

The Man from Nowhere

Aims

- To introduce students to the desert setting of the story.
- To introduce them to the characters and the situation.

1 Tell students that the book is called *The Man from Nowhere*. Ask them what they understand by the title, and what kind of story they think it will be.

Ask them to read the Blurb and decide on the genre (thriller). Ask them whether they think they will find the story interesting. Why/why not? Ask students to think about what might have happened to the man. How does the Blurb help them understand the title?

2 Ask students what they know about deserts. Put them in pairs to make a list of information. Call back answers and make a board list.

Possible answers: very hot by day, very cold by night; sand; no trees; sandstorms; no water – only where there is an oasis; few plants and animals – snakes, lizards, scorpions, some other mammals and insects; dangerous for humans; people use camels to cross deserts; Africa, Australia, USA, parts of Asia, Middle East all have deserts.

3 Tell students that this is the story of a man who is flying his family home to Tehran after a holiday in India. The plane crashes in the desert. He decides to leave his wife and son by the plane and go for help. Ask them to read the extracts in *The Desert* and compare what they find out with the ideas already listed on the board.

Answers: very hot in the middle of the day; cold at night; no people, roads, villages; no plants; dangerous – it's easy to get burnt.

4 Ask students to get into groups of four and imagine they are the only survivors of a plane crash in the desert. Ask them to decide what things they would try to salvage from the plane to help them survive in such a harsh environment. Ask them to rank the things they need to survive in order of importance.

Possible answers: (1) water, (2) food, (3) radios for communication, (4) medical supplies, (5) things to make a shelter, (6) clothes, (7) things to make fire, (8) maps, (9) compass, (10) tools.

Ask students to think about what they would have to do in order to survive in the desert. Call back their ideas and list them on the board.

Possible answers: they would have to keep warm at night, keep out of the sun at midday, treat any medical problems, signal for help, decide whether to go for help, use their food and water supplies carefully, keep cheerful, build a shelter.

5 Ask students to read the extracts in *Survival* and find out what the man's wife and son in the story did to increase their chances of survival. Ask them to compare the facts of the story with the ideas listed on the board.

Answers: they salvage a little food and water from the plane, and their clothes; they collect some petrol to make a fire; they collect the water that condenses on the wing of the plane; they use their supplies slowly and carefully; they have to be strong mentally.

6 Tell students that the man goes for help and reaches the coast. Ask them to read *At the Coast* and to explain what happens next.

Answer: the man gets to the coast, but he is unconscious; a boy finds him and brings men from the village; they discover that he is still breathing and quickly take him back to their village.

7 Ask students to read *Extract 1*, then ask them to work in pairs and decide what the villagers did about the man and where he is now. Ask them to write the television news report that night announcing the discovery of the mystery man, giving all the information they know, speculating on what might have happened to him, and asking the public for help. If necessary, remind them that no one knows about the man's wife and son. Ask the pairs to read their reports in a whole-class setting.

8 Tell students that three other characters, Nurse Imelda, Dr Singh and Inspector Ibrahim, are also involved in the story. Ask them to stay in their pairs and to decide what they think happens next. Call back their ideas again in a whole-class setting.

The Man from Nowhere

Blurb

A man is walking slowly in the desert. He is not wearing a shirt. The sun is on his back, which is burnt red. He cannot see, he cannot think. He does not know where he is or who he is. He only knows that he must keep moving, keep putting one foot in front of the other. Keep moving, or die.

The Desert

- a 'Two fifteen in the afternoon,' he said. 'The hottest time of the day. We must stay here out of the sun until it goes down a little ...'
- b 'There is nothing here to make a fire with, no wood, nothing but sand. And there are no people anywhere near here, no roads, no villages.'
- c A man is walking slowly, up the dunes and down the other side. He is not wearing a shirt. The sun is on his back, which is burnt red.
- d 'Mum, I'm still cold.'
'Stay under my coat. It was a cold night, but now it's starting to get light again. When the sun comes up, it will be hot again.'

Survival

- a 'I've got all the suitcases and the food and drinks out of the plane. They're over there under the wing.'
- b 'I'll take one bottle of water. Keep the rest. Use it slowly and carefully.'
- c 'I'm hungry too. But we haven't got much food and drink. You know we have to be strong and wait for someone to find us.'
- d 'Petrol? We can use it to make a fire at night. Can you put it in something? If a plane comes, we can light a fire.'
- e 'Mum! Look! On the plane! On the wing of the plane! There's water everywhere. Look it's running down. It's water, clean water.'

At the Coast

Four men from the village ran with the boy to where the man was lying on the wet sand. The boy's father turned the man over on his back. There was wet sand on his face and in his dark hair. The head man put his hand on the man's neck.

'Not dead,' he said. 'He's still alive. We must take him back to the village quickly.'

Extract 1

Then the inspector said, 'They told me at my office this morning that some fishermen found him on the beach north of Masirah Island late in the afternoon two days ago. He came here in a helicopter in the night, and has not moved or spoken a word until now. And nobody knows who he is or where he came from.'