account, and started borrowing books written in English to read. She made a point of reading what the South African race laws did to stereotype the population of South Africa into the basic racial categories of English, and Afrikaners, both of whom were of White classification. The nine black tribes were classified as Black Africans who she would have avoided at any case because they looked down on the Coloured community. There were the Indians, who by their own hand divided themselves into Muslim and Hindu, and frowned on marriage between the two, and finally there were those of mixed race and mixed blood, the Coloureds, that was her racial category.

There were also the Malays and the Chinese, although many were uncertain as to the Chinese category simply because of the few Japanese that had come to South Africa and who were allowed White status.

Emily became very angry and withdrawn. She gradually stopped socializing with her Coloured friends, and they with her. She chose instead to walk and eye-shop the popular fashion stores in the city, learning to imitate the dressing habits of the Whites, and by talking to the sales ladies as though she was interested in buying an article of clothing, started improving her English. At home the family usually spoke Afrikaans with the Coloured dialect and intonation and she found learning to speak English not as easy as she thought it would be. They did learn English as a second language at school, but they rarely spoke it during class. She started saving the few pennies given to her as pocket money every week by her father, and sought the odd job in the community to add to those pennies. One night, as they lay in bed, Nellie said to Jeremy in her broken English.

“Jerry, have you seen that Emily has changed?”

“What do you mean?” he asked.

“Just look at her,” she answered sitting up in the bed. “She is starting to dress differently, like those ladies in the magazines.”

“So?” Jeremy said, “What is wrong with that? She is a teenager, growing up.”

“Ja, I suppose so,” Nellie answered, her face a frown of uncertainty. “But, you know, she always used to talk to me in Afrikaans. Now, she only talks to me in English.”

“Ag Ma,” Jerry answered turning on his side and closing his eyes. “Leave her, she will come right.”

Nellie leaned over and blew out the candle that had lit up the room. She lay back in her bed, thinking about Emily. Listening to Jeremy as he snored softly beside her, she slowly relaxed and fell asleep.

Emily began to challenge the race laws more and more. When she walked through the streets, she would often, especially if she saw a crowd of Whites, sit on a ‘Whites only’ bench next to those already sitting there, and wait for someone to say something. No-one did. She would catch a ‘Whites only’ bus to wherever, and wait for the driver or conductor to ask her to get off the bus. None of them did. She started highlighting her hair, which fell in soft brown waves to her shoulders. She no longer lay in the sun looking for a suntan that would turn her skin a beautiful golden brown tan that even then was much lighter than the darker skin of her brothers and sisters. With eyes that were the lightest of blue, she noticed that she was starting to attract the admiring glances of White men, and the odd jealous frown of a White woman.

Her racial obsession kept her awake at night as she schemed of ways to break the racial laws of the country and improve her status. At school she would listen carefully to the teachers when they discussed the new racial laws that were being introduced.

“My father says that they are going to kick us all out of our homes in District Six one of these days,” Violet told her as they walked home from school one afternoon.

“That cannot be,” Emily answered. “We are people. No-one can be that horrible.”

“Well, my father said look what is happening to the Jews in Germany. They are being separated as a different people, like we are here. My father says that many of them are leaving Germany. Quite a few are coming to South Africa.”

“Yes, but there are a lot of English living in South Africa, and I think that if the Government started doing that, there would be a war,” Emma answered, troubled at what Violet had just said, “Then again, I must admit though, that even the English treat us as second class people.”

What Violet had said worried her. Violet had confirmed that as a Coloured she would never be accepted by either the African community, not that she wanted to, nor by the White community, as long as she remained in Cape Town. The fear of being recognized by a friend from the Coloured community as she continually tested the colour barrier was a major concern. As a Coloured, she enjoyed practicing the traditions handed down by her family, but every day she became even more determined to jump the colour barrier and become a White.

After a great deal of thought and introspection, she came to the conclusion that the coloured traditions she had grown up with had to be forgotten and no longer remain even a part of her memory.

On a Sunday, she would now take a bus into the city on some pretext or other and bus her way to Clifton Beach, a beach that is to South Africa what Copacabana is to Rio. She retained her modesty, wearing a one piece bathing suit with a short skirt.

