

MEET THE AUTHOR

When did you first know you wanted to write?

I can't remember a time when I didn't want to write. I first wrote a play, which I performed with my family at Christmas, when I was eight years old. Even when I did other things I always knew I was a writer and I was just filling in time until I could sit down and write.

You mention plays. Do you still write plays or just stories?

I write lots of stories for English language learners and I also write plays as I like the challenge of describing people through what they say and do. It's very different from writing fiction, but very exciting when you see actors playing characters you have invented.



How do you begin a story?

Well I don't wait for inspiration. Often I begin with an issue, for example something that makes me angry or worried. Then I think about the characters. Who would be involved in this issue? What kind of people are affected or get involved in it?

Why did you write this story?

There is a lot of discussion in the papers at the moment about the environment and carbon trade, and it is a subject that has interested me for many years.

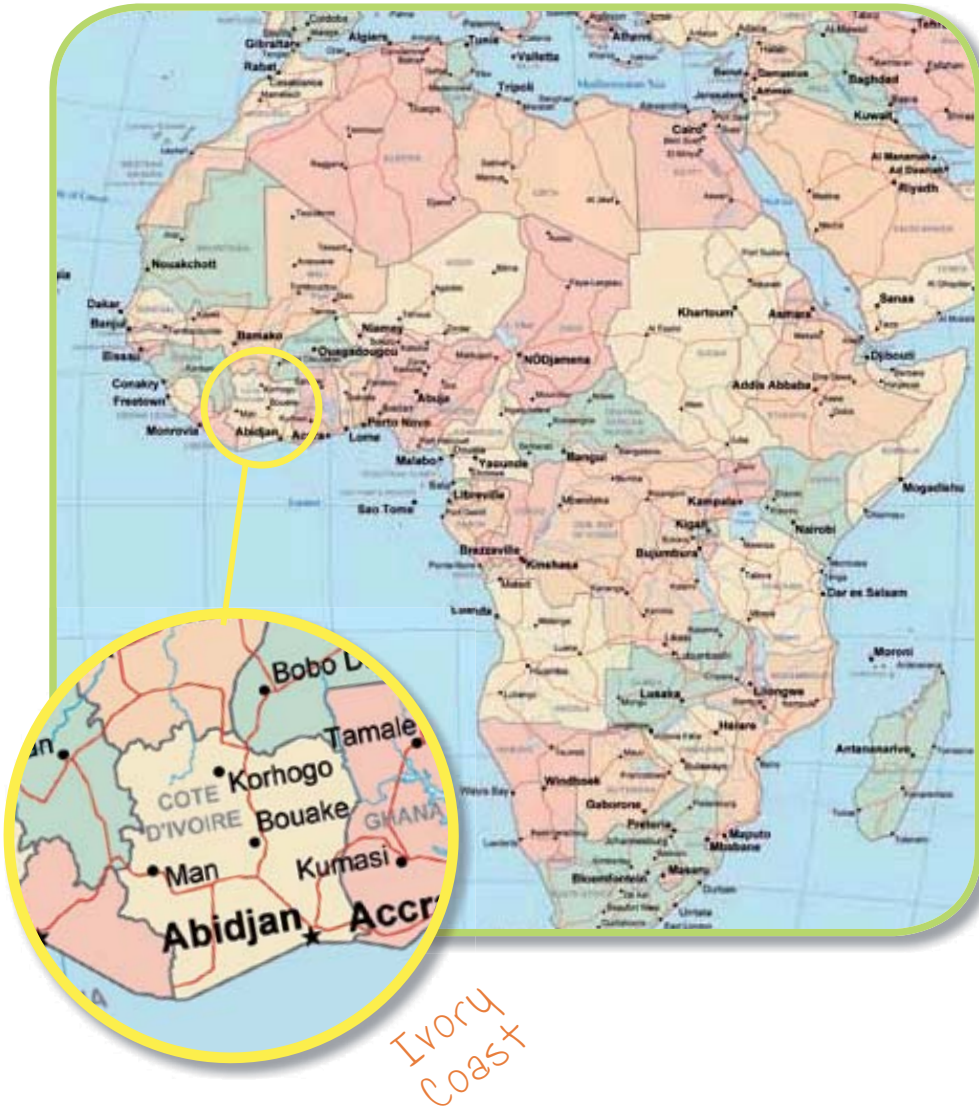
Have you ever been to Africa?

I've been to North Africa several times, and I once sailed in a boat all the way round Africa to Kenya and fell in love with the continent. I feel that what happens in Africa is important for all of us.

BEFORE READING



- 1 The story, *Red Water*, takes place in England and the Ivory Coast. Listen to the information about the Ivory Coast and answer the questions.



