

Genat woke to the familiar sounds of the cows chatting to each other as the sun kissed the dramatic mountain peaks of the Ethiopian Highlands.

Turning over, she watched her Auntie Muluken stir the pot over the fire getting the morning meal ready – genfo, a porridge dish. She smiled, food was **scarce** at times but Muluken always made sure the family had some breakfast ready to set them up for the day.

Getting out of bed, Genat padded her way across the **communal** area and surveyed the world outside her home.

Such a contrast, **lush** trees hugging the mountains and hillsides which she still found **awe-inspiring** and the reassuring sound of the river saying, “Good morning”. But closer to home, the **terrain** changed. Years of agricultural farming and drought meant her immediate environment was tired and **barren**.

She smiled at the circular compound of homes, all dwarfed by the natural environment. Huts housing up to twenty people made of earth, stone and wood with hats of straw. Neatly arranged and carefully looked after, the pride of her people.

She returned to the view of the hills.

“Winta! Let’s explore,” Genat called to her sister. “We’ll be back home in ten minutes Auntie.”

And before Muluken could reply, Genat ran swiftly barefoot towards the river, her sister following closely behind.

Here Genat felt free. She climbed and climbed, getting to a view point where she could see for miles. She could just make out the low building of her school, a journey she would undertake very soon, a journey of some six kilometres which would take her nearly an hour and a half to do. A journey she did not mind as school was her saviour. But more of this later.

Genat breathed in the scenery, it really was spectacular. She loved it up here. She watched the monkeys chattering and laughing. She knew that this was not the image that many people around the world believed existed in Ethiopia. She had learnt about this at school. She looked down towards her own home and sighed. This was more like the picture the world knew about her country. Dry land, her people toiling away on **parched** land for whatever food they could get or farm. She thanked God for the blessing of the river nearby providing water to cook and clean.

A lifeline.

She could see her wonderful father, Nahom, **toiling** away with his tools, digging and attempting to break up the **arid** soil to give life to the produce which he would hope to sell. Genat’s heart swelled with pride as she admired her father’s dedication to his family. He would’ve been up at five and would continue to work **industriously** for many hours until the sun defeated him.

“Come!” said Winta. “We must return to our village. We need our energy before our journey to school.”

Returning to their hut, all the family were now up and preparing for breakfast. Sitting in a circle the family **conversed**. Father had returned and was grateful for the porridge set before him but no sign of mother. No sign of her until Saturday.

Genat missed her mother dreadfully but she knew she was a lucky girl as so many of her family lived with her, either in this hut or in nearby ones – grandfathers, grandmothers, aunts, uncles, cousins. Genat was equally as proud of her mother as she was her father. Mahlet, for that was her name, worked as a teacher in a school some twenty five kilometres away. It was a good job which her mother loved but it was an **arduous**, long journey so Mahlet boarded at the school during the week, returning if possible at the weekend to see her beloved family.

After breakfast, Genat prepared for her own school – the thing in her life she most cherished apart from her family. Mother had told her that education was vital, crucial and could **transform** Genat’s life.

“Education is the way out to a life of new adventures,” Mahlet often said. “Only those who learn to read, write and do arithmetic can hope for a good job away from farming when they grow up. School helps build confidence and faith in your future.”

And these were the words that would **resonate** in Genat’s mind as she took the six kilometre walk to school every day, setting off very early to get there for the start of the school day at 7:30am. Here she would love to learn and soaked up the information like a sponge. Her teachers were admired and respected. No displays, computers or posters – her teachers told her everything she required. Classes were large – over fifty was usual. She knew every member of the group, she had made many friends but it was hard to **socialise** after school as her peers lived in many different villages, many miles apart.

School finished at 12:30 and so would begin the long walk home. In the afternoon, Genat did not have time to relax or play. There were many jobs to be undertaken, to help out the family. Because there was no running water in the home, Genat would often walk to the riverside where a pump had been constructed. Here she would collect water in a large pail to return home. This journey would be repeated many times as water was required for cooking, cleaning and washing. Firewood would also need to be found for the cooking area. If there was any free time, Genat would go and help her father on the land. Her father though was a kind, **gracious** man and would often tell Genat to run and play with her sisters and cousins.

After an evening meal of wat, Genat would **retire** to her bed, where she liked to draw – draw her future, her **aspirations** – her dreams of becoming a teacher like her mother. A person who could inspire and motivate.

And as she drifted off to sleep, she smiled warmly as her father kissed her forehead and at the thought of the comforting hugs her mother would give her in a few days time.

