



# Through The Tunnel

*Doris Lessing*

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## **Through The Tunnel** Doris Lessing

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## **Through The Tunnel Details**

Date : Published March 28th 2013 by Fourth Estate (first published June 1989)

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Author : Doris Lessing

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# From Reader Review Through The Tunnel for online ebook

## Matea says

Written by the British author and 2007 Nobel Prize winner, Doris Lessing, this rather intriguing and thought-provoking short story, originally published by The New Yorker in 1955, revolves around the English pair, mother and her son, vacationing. The exact location of the beach where the main action takes place is not in any way specified but it could be gathered from the text that it is surely set in a foreign country.

Jerry is at the beach with his mother, a widow. One day he goes swimming to the new beach, far away from their usual spot. There he meets a group of older boys, obviously foreigners. Jerry tries to communicate with them but they speak different language. Boys show him the tunnel under water and after they leave him it becomes Jerry's fixation to go through the tunnel. Will he succeed?

Focusing mostly on Jerry, plot is fairly simple. Characters are somewhat one dimensional. It could be said that Jerry's key character determiner is his devotion. Once he decided he wants to go through the tunnel he made all the preparation to make that happen. He is stubborn but at the same time determined, a typical attribute of a boy coming of age.

Despite the ostensibly simple plot, this short story contains several fairly big metaphors within itself. Allegory of older boys whom Jerry is not able to understand, illustrates how foreign and peculiar adult world is to a youngster. Another great image is one of two beaches. One beach is familiar, where his mother is and the other is dangerous and unknown. Jerry is fascinated with the second beach, a symbol of adult world and of the inevitable – growing up.

On the whole, this is well worth reading since it opens up theme very close to the young public. As someone who recently left the "safety" of home's nest, I felt really closely attached to the story. I would most definitely recommend this story to everybody of age between 9 and 19. An interesting, fast paced, captivating and easy to understand piece. Give it a try.

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## Diana Bautista says

This was a WEIRD story, it has a confuse metaphor between the setting and the trials of life. I kinda liked it, but I do not recommend it.

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## Dakota Tutor says

I had to read this in my English II class, and I really liked it. My favourite kind of literature is that coming-of-age kind of story, because with so many /kids/ out there, all their stories are really unique. This is no exception. It has inner struggle, good imagery, and a really good feel overall.

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## **Sarah says**

Out of the series of short stories I have been reading recently this one was one of the more promising, however I still felt that it lacked excitement but instead ended in a rather generic and predictable way

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## **Fag says**

it was okay.

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## **Oziel Bispo says**

Atravessar um túnel debaixo d'agua que só garotos maiores que ele ou adultos conseguem, torna se uma obsessão para um garoto de 11 anos. .mas para ele essa travessia vai significar muita coisa; a independência em relação à sua mãe e a sua entrada no mundo dos adultos.

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## **Joao Miguel says**

This short story is especially interesting because of it's thematic ideas and the story it is trying to tell. These include growing out of childhood and entering manhood and preserverence to name a couple.

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## **Grace Austin says**

An easy to understand and inviting piece.

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## **Lucy Hutchinson says**

This story was just perfect. I felt completely immersed (pun intended) in this young boys adventure. I think it really sums up our struggle as children to push for the goals in out sights, and not to give up regardless of the obstacles we face.

I felt so linked to the character that I actually held my breath whilst reading.

There was just the right amount of excitement and danger, and such beautiful prose. I really deserves an extra star from me.

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## **Andrew Childers says**

This book, or rather short story, stays on the beach; the boy, Jerry, ever seeking to be more manly keeps close enough to his mom so that she's still within sight. His mom tries to let him grow up some, but Jerry

wants to do what the older boys do. I first read this story during my creative writing class (OCCC); my professor cut it up in pieces. Each student read a piece without the context; each piece was solid in itself. Together, the pieces of the story stand tall. I suggest reading it. A simple google search will find you this story in pdf.

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## **Emily Logue says**

Rite of Passage

Through the Tunnel by Doris Lessing. The New Yorker, New York, 1995.

Doris Lessing perfectly captures the awkward age of adolescence the time period where one is caught between childhood and adulthood. Lessing wonderfully portrays the fears involved with branching out into the unfamiliar adult world, along with the accompanying fear of parents to let their children leave the nest. As a young reader, new to being on my own, I found this story really hit home for me.

The author flawlessly captures the feeling of younger child longing for the acceptance of the older children. The of Jerry is reminiscent to the younger brother trying to catch up to his older siblings, tagging along and trying to prove his worth, and almost always getting hurt because of his stubbornness. On the flip side she captures the abject feelings of rejection when Jerry is welcomed by the older boys only to be ignored when they figure out he is foreign. He cries uncontrollably after being left behind as the boys swim through the secret tunnel. But the rejection just makes Jerry determined to prove his worth.

