

Epilogue. The Call Out

In the epilogue of **The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store**, we revisit Hirshel Koffler and his brother Yigel, Jewish refugees from Austria, who are embarking on their lives in America. Just six weeks into their new life, they become brakemen for the Pennsylvania Railroad's freight train, the Tanker Toad, which transfers coal from Berwyn, Pennsylvania, to the Pennhurst hospital. This particular Memorial Day weekend in 1936 presents them with a puzzling situation: a tall, lanky Negro holding a crying child in their freight car, a scene that feels strange to the brothers who are still adjusting to the nuances of American culture, including the food, language barriers, and industrial landscapes.

Under orders from their union boss, Uri Guzinski, they do not engage with the man and instead follow the directive to escort him and the child to Berwyn. As they arrive at the freight yard, two well-dressed Negroes meet them, accepting a little boy and handing over an envelope that contains forty dollars and an invitation for free new shoes, signed by M. Skrup—a gesture made possible by indirect community support that ties back to a past meeting involving the brothers' hometown community.

As the narrative unfolds, it interweaves the history of Nate Love, a man who helps get the boy to freedom and a better life in Charleston, South Carolina. The boy, known as Dodo, learns to adapt to new surroundings, developing skills like farming and community engagement, while memories of his past fade, the pain from Pennhurst dissipating over time. Nate Love resolves himself to never seeing his beloved Addie again but remains hopeful, revealing the enduring connection between love and loss.

As Dodo grows, he becomes a family man, raising children in the South, yet one memory lingers fiercely—the woman with shining hair who offered him friendship when he needed it most. Dodo's journey culminates in his transformation into Nate Love II, a legacy reborn through his family. At the end of his life, as memories of his past evoke mixed feelings of joy and sorrow, he utters a cryptic farewell, "Thank you, Monkey Pants," suggesting bonds that transcend even the deepest rifts of time and space.