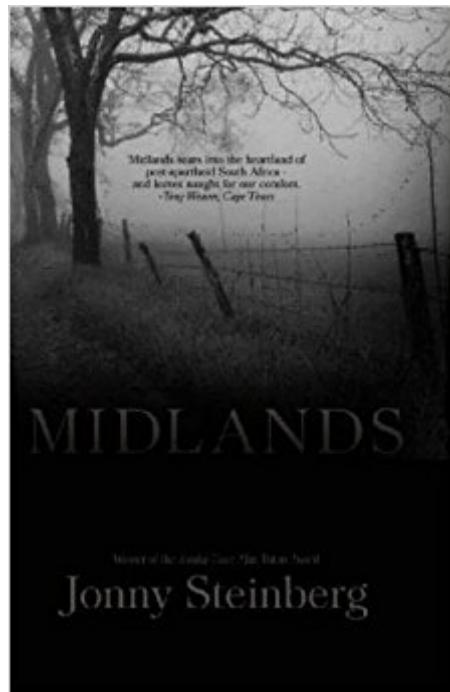


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# Midlands



## **Synopsis**

Sifting through the betrayals and the poisoned memories of a century-long relationship between black and white, this title takes us to a part of post-apartheid South Africa.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 259 pages

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## **Customer Reviews**

A look at a situation (murder) from the perspective of many aspects of life in South Africa, and the author's speculation of what happened after talking to all the different parties. I found it to be a very informative and insightful look into South African culture.

JS has written a magnificent book on one of the most controversial issues in post-apartheid RSA: farm attacks. Clearly, some of those crimes are just opportunistic: these people live isolated among destitute people. However, some claim a conspiracy theory where white landowners are driven out illegally through violence. Reports of heinous crimes have surfaced in the last years, including torture towards defenseless elderly and children. So, this is a disturbing issue, which some might prefer to swipe it under the carpet of the so-called non-violent miracle of transition from an authoritarian regime toward majority rule. If you add the importance of land ownership in Africa, the subject is already interesting. In addition, this book is not just about farms attacks: it deals with the deep rift between whites and blacks in rural South Africa, the relationship between rich land owners and destitute tenants and the lack of empathy thereof. What comes to my mind, after reading the book, is the enormous rift between these two cultures that came to blows between each other in that beautiful part of the world. The book deals with the subtleties of this power relationship. The author

describes magnificently the lack of understanding of Zulu's traditions, culture and beliefs by the white community. It also touches on the violence which permeates RSA life in all its aspects, the utter failure of the criminal "justice" system, in particular the police's detective service, and the politics around it, the link between the townships upheaval in the 80's and current surge in violence, both in the urban and rural areas, the unlawful actions of farm watch/commandos/police reservists in rural areas, the repercussions of conservation areas among the poor rural inhabitants, and a ominous sense of lawlessness - nobody is really interested in truth, justice or in a more equitable society. Instead, the laws are used to advance particular interests. All this in stark contrast with the beauty of the land, which characterize RSA countryside in general, and in particular the area where the crime, described in the book, occurred. To conclude, the author did a great job in matching macro sociological/historical trends with people's lives troubles, and he used a neat, clear, straightforward and lean style in describing a complex, difficult situation. A must read if you want to understand modern South Africa and the background to its race relations.

I thought this book did a great job of explaining a complicated situation and it really brought home to me the long term wounds in the farmland of South Africa. I did not know a lot about the history before I read the book, and I felt like the book did a good job guiding the reader through it all. How things that happened a hundred years ago can impact today. I could tell it was hard to research and I appreciate the honest and direct way the story is told, even though so many names had to be changed.

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