

## Synopsis

### Leaving

by M.G. Vassanji  
(Retold by Jennifer Basset)

*Leaving* is set in Tanzania. It tells the story of Mother who raises her five children alone after the early death of her husband. After the two elder girls get married and the eldest son acquires a job, Mother is ambitious for her two youngest children, Aloo, who is in his final year in school, and his elder sibling/the narrator, who is in university. Mother sells the family store to move to a quiet part of town to enable Aloo and his sibling to study more easily. Mr Dato, a former teacher, comes back from America for a visit and that inspires Aloo to think of going overseas. He wants to study medicine in America instead of accepting an offer from the local university to study agriculture. He starts writing to American universities to get the necessary information. Eventually, the California Institute of Technology offers him a place with a scholarship. However, his mother is against him accepting the offer, saying that she cannot afford to send him there. She then seeks advice from a school officer, Mr Velji. He tells her that getting the scholarship is good for Aloo's future, but he also cautions her that she may lose him if she lets him go far away. Finally, Mother decides to let Aloo go. The narrator describes a new awareness of Mother as a person who has always put her children first. Aloo's first letter describes his excitement at seeing London, his stopover on the way to America. The story ends with the contrast between Aloo's new adventure and Mother's sadness of not knowing whether her beloved son will return.

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