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BEFORE READING



1 The story *The Coconut Seller* takes place in Brazil. How much do you know about Brazil? Do the quiz and find out.

- a** Which city is the capital of Brazil?
- Rio de Janeiro
 - Brasília
 - São Paulo
- b** What is the estimated population of Brazil?
- about 50 million
 - just over 100 million
 - nearly 200 million
- c** Which is the largest city in Brazil?
- São Paulo
 - Salvador
 - Rio de Janeiro
- d** What is the official language in Brazil?
- Spanish
 - French
 - Portuguese
- e** Which country was Brazil a colony of?
- Portugal
 - Great Britain
 - Spain
- f** What is the name of the currency in Brazil?
- dollar
 - real
 - peso
- g** Brazil's large territory includes different ecosystems, such as ...
- the Amazon Rainforest
 - the Great Barrier Reef
 - the Atacama Desert
- h** What is the famous Sugarloaf in Brazil?
- a typical sweet
 - a mountain in Rio de Janeiro
 - a popular beach in Bahia
- i** Which of the following is NOT a famous beach in Rio de Janeiro.
- Copacabana
 - Ipanema
 - Pantanal
- j** What is samba?
- a type of Brazilian dance and music genre
 - a typical Brazilian dish
 - a Brazilian festival



2 Listen and check the answers.



3 With a partner write a quiz about another country you know or would like to visit. Then exchange your quiz with another pair.

BEFORE READING



- 1 Check you know the meanings of the words below. They are all used in the story to describe three of the main characters: Bruno, Clara and Zeca. Put the words you think might refer to each of them in the column below each picture.

poor tough bad-tempered optimistic rich menacing
 enthusiastic muscular gorgeous thug hard-working
 fair-skinned anxious criminal shy



Bruno	Clara	Zeca

- 2 One of the three people above is the coconut seller. Who do you think it is? Who do you think are the hero and the villain in this story? Give reasons.

BRUNO



Bruno stopped what he was doing for a moment and sat down on a low wall in front of the beach. He stared out to sea with a broad smile on his face, lost in thought as he enjoyed a moment's rest.

It was a hot, sultry day like most summer days in Rio de Janeiro. It was only 11 o'clock in the morning and the temperature was already 35°C, and the humidity 82%. As usual, Bruno was wearing colourful, knee-length Bermuda shorts, a white sleeveless T-shirt, and a pair of blue flip-flops. The warm sea breeze felt good against the smooth, dark skin of his face.

This was the day Bruno's life was going to change forever.

A group of girls walked past and smiled over at Bruno. He was slim and good-looking with short jet-black hair and sparkling dark brown eyes. But Bruno wasn't just another good-looking guy. He was one of life's genuine nice guys. He had a very distinctive, deep voice that was also pleasant and cheerful and warm. But he didn't use his voice to win people over. No, whenever Bruno did say anything, it was always relevant and meaningful. His classmates at school teased him about being shy, but Bruno never got embarrassed or nervous; it was just the way he was. He kept himself to himself. And only spoke when he had something to say. Oh, and he had one of those irresistible smiles that light up your day. And he constantly looked on the bright side of things and was optimistic about everything. Quite simply, he was a nice happy guy and you couldn't help but like him.

- **breeze:** light wind
- **broad:** (here) big
- **guy:** male
- **jet-black:** very black
- **sultry:** hot and heavy
- **win people over:** convince people of what he was saying

Bruno gazed^o blankly at the hustle and bustle^o on Ipanema^o beach. The beach was crowded with rich, beautiful people, mainly Brazilians, but there were also lots of wealthy tourists, too. There were the usual sunworshippers^o and surfers, and several groups of people playing football, volleyball and footvolley, a combination of volleyball and football which was invented in Brazil. Bruno looked to his right at the two mountains in the distance – the “Dois Irmãos” – the Two Brothers. Rio is such a beautiful place to live, he thought to himself.



BRAZIL

What do you know about Brazil?

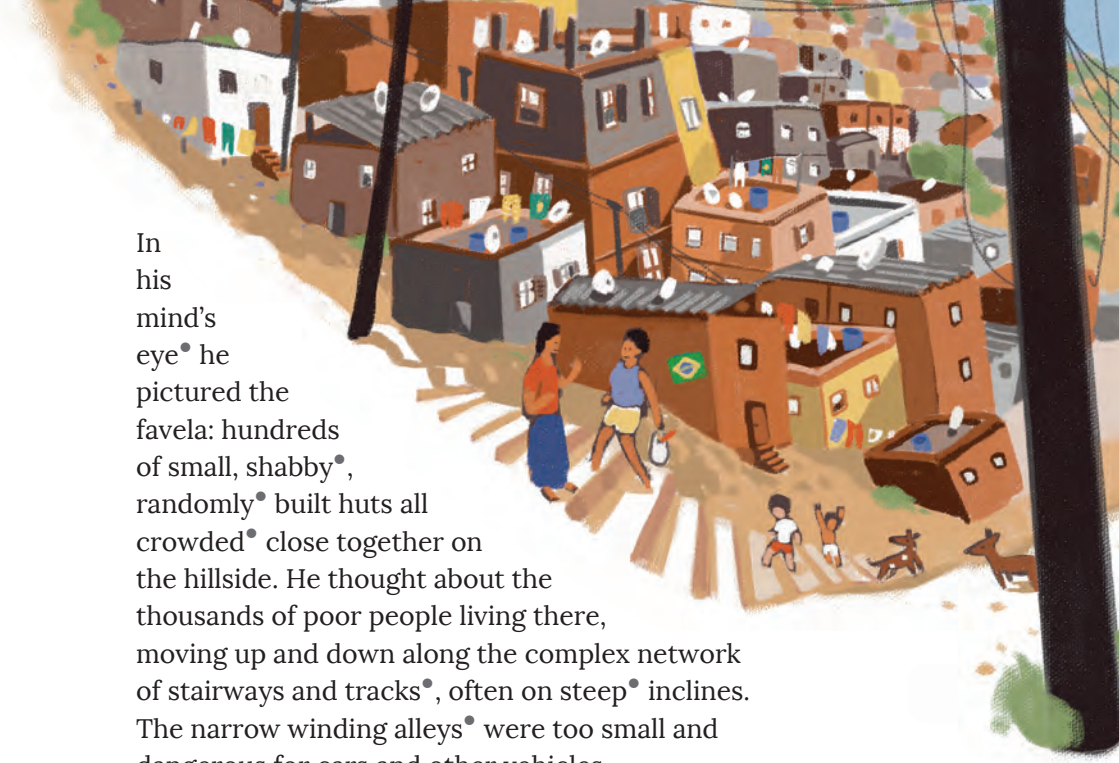
💬 Think, then share ideas with a partner.