Here, against the stunning backdrop of a mountain dropping almost sheer to the sea, with Devil’s peak on the one side and Lion’s Head on the other; where houses and apartment blocks clung preciously to the steep slopes, she would sunbathe in the shade of an umbrella on the white sandy beaches. She did it more to catch the eye of a White boy than a tan, and indeed, she started catching plenty. Emily began to realize that she was a beautiful girl. She also started to realize that none of the boys even dreamed that she was a Coloured girl, and that

if she were to keep up the deception, she would not only have to dress differently, but would also have to lose her instinctive lapse into the Afrikaans spoken at home with its distinct Coloured dialect.

Whenever she left the boundary of District Six she changed her name to Emma, rather than Emily, using the surname Kline. She had originally thought of spelling her surname as Klein, removing the ‘tjies’ from her true surname, but decided against it. Klein meant small in Afrikaans, and she wanted nothing to do with Afrikaans. When Violet spoke about extracting her two front teeth to create a ‘passion gap’, the fashion of the day with the young Coloured girls, she walked away in disgust.

“A sign to show that we belong to the Coloureds,” she told Violet. “I don’t need that sign.”

She went as often as she could to the bioscope, classified for Whites only, especially when they showed British movies, listening carefully to the dialogue. At night when at home in her bedroom, she would practice talking with an accent similar to that of the heroine in the movie.

Soon there was no end of dates with White boys, and she rejected invitations by the Coloured boys she grew up with. She would always arrange to meet her dates in the city, never bringing them home. Her mother commented on the fact that every Saturday night she was never at home, coming in late and leaving the house early on Sunday, often missing Church. She always lied to her mother, telling her that she was out at a friend’s house.

The double life was beginning to tell on her at home. In the city and on the beach she was Emma Kline, and she spoke English like the Emma Kline she was slowly becoming. At home she was Emily Kleintjies, falling quite naturally into the expressions and slang of those around her as they spoke either English or Afrikaans.

One Sunday morning, sitting in her favourite spot on Clifton beach with two White boys that she usually dated, she suddenly saw Andries

approaching. Andries was a boy in her class at school. He was walking around the beach selling ice cream from a container filled with dry ice to keep them frozen. As she saw him approaching, she immediately lay down and turned onto her tummy, so that Andries would not recognize her. This is what she always did when she saw someone she knew approaching her. She always lived in the fear that she would never notice them and that one day one of them would recognize her. Although Coloureds were not allowed to sunbathe on Clifton beach, they were always walking the beach as hawkers or garbage cleaners.

“Hey, boy,” one of the boys next to her shouted at Andries, “over here. Would you like an ice cream?” he asked Emma looking at her back as she lay on her towel.

“No thank you,” she answered, her voice muffled by her hands as she covered her face with her hat.

“You sure?” he asked, “it is so hot and the ice cream is just what I need to cool off.”

Emma was scared to move. When eventually Andries moved away, she slowly moved onto her back breathing a sigh of relief, keeping her face covered until she was sure that Andries was far enough so as not to recognize her. She looked at the ice creams the two boys were eating.

“John,” she said to one of the boys, “watching the two of you eat those ice creams I have changed my mind. Will you run after that boy there,” and she pointed to where Andries was standing selling ice creams to another couple, “and buy me one?” She reached for her purse.

“Sure,” John said standing up, “my treat,” and he ran through the hot sand towards Andries. She saw Andries looking at her curiously as John bought an ice cream from him, but from the distance he did not recognize her.

A month before her sixteenth birthday, Emily passed Standard 8 at the top of her class. At prize giving, her parents were terribly proud of

her when she received the award for best student in her class. The following night, at supper table her father asked her, "Now that you have finished school, where do you want to go to work?"

She looked up at him in amazement, her fork half way to her mouth.

"But Pa," she said putting her fork back on her plate, "I was hoping to carry on and get my Matric. I would like to go to University, and get a degree. I thought you and Ma would allow me to, seeing that I did so well at school."