By Jenny Turner

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An African Dream – 4b – Text

An African Dream – Oral Teacher Questions

What does the author mean when they write that the sun kissed the mountain peaks? (AF5) **It is dawn and as the sun rises it is as if the sun is touching the summit of each mountain peak, wishing them a good morning.**

What is Auntie Muluken doing and why does this make Genat smile? (AF2/AF3) **She is preparing breakfast for all the family in the hut – a breakfast of porridge. Genat smiles as this is a regular routine. It is reassuring to see that her kind aunt ensures that the whole family are fed and prepared for the new day ahead despite very limited food supplies.**

Describe the contrast between Genat’s immediate environment and her more distant surroundings. (AF3) **Her immediate environment is infertile, the soil is dry due to very little rain. The area has been over farmed and so there is very little quality soil to grow crops or for animals to be farmed. Her distant surroundings are more cultivated, green and fruitful with abundant lavish trees covering the mountainsides and the river providing a valuable water source.**

What does the author mean when she says the homes are “dwarfed” by the natural environment? (AF5) **It means the homes are dominated and overshadowed by the mountains.**

What are “hats of straw”? (AF5) **They are the roofs of the homes.**

Why do you think when Genat has climbed to a view point, she “breathes in the scenery”? (AF3/AF5) **She is savouring the moment and the natural beauty of the Ethiopian Highlands and the lush environment. She wants part of that scenery to be within her own self.**

Why is Genat grateful for the nearby river? (AF2) **It is a very important resource for all the people in her community. It is, as she says, a “blessing” as it is used for both cooking and cleaning.**

Why does the author give the word, “lifeline”, its own paragraph? (AF5) **It emphasises the importance of the river to the community. Without it, Genat and her people would struggle even more in the difficult environment they live in. It is a life source.**

“Genat’s heart swelled with pride”. Why does she have these emotions about her father? (AF3/AF5) **Genat is very proud of her father. He works incredibly hard in very difficult conditions to feed and look after his family. This is not easy because the work is hard, laborious and tiring in very hot conditions and there is no guarantee of produce at the end of it. Genat admires her father’s tenacity and courage in adverse conditions.**

Genat’s father worked industriously for many hours until, “the sun defeated him.” What does the author mean here? (AF5) **Nahom, Genat’s father will continue to work until the heat of the sun is so unbearable he can no longer work in such hot conditions.**

Why does Genat not see her mother regularly? (AF2) **Her mother, Mahlet, works as a teacher about 25 kilometres away. This is such a long way from home that Genat’s mother boards at the school during the week, returning home if possible at the weekends.**

What important message does her mother tell her daughter? (AF6) **That education is very important and is a route to a better life and new adventures. It will provide opportunities and gives a person confidence to aspire to better things.**

What is your opinion about this? (AF6) **Open answer but pupils should support this view. Use evidence from the passage to explain why.**

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An African Dream – 4b – Teacher Questions

Why does Genat not mind the six kilometre walk to school every day? (AF3) She does not mind because she believes her mother's words that receiving an education will provide her with more opportunities for her future. She also loves learning, her teachers and the school environment and so does not mind enduring such a long journey. It is invaluable.

Why does Genat not get to see many of her friends after school? (AF2) She does not see her friends outside of school because none of them live near her home. They all live in different villages, many miles apart from each other.

What does Genat usually do after school? (AF2) She goes to the river with pails to collect water for her commune. This is used to wash, clean and cook. She also collects wood to make up the fire for cooking. She may also, occasionally, help her father farm.

What is Genat's aspiration? (AF2) She wants to be a teacher like her mother – she wants to inspire and motivate others like her teachers have done to her.

Why does Genat smile to herself as she goes to bed? (AF3) She is heartened by her father's reassuring and loving kiss and the thought of her mother returning home in a few days time from work.

What messages is the author illustrating in this story about life for a typical Ethiopian child? (AF7) That children live in a close knit community and despite the difficult and challenging environment and the struggles that people endure every day, children like Genat have aspirations, dreams and drive. They admire the determination and perseverance of their elders but realise that education is invaluable and that with this, there is hope for a better, more rewarding life outside of farming and the environmental challenges that people face on a daily basis.

The story also illustrates that the image of the drought ridden landscape of Ethiopia is not entirely accurate as it highlights the lush, green mountains of the Ethiopian Highlands and the few running rivers, a vital life source for its people. The passage also emphasises that the inhabitants of this area are immensely proud of this beautiful landscape.

An African Dream – Follow-Up Work 1

What does the author mean when they write that the sun kissed the mountain peaks? (AF5)

What is Auntie Muluken doing and why does this make Genat smile? (AF2/AF3)

Describe the contrast between Genat’s immediate environment and her more distant surroundings.

(AF3)

What does the author mean when she says the homes are “dwarfed” by the natural environment?

(AF5)

What are “hats of straw”? (AF5)

Why do you think when Genat has climbed to a view point, she “breathes in the scenery”?

