

'the other side of truth' essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

My purpose for writing 'The Other Side Of Truth' was simply because I wanted to open the public's eyes. I wanted them to see how hard it is for asylum seekers to find a safe haven and how they go to desperate measures to get there. As I grew up I was always taught that white people were superior to black, and it was natural for white people to have everything. So when I started to write I wanted to challenge this narrow-minded way of thinking!

Ken Saro-Wiwa's death triggered a new beginning in Nigeria; so many people were outraged by his unjust death. So I based the story on Ken Saro-Wiwa's children's point of view, I wanted to write a story about an outspoken journalist. Before I write a story I always do a lot of research. I did most of my research for 'The Other Side Of Truth' in England, working with refugee children in London learning about their different experiences and backgrounds, which I found very inspiring.

At the time I was writing 'The Other Side Of Truth' Nigeria was under the dictatorship, many everyday Nigerians were killed and tortured for speaking up against the cruelty of the regime, because the government wanted to keep Nigeria's citizens scared of what would happen to them and their families should they choose to challenge the injustice way of life they ordered. I decided to write the story as Sade's point of view rather than Femi's because Sade is older and has to make more decisions.

I also felt that writing it from a child's point of view may appeal to a younger audience, as children are influenced easily, I wanted to open their eyes and tell them about cruelty and injustice in the world, open their eyes past there

front doors and beyond the television screen, who knows? Maybe then they may grow up doing all they can to stop it, and possibly... in a few decades time injustice may be a thing of the past.

I chose to write the story in the third person rather than the first because, Sade being a child of just twelve years old smuggled out of the country with her ten year old brother would have been very confused and writing everything from her perspective would have made it very unclear to the reader, I thought this way the reader would get the best of both worlds! I showed Sade's emotions mostly by displaying her fear, I tried to put myself in that position and realise how many other children in similar positions must feel. Sade doesn't understand why everything's changed so quickly!

They became refugees and lost their mother in twenty-four hours, so understandably she's very upset and confused, She's never experienced an airport before, she wanted her first time to be with her mother and father, but instead she's with a complete stranger posing as there mother. She describes the plane as a ' Whale like monster', which helps the reader understand that she feels trapped and scared. Sade gives the people she meets labels, I hoped this would be affective and show her level of confusion and understanding because, She has nothing else to call them, She fears them because they seem inhuman to her.

She doesn't know what a airhostess or a security guard is, so instead, she gives them names depending on features in there appearance, for instance the airhostess is called ' blue button eyes' because the first thing Sade notices about her is her blue eyes, Mrs Bankole the woman posing as there

mother is called 'Mrs Peacock' because Sade notices that she's wearing very bright colours and lots of jewellery, and the first thing that came in to her mind when she saw her was a peacock.

Also throughout the book Sade relates back to what her mother and father would do in similar situations, her father gives the generals labels, he calls them 'Brass Buttons' so Sade copies him, because it helps her feel closer to him. I used the technique of dreams, because I felt Sade's dreams reflect reality, it shows what she no longer has, how quickly her life has been turned over, and how she longs for her mother. " Mama was squeezing the children's hands as she led them along a deep forest path.....

Sade looked up at Mama, she found herself looking up at an unknown woman's face. " The fact that Sade's with her mother and then the next second, she's looking up at an unknown woman's face, shows how she doesn't want to be alone in London, she wants to be holding her mother's hand and comforted. It shows how they have come from a corrupt society, but also a beautiful home where they are happy. Her dreams show life in Nigeria, the forest where she's walking with her Mother, is the forest near Ibadan, where the children played behind their grandmothers house.

She felt at home there, they called it the 'The family home' and the whole family went there for Christmas. I used flash backs to remind the reader of the horrific events of Sade's past life in Nigeria, and how it's scarred and still affects her. " Papa is kneeling in the driveway, Ma partly curled up against him. One bare leg stretches out in front of her. His strong hands grip her,

trying to halt the growing dark red monster. But it has already spread down her bright white uniform. It stains the earth around them. ”

Sade can't get the image out of her head, of her mother lying in front of her dead. She replays it over and over again, becoming more and more confused as to why it's happened. As well as using the flashbacks to remind the reader of the terror Sade and Femi have been through, I also used them to help show contrast between the grey, cold, uninviting streets of London to the sunny, bright, colourful, warm land they have come from. Because Sade often relates and compares things to how life would have been back in Nigeria.

I tried to put across the fact that Sade and Femi have come to the UK because their lives were in danger, and when they got to the UK they were treated as criminals, and treated unfairly. People are cold and unwelcoming to them. During my research for 'The Other Side Of Truth' I learned that when they arrived, they were called 'Scroungers' and other names, they were looked at like criminals, and treated unfairly. I wanted to put this across in the book.

At the Detention Centre that Sade and Femi visited “ A man in a yellow coat guarded the door” the fact that there is someone guarding the door at a place only people wishing to seek asylum go, is somewhat discriminative, Usually guards are only at places where violence takes place, and where people need to be protected from riots. So this is stereotyping Asylum seekers as violent people! Which in most cases is not at all true. Finally, I'm

pleased with the book, it's won the Carnegie medal and is now used in the GCSE English syllabus by hundreds of children!

I think it's still relevant today because, political parties are constantly arguing about putting a quota on the amount of asylum seekers Britain should allow into the country each year! Many people do stereotype asylum seekers as scroungers, before learning about their story, and why they are seeking asylum! Many are very well educated and experienced! I hope that my book will continue to educate people and help them to understand a little bit more about what they go through.