Her brother Jonas, when he had completed Standard 8 had immediately found a job as a worker at a Pharmacy in a mall in Goodwood, a suburb of Cape Town.

"I would love to, my dear, but unfortunately we don't have enough money to keep you at school. We need you to help us so that we can educate your younger sisters and brother."

She thought about what he had said for a few minutes looking down at her plate, a tear forming in the corner of her eye. Then with a determination she never knew she had, she looked up at him and asked, "Does it matter to you where I find work?"

"What do you mean?" he asked her, looking at Nellie as she came in from the kitchen carrying a hot plate of food.

"For a long time now," Emily continued, "I have wanted to go to Johannesburg. I feel that I would like to see more of South Africa," she lied. "If you allowed me to go, and I found a job in Johannesburg, would that be O.K. with you and Ma?"

"But you have only just turned sixteen," Nellie cried out, "you cannot leave home so young."

Emily turned to face her mother. "Ma," she said with a smile on her face, "you married Pa when you were only fifteen, so at sixteen, I am one year older than you were." She turned to her father and continued. "You know, working in Cape Town, I would earn very little. I have spent a lot of time in the library reading newspapers, Transvaal news-

papers, and I have seen that jobs pay much better there, than here.”

“We will think about it,” her father interrupted angrily. “Now let us finish our supper.”

They all sat quietly not saying a word. Emily no longer felt hungry, and after a while she stood up and cleared the table, washing all the dishes in the sink, drying them and packing them away.

*“I will keep nagging them,” she thought. “Eventually they must give in.”*

After many arguments and a lot of tears, her parents did give in, Nellie probably realizing her intentions, but saying nothing. Three weeks after that decisive supper, she bought a dress and a suit with the few pounds that she had managed to save up by helping out in the shops close to where they lived. She needed clothes that she felt would be suitable for Johannesburg. Jeremy and Nellie had given in to her, but not without a fight. Beaming with her newfound determination and a spring in her step in anticipation of a new life in the Transvaal, she caught the train from Cape Town to Johannesburg. Tears streamed from her eyes as she waved goodbye to her family standing on the station. Her heart tore as she watched her mother sobbing on her father’s chest, his arm consolingly around her; her hand to her mouth. Her brothers and sisters standing with them waved and shouted their goodbyes as the train pulled out of the station.

She cried her goodbyes from the coach marked for Non-Whites, dressed in the long large flowery dress that enveloped her, but once the train had left the station, she walked to the lavatory, and changed into the tight fitting white suit she had bought. She freed her hair from the tight bun covered by a doek, allowing it to fall naturally to her shoulders. She made up her face, taking special care with the eye shadow and lipstick, and then satisfied with how she looked, she went back to the coach, but sat in a different seat, closer to the exit. At the first stop, Paarl, she left the Non-White coach and with butterflies in her stomach, calmly walked into the coach reserved for Whites. Weeks before, she had bought a ticket to a basic sleeper four person

compartment, and she walked through the coach looking for her compartment. Eventually finding it, she found that she was sharing it with two ladies.

“Good morning,” she said as she reached up and placed her small suitcase in the overhead rack, standing on the seat to do so. She smiled at them as she sat down.

“Good morning,” the lady she sat next to replied.

“Good day,” the lady in the seat opposite said to her in Afrikaans.

She relaxed, her nervousness slowly dissipating as the clickety-clack of the train soothed her. She was sitting in a Whites-only compartment with two white ladies. From this day on she would be and would live as a White. She was now Emma Kline.

When the conductor came around to examine tickets while the train was travelling through the Karoo, he smiled at her, and then said in Afrikaans,

“Ladies, do enjoy your trip. If you should need anything, please let me know.”

At sixteen, Emma had grown to be a very beautiful young lady. She was slim and had taught herself to be very poised and full of confidence, something remarkable for a young woman of her age, but something she knew she could achieve. Anyone who may at any stage have doubted her racial qualification was stared down by her into embarrassment at even doubting that this beautiful woman, with her bright blue eyes, was anything but a White. Had they only known about the butterflies in her stomach! But then, nearly one year of Clifton beach associating with, joking and even necking with good looking White jocks had given her the confidence to pull off her change.