What is your country famous for?

What tourist attractions are there?

Then he turned around and looked at all the sophisticated, high-rise^o apartment buildings along the beach front. Ipanema was one of the best and most expensive places to live in Rio. But Bruno was really thinking of where *he* lived. Bruno lived in a favela, a kind of poor shanty^o town, called Morro do Cantagalo, on the hill, behind these expensive flats.

- **gazed:** looked in a fixed way
- **high-rise:** tall (of buildings); with many levels/floors
- **hustle and bustle:** busy movement
- **Ipanema:** rich neighbourhood in the south of Rio de Janeiro
- **shanty:** with poor, badly built houses and huts
- **sunworshippers:** people who love lying in the sun



In his mind's eye he pictured the favela: hundreds of small, shabby, randomly built huts all crowded close together on the hillside. He thought about the thousands of poor people living there, moving up and down along the complex network of stairways and tracks, often on steep inclines. The narrow winding alleys were too small and dangerous for cars and other vehicles.

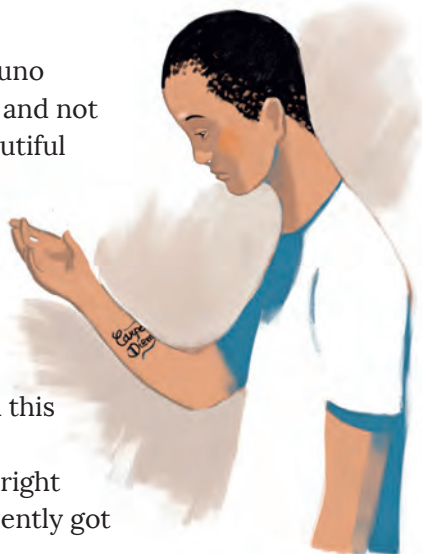
The favela certainly wasn't an easy place to live and young people often turned to a life of crime. Bruno suddenly thought of Zeca. Zeca started stealing when he was only eight years old, now he was the neighbourhood tough guy. Bruno hadn't seen him for years and he wasn't sorry. It's an unfair world we live in, Bruno thought. If you're poor you don't get much education and you've little chance of escaping from this situation. Bruno shivered and quickly thought of something more positive. He smiled as he thought of his mom and all the other ordinary people who lived in the favela, trying to earn an honest living. Day after day they walked up and down the steep steps into Rio to their low-paid, unskilled jobs. But they always had a smile and a big hello for everyone they met.

- **alleys:** narrow streets
- **crowded:** (here) built close together
- **mind's eye:** imagination
- **randomly:** not planned
- **shabby:** in bad condition
- **steep:** difficult to climb
- **tough guy:** bully
- **tracks:** paths
- **winding:** that turn round and round

When he was about eight years old Bruno asked his mother, “Why do we live here and not down there near the beach in those beautiful apartment blocks?”

“That’s just the way things are, dear,” his mother replied. “In this world there are rich people and there are poor people, and we are poor. There’s no way we could ever live like them.” He did not really understand this at that time.

Bruno then looked at the inside of his right forearm and the black tattoo he had recently got done there.



Carpe Diem was a quote from his favourite movie, *Dead Poets Society*. He’d seen the movie five years ago and it had had a profound effect on him. The story was about an English teacher, John Keating, in a school for boys. His lessons are unusual and unorthodox* and he inspires his students to change their lives and find the courage to do what they want in life. He tells them constantly, “Carpe diem. Seize* the day, boys! Make your lives extraordinary!”

- **seize:** grab; take with your hands
- **unorthodox:** not usual or traditional

Yes! That's it! Bruno thought at the time. Things are not the way they are just because that's the way they are. We can change things. We *can* live the life we want!

MOVIES

What is your favourite movie?
Why? What is it about?

Have you ever seen a movie or read a book that has changed your way of thinking?

Do you think that we can change things and live the life we want?

🗨️ Tell a partner.

Bruno decided there and then that he would not live the same life as his parents. He was determined to break away from the hardship[•] and poverty, and find a better life for himself and his family. He started to read as much as he possibly could, borrowing[•] books from the local library. He began studying really hard at school, too. And he did very well, getting high grades in all his subjects. But then two years ago, he had to leave school and go to work to help his family. That is when he got this job, selling coconuts at a small kiosk[•] on the beach front in Ipanema.

“Come on, Bruno, I have customers waiting!” his boss shouted, slightly annoyed that Bruno was still sitting on the wall.

“Okay, I'm coming!”

Bruno quickly stopped his daydreaming and jumped up. His break was over. It was time to get back to work.

- **borrowing:** taking something for a period of time
- **hardship:** economic difficulties
- **kiosk:** small open building (often selling newspapers or food)