I truly admired the abundant metaphors contained within this short story. By far the most intriguing, was the portrayal as the older boys as foreigners whose speech was not understood by Jerry. This can be interpreted as a representation of how foreign and alien the adult world is to a child. While on the cusp of manhood, the adult world is still a mystery to him. Another interesting allusion was that of the two beaches. The safe beach frequented by Jerry's mother is an obvious representation for childhood safety; it is warm and sunny with safe waves. The rocky beach inhabited by the older boys is a symbol for adulthood; it is rough and intimidating but intriguing to the almost man Jerry.

Coinciding with Jerry's struggle to swim through the underwater tunnel and be recognized by the older boys, there is the mother's struggle to let her child grow up. It is obvious that in the beginning of the story the relationship between mother and son is tense, Jerry is on the brink of adulthood and his mother is not prepared for this. She does let her son leave the safety of her side for the rocky beach, but at the first sign of trouble, in the form of a bloody nose, she recalls him to her side in the nursery like beach. In an act of rebellion the boy strikes out on his own to the rocky beach without his mother's knowledge. He succeeds in proving himself, but in a twist fears he will be unable to swim back the way he came, perhaps a metaphor for innocence lost.

All in all "Through the Tunnel" is a charming story that perfectly captures the determination of a young boy trying to prove himself a man and a mother's fear of letting go. It's a quick read but it particularly resonated from me as someone who recently "left the nest". I would defiantly recommend this rite of passage story to any avid reader.

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## **Mateo (pokemon time!) Rivera ;) says**

this book is a good book. although it has a very gory ending, it is good and easy to understand.

This book is about a boy named Jerry who discovers a tunnel underwater. He tries over and over and over again attempting to get in the tunnel and through it. will he succeed? (SPOILER:yes)

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### **storiystereo says**

I don't want to say the write was bad, because it wasn't. I liked the plotline, as I thought it was decent.

I am rating it so low because for me, it was a struggle and displeasure to read. I just couldn't get into it, and it felt like it was 'jagged' as I read it.

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### **miakowsky says**

“Through the Tunnel”, by Doris Lessing is a story about a boy named Jerry, and how he matures over time. Jerry wanted to be included in a group of older boys. He thought they would accept him if he could swim through a tunnel underwater. For Jerry, movement through the tunnel is a passage from the immaturity of boyhood to the maturity of adulthood.

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### **Anatoly says**

The short story "Through the Tunnel" by Doris Lessing told about the young English boy, Jerry, who came with his mother for a summer vacation to the sea abroad. The author described in the first paragraph these two people: the mother walked on in front of the boy, carrying a bright-striped bag and the boy who stopped at turning off the path and looked down at a wild and rocky bay.

Next morning Jerry asked his mother to permit him to go and have a look at the rocks there. She agreed. He was an only child, eleven years old, she was a widow. She thought that he mustn't feel he ought to be with her.

Jerry went down to the rock, he jumped into the sea, he was a good swimmer. He dived and when he appeared on the surface, he noticed a group of boys. They spoke a language which he didn't understand. He very much wanted to be with them. He was so glad to see that one boy noticed him and smiled. They shouted cheerfully at him and when they understood that he was a foreigner they proceeded to ignore him. Jerry was happy to be with them.

Next time Jerry saw one boy dived into the water and didn't come up. Jerry yelled in warning, the other boys looked at him idly and turned their eyes back toward the water. After a long time, the boy came up on the other side of a rock and shouted triumphantly. The other boys followed the example of the fellow, and Jerry understood that they swam through the tunnel in the rock.

The idea of going through the tunnel intrigued Jerry. He had passed several classes at a diving school. He thought he must learn to control his breathing. He counted the time being underwater, Jerry exercised his lungs as if it was the goal of his whole life. At night, the boy dreamed of the water-filled cave in the rock. His nose was bleeding.

He continued training. The boys made a pause while he counted a hundred and sixty. He thought that now if he tried, he could get through that long tunnel, but he was not going to try yet. The author wrote, "A curious, most unchildlike persistence, a controlled impatience, made him wait."

He understood how dangerous swimming through the tunnel could be. He was frightened but he said to himself that if he did not do it now, he never would. Eventually, he did it. It happened in the morning, he went to the beach and swam through the tunnel. When he came to the surface, he saw "the local boys diving and playing half a mile away. He did not want them. He wanted nothing but to get back home and lie down."

He told his mother that he can stay underwater for three minutes. The mother looked at him closely. She noticed that his face was pale, he was strained. His eyes were glazed-looking. She was worried. She was ready to argue against his underwater swimming, "but he gave in at once. It was no longer of the least importance to go to the bay."

A reader can assume that when the boy becomes an adult he would be recognized for the great achievements. The idea that if you set your mind to something, then you can accomplish it - was expressed in Jerry's desire to getting through the tunnel and as a result, he did that. After Jerry reached his goal, he no longer felt the desire to demonstrate it or to be congratulated by the other boys. In the case of Jerry, the tunnel symbolizes the passage from childhood to adulthood. In the story of the boy who went through the tunnel, the author represented people who are able to overcome difficulties.

Here is the link to the text of the story:

<http://bclearningnetwork.com/LOR/medi...>

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