

Changing Voices

Journey to Jo'burg By Beverley Naidoo

Naledi and Tiro travel from their small South African village to the big city of Johannesburg (Jo'burg) to bring their mother home to care for their sick baby sister. Life is hard in the village, but they learn some even harder lessons in the city where the effects of apartheid are far more serious than they could have imagined. What they see and learn will change Naledi's heart, mind, and future.

LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

WORD POWER – from Beverley Naidoo

My first novel was *Journey to Jo'burg*. When you read it, I hope you feel that you are on the journey with Naledi and Tiro. I want you to be gripped by what happens to them. I want you to feel their shock, breathe their relief, taste their tears and share their dreams. I also hope that you, my readers, will be left with many images, feelings and thoughts from the story that lead you to ask your own questions. Why did such things ever happen? Why do they still happen? Why do some human beings treat other human beings as if they are nothing? You might even feel moved to ask: 'What can we do?' 'What can I do?'

The Apartheid government in South Africa banned *Journey to Jo'burg*. If the Apartheid police found it in your home, the law said that your parents could be fined or even put in jail. When you have read the story, perhaps you will talk about why you think it was banned.

Journey to Jo'burg was unbanned in the year after Nelson Mandela was released from jail. Now we have a democratic government in South Africa. In 1994 for the very first time, all the parents of all the children in South Africa were able to vote for the people they wanted to make the laws in their land. Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected President - and the first black President.

I wonder if you have heard anyone say, 'The pen is mightier than the sword'? I believe it is. What do you think?

Keep the words flowing...

Beverley Naidoo