- 1 The Ivory Coast is in Africa.
☐ a East ☐ b West ☐ c North
- 2 Which of the following countries doesn't border with the Ivory Coast?
☐ a The Gambia ☐ b Guinea ☐ c Ghana
- 3 The climate is hot and wet from
☐ a November to March ☐ b March to May ☐ c June to October
- 4 Mont Nimba is a in the Ivory Coast.
☐ a lake ☐ b mountain ☐ c forest
- 5 The population of the Ivory Coast is
☐ a 17.6 million ☐ b 70.6 million ☐ c 16.7 million
- 6 People in the Ivory Coast live until around the age of
☐ a 59 ☐ b 69 ☐ c 49
- 7 Yamoussoukro is the of the Ivory Coast.
☐ a largest city ☐ b capital city ☐ c former capital city
- 8 Which of the following can the Ivory Coast not export?
☐ a diamonds ☐ b cocoa ☐ c rubber



- 2 With a partner write a quiz about your country. Then give the quiz to another pair to do.

3 Read these quotes from the story and answer the questions.

- (a) . . . he just smashed his way into the apartment. He didn't say his name, but his purpose was clear. What he wanted was silence. And that was what he got. He bought silence with fear.
- (b) "That is extremely serious," agreed the inspector. "We've got every available police officer looking for your sister. But I'm afraid it's a question of whether we can find her in time."

- (1) What kind of story is it? Tick.
- ☐ Thriller ☐ Adventure ☐ Horror ☐ Romance
- (2) What do you think takes place in the story? Tick two items.
- ☐ A murder ☐ A hijack ☐ A kidnap ☐ A robbery



4 Look at the pictures below. Describe the people.

- (1) What do they look like?
- (2) What kind of personalities do you think they have got?
- (3) What do you think their professions are?



Daniel



Mr Johnson



Tricia

5 Who do you think is the villain of the story? Give reasons.

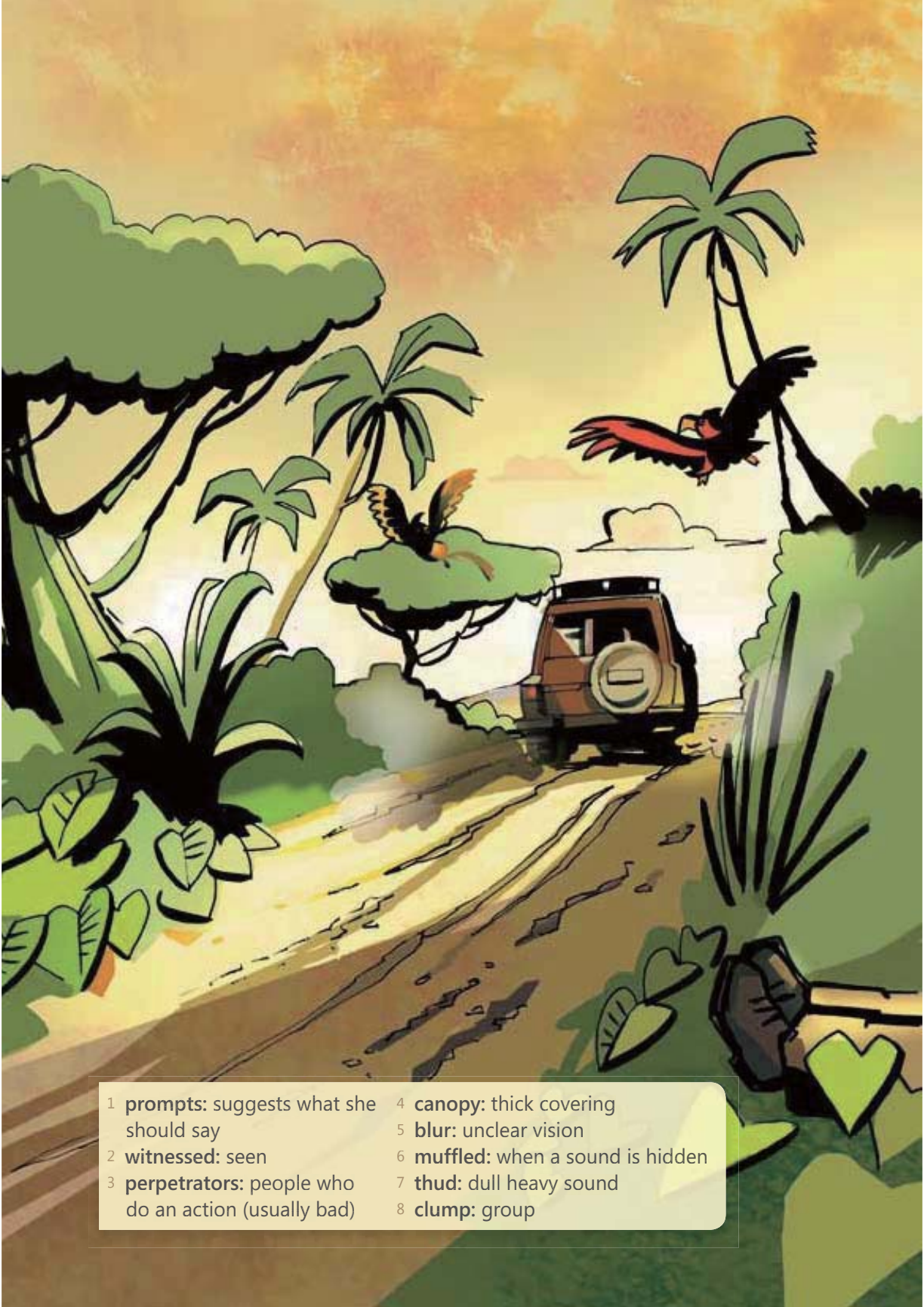
6 Check if you know the meaning of these words from the story.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a memory stick | <input type="checkbox"/> e the races |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b leaflets | <input type="checkbox"/> f dam |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> g explosion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d global corporations | <input type="checkbox"/> h mine |

