

## **AN EXCERPT FROM: HELLO AND GOODBYE BY ATHOL FUGARD**

Hester: Somewhere else. Your were too young. They pushed me forward. 'Say goodbye to your Mommie, Hester.' I said it – but I couldn't cry. I was dry and hot inside. Ashamed! Of u. Of her, Mommie, for being dead and causing all the fuss. Of him, Daddy, his face cracked like one of our old plates, saying things he never said when she was alive.

And all the uncles and aunties kissing him and patting hin on the back and saying 'Shame!' every time they saw you. It was those cousins of his from Despatch, who never ever came to visit us. The whole mob of them, all in black, the little girls in pretty dresses, looking at everything in the house and us looking like poor whites because there wasn't enough cups to give everybody coffee at the same time. I hated it! I hated Mommie for being dead. I couldn't cry. I cried later. I don't know, maybe two days. Everything was over, the relatives gone. He was in bed with shock. The house was quiet like never before. Then there was a knock at the back door. I opened it an it was that coolie who always sold the vegetables, 'Where's your Mommie?' he asked. I couldn't say anything at first. 'Girlie, where's your Mommie?' then I told him. 'Dead.' I just said, 'Dead', and started to cry. He took off his hat and stood there watching me until I shouted, 'Voetsek!' and chased him away – and sad down and cried and cried. Because suddenly I knew she was dead, and what it meant, being dead. It's goodbye for keeps. She was gone forever. So I cried. There was something I wanted to do, but it was to late.