(AF3/AF5)

An African Dream – Follow-Up Work 2

Why is Genat grateful for the nearby river? (AF2)

Why does the author give the word, “lifeline”, its own paragraph? (AF5)

“Genat’s heart swelled with pride”. Why does she have these emotions about her father? (AF3/AF5)

Genat’s father worked industriously for many hours until, “the sun defeated him.” What does the author mean here? (AF5)

Why does Genat not see her mother regularly? (AF2)

What important message does her mother tell her daughter? (AF6)

What is your opinion about this? (AF6)

Why does Genat not mind the six kilometre walk to school every day? (AF3)

Why does Genat not get to see many of her friends after school? (AF2)

What does Genat usually do after school? (AF2)

What is Genat's aspiration? (AF2)

Why does Genat smile to herself as she goes to bed? (AF3)

What messages is the author illustrating in this story about life for a typical Ethiopian child? (AF7)

Find the dictionary definition for the following words.

scarce _____

communal _____

lush _____

awe-inspiring _____

terrain _____

barren _____

parched _____

toiling _____

arid _____

industriously _____

conversed _____

arduous _____

transform _____

resonate _____

socialise _____

gracious _____

retire _____

aspirations _____

scarce - insufficient, not a lot of

communal - used or shared by everyone in a group

lush - luxurious, succulent or juicy relating to plant life

awe-inspiring - magnificent, spectacular

terrain - land

barren - empty, bearing nothing, fruitless

parched - to be dry, hot or very thirsty

toiling - hard, continuous and exhausting work

arid - extremely dry, no moisture

industriously - hard working, working with devotion

conversed - to talk

arduous - requiring great effort, difficult

transform - change

resonate - to produce a sound, echo

socialise - to seek and enjoy communication with others

gracious - pleasantly kind and courteous

retire - to withdraw, to go to bed

aspirations - hopes and dreams, desires and ambitions

Match the words from the story to one ANTONYM on the right.

WORD

scarce

lush

barren

arid

industrious

arduous

gracious

ANTONYM

fruitful

effortless

lethargic

discourteous

ample

fertile

barren

scarce

lush

barren

arid

industrious

arduous

gracious

Now choose 5 of the antonyms and place them into sentences. Don't forget to think carefully too about your punctuation and other suitable words you could put into each sentence.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

Match the words from the story to one ANTONYM on the right.

WORD

scarce

lush

barren

arid

industrious

arduous

gracious

ANTONYM

fruitful

effortless

lethargic

discourteous

ample

fertile

barren

scarce

lush

barren

arid

ample

barren

fruitful

fertile

industrious

arduous

gracious

lethargic

effortless

discourteous

An African Dream – SPAG

Read this passage describing the work of Comic Relief.

Rewrite the text again carefully with the correct punctuation. There are capital letters, full stops, apostrophes, commas, quotation marks and a question mark to put in.

There are also 10 spelling errors to identify.

Where a word is underlined, you should replace this word with a synonym.

comic relief is a uk based charity founded thirty years ago in 1985 it was primarily set up to adress the issues in ethiopia at the time namely the distressing famine that was ravaging the country.

the charity is always working not just to help those in need in africa but supporting many people in the united kingdom to.

The charitys aim is to, “bring about positive and lasting change to the lives of poor and disadvantaged people which we belive requires investing in work that addresses peoples imediate needs.

An event is held evry two years in march to raise as much money as possable for the charity this is nown as red nose day and people do lots of fun silly and amusing things such as wering a red nose to raise money. A live telethon also happens that day with many celebritys taking part in humorous activities.

Have you done or will you be doing anything for comic relief this year

Comic Relief is a UK based charity founded thirty years ago in 1985. It was primarily set up to address the issues in Ethiopia at the time, namely the distressing famine that was ravaging the country.

The charity is always working not just to help those in need in Africa but supporting many people in the United Kingdom too.

The charity's aim is to, "bring about positive and lasting change to the lives of poor and disadvantaged people which we believe requires investing in work that addresses people's immediate needs."

An event is held every two years in March to raise as much money as possible for the charity. This is known as Red Nose Day and people do lots of fun, silly and amusing things, such as wearing a red nose, to raise money. A live telethon also happens that day with many celebrities taking part in humorous activities.

Have you done or will you be doing anything for Comic Relief this year?

Suitable synonyms

- primarily: chiefly, principally, mainly
- distressing: dreadful, painful, upsetting
- ravaging: overwhelming, damaging, devastating
- supporting: aiding, benefitting, helping, assisting
- disadvantaged: deprived, impoverished, impaired
- investing: supplying, devoting, providing
- happens: occurs, takes place

Spellings:

address (adress)
too (to)
believe (belive)
immediate (immediate)
every (evry)
possible (possable)
known (nown)
wearing (wering)
celebrities (celebrityys)
humorous (humourous)