7 The words are all important to the story. Can you guess how?
Use each of the words above to complete the sentences.

- ☐ a They decided to produce and hand them out outside the supermarket.
- ☐ b Suddenly there was a huge Smoke and flames poured out of the building.
- ☐ c They say that they are building a hydro-electric there, to make electricity.
- ☐ d These days the big are more powerful than governments.
- ☐ e Governments around the world have been asked to lower their of greenhouse gases.
- ☐ f Since he was ten he had worked down a digging diamonds out of the ground.
- ☐ g She copied all the information she needed from the computer onto her
- ☐ h Her father owned a racehorse and he often brought his clients to

8 Choose one of the sentences above. Continue the story from there.



¹ **prompts:** suggests what she should say

² **witnessed:** seen

³ **perpetrators:** people who do an action (usually bad)

⁴ **canopy:** thick covering

⁵ **blur:** unclear vision

⁶ **muffled:** when a sound is hidden

⁷ **thud:** dull heavy sound

⁸ **clump:** group



On Thursday 12th May two apparently unrelated things happened within the same two minutes in two very different parts of the world.

"What's extraordinary . . ." says Tricia, looking back at that moment. She stops.

"Yes?" prompts¹ her mother.

"What's so incredible," Tricia continues, "is that they happened on the same day, at the same time. Don't you think?"

"I *don't* think," says her mother. "I try not to think. I just try to move on."

"I keep thinking, what if?" says Tricia. "What if one of those things hadn't happened? What if I . . .? I know, Mum," she says. "You can't go through life saying, 'what if?' – but just imagine . . . *what if?*"

* * * * *

The first event took place on a dusty red earth road that led to a small village in the heart of equatorial Africa. It was an event witnessed² only by its perpetrators³ and two gray parrots that rose screaming from the forest canopy⁴ in a blur⁵ of red tail-feathers. There was the sound of a gun firing. Three times. And then the muffled⁶ thud⁷ of a man's body being thrown into a clump⁸ of thorn bushes.



To the men with the guns he wasn't a man; he was a job, a task. They never thought of him as a man. Nor did the men who had sent them. That was their mistake.

Every human has a name; every human has a story. This man, the man who had died, was called Winston. Winston worked for a large multinational company that had just sacked¹ him; and Winston was scared. That was why he'd left the city and was trying to escape to his village at the other end of the dusty red road.

He'd been born in that village, but had moved to the capital city to study, and then, later, after he had acquired² certificates and a degree, he had stayed on to work there. In the city he had a wife and two children, and they were worried about him. His wife knew that something bad was going on, but for the sake of³ the children she said nothing.

Winston's wife was a kind woman who loved her husband and her children. When the man came to her home, she knew something bad was going to happen. This man didn't say very much. He was a man of few words. He was called the Sweeper⁴, and he was one of the two men who, on that Thursday morning, were carrying guns and climbing back into the Land Rover on a dusty red earth road in Africa.

The Sweeper didn't knock on the door of Winston's home – he just smashed his way into the apartment. He didn't say his name, but his purpose⁵ was clear. What he wanted was silence. And that was what he got. He bought silence with fear.



The Sweeper was a man who traded in⁶ fear. He was a man who swept up problems. Winston was a problem, and the Sweeper got rid of⁷ him. And now he was in Winston's home, and his message to Winston's wife was clear; he knew where she and the children lived.

Winston's wife understood. She bought her children's lives with silence, but she knew she couldn't buy her husband's life. It was already too late. That was why Winston's wife had wept⁸ even before the news of Winston's death reached her. Winston was dead before he left the city, before he walked down the dusty red earth road.

Winston's wife loved her husband, but she did not speak out⁹. Not then, or ever. She had to think about her children. The Sweeper relied¹⁰ on this. He, and the men who paid him, the company men.

Silence

- Winston's wife decides not to speak out against the Sweeper. Can you think of a time when you chose not to speak? Or when it would be best to say nothing?

- sacked:** when you lose your job
- acquired:** got
- for the sake of:** for the good of
- Sweeper:** someone who cleans with a brush
- purpose:** objective; what he wanted

- traded in:** used for his work
- got rid of:** removed
- wept:** cried
- speak out:** protest
- relied:** depended