

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?

I often begin with a "what if" situation. What if you arrived at the airport and there was no one to meet you? That's how I started this story. Then I got to know Jake and started to think about who he was and what he wanted. The story is always about character rather than plot.

Have you been to Greece?

I lived in Athens for four years and often go to Crete, which is a wonderful island. I know many of the places in the story and they are very dramatic. You can imagine things happening there.


BEFORE READING

- 1 The story, *Danger in the Sun*, takes place in Athens and on the island of Crete. How much do you know about Athens and Crete? Do the quiz and find out.



- 1 Who was the city of Athens named after?
☐ a A king ☐ b A goddess ☐ c A queen
- 2 When were the first modern Olympic Games held in Athens?
☐ a 1796 ☐ b 1886 ☐ c 1996
- 3 What is the Parthenon?
☐ a A castle ☐ b A park ☐ c A temple
- 4 When was it built?
☐ a 447-438 BC ☐ b 1430-1440 AD ☐ c 1110-1000 BC

- 5 What is the Acropolis?
☐ a A castle in Athens ☐ b A hill in Athens ☐ c A bridge in Athens
- 6 What is the capital city of Crete?
☐ a Melissa ☐ b Athens ☐ c Heraklion
- 7 Which is the largest Greek island?
☐ a Rhodes ☐ b Crete ☐ c Corfu

 **2** Choose one of the following subjects. Find out more about it. Then give a presentation to the class.

The Acropolis

Athens

The origins of the Olympic Games

The Parthenon







This is the fantasy¹. I am in Athens with my father. Where? Maybe the Parthenon. Yes, I am standing in the middle of the Acropolis with my father. OK, I know you're not allowed to stand there because they are repairing² it. This is my fantasy, OK? So I'm there and although I've seen it a thousand times on posters and postcards, it seems quite different.

It is the same, but not exactly the same. I love the place and how old it is and suddenly I understand why my father is an archaeologist.

Then he looks at me and he sees all of this in my expression and I know he is really happy. I know that this is what he has always wanted—to share³ his passion for Greece with his son.

"I guess you've been up here hundreds of times," I say.

"Maybe dozens⁴," he replies. "In the old days it was free entry on Sundays and evenings when there was a full moon. We often came up here with a bottle of wine and we drank and toasted⁵ the glories⁶ of Ancient Greece."

"In the old days," I joke.

"Yeah," he says. "When dinosaurs walked the earth."

It is our joke. We have jokes. We do things together.

I have many fantasies about my father, Alexander Wyatt. This is one of them.

¹ **fantasy:** dream

² **repairing:** fixing

³ **share:** enjoy with another person

⁴ **dozens:** (here) many times

⁵ **toasted:** raised their glasses and honored someone or thing

⁶ **glories:** great successes



I have not seen my father for five years. I was ten when he left home. But here I am at Athens airport and, finally, after all this time we are going to have a holiday together. We will visit the Acropolis and he'll show me amazing things and we will have jokes together. Except . . .

Except I am here at Athens airport and he isn't. He isn't here to meet me and I don't know why.

Waiting



- Why do you think Mr Wyatt is not there to meet his son?
- Have you ever waited for someone who arrived very late or didn't turn up¹? How did you feel? What did you do?

I take out the last email he sent me. "I am so pleased you're coming here at last. I'll be at the airport to meet you at 14:20."

But now it is 15:30 and I'm standing in a crowd of people with cards saying "Mr Jones" and "Olympic Hotel" and I decide that I don't want to spend my holiday hanging around² Athens airport with a lot of strangers. What I want is my dad and just like every other time in my life when I've wanted him, he's not here and I feel really angry and fed up³.

¹ **turn up:** arrive for an appointment

² **hanging around:** waiting in; staying somewhere without doing anything

³ **fed up:** annoyed



When I was ten and I wanted him, I used to tell myself stories. But I'm not ten any more and I am not in the mood⁴ for stories. I am going to find my father and I'm going to tell him that when his only son comes to visit after five years he needs a very good excuse when he doesn't turn up. A very, very good excuse.

Then I act. I go to the information desk where a pretty, dark-haired girl smiles at me and says that she is sorry that my father is not there. She then says quite sharply⁵ over the loudspeaker⁶: "Alexander Wyatt must come immediately to Information where his son Jake is waiting."

And when he does not come, she looks worried and asks if I am OK. I tell her that I'm fine and that I'll go to the hotel and wait for him there. So she smiles again and says that the traffic in Athens is terrible and he must be delayed⁷.

I change some money and I get the metro to Syntagma Square which is where the Parliament is and also (as the nice girl at the information desk showed me) two minutes' walk from my hotel. According to my father, the best thing about the hotel is the view of the Acropolis from the roof. When I get there, I find that my father does have a room for us and that he has talked to the receptionist about my arrival and that he is happy that I am finally coming to Greece.

"I do not understand why he was not at the airport," the receptionist says and looks worried. "He left here three hours ago because he did not want to be late."

⁴ **I'm not in the mood:** I don't feel like; I don't want

⁵ **sharply:** in a determined and angry way

⁶ **loudspeaker:** piece of equipment that makes your voice or sounds louder

⁷ **delayed:** stopped from arriving in time