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Before Reading

1  The title of the book is *The African Mask*. What do you know about African masks? Listen and tick (✓) T (true) or F (false).

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a Children wear the masks. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b The masks represent a spirit of a dead ancestor or an animal spirit. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c The masks are plastic. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d They make the paints from plants, trees and earth. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e The colour black symbolizes death. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f The masks are very special to their owners. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g The masks protect the home. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2  In pairs, discuss the questions below.

- Do people make masks in your country?
- What are the masks made of?
- When and why do people wear them?



3 Look at the pictures in the book and guess the answers to the questions.

Where does the story take place? What kind of story is it?

a Africa and Scotland

a fantasy

b Africa and America

b detective

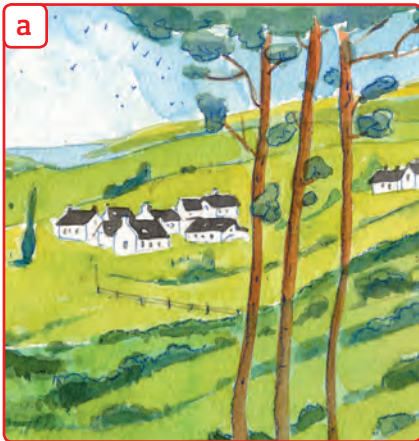
c India and Scotland

c ghost story


d America and India

d science fiction

4 Describe the places in the pictures. Write 3 sentences about each one.



5  Which of these places would you most like to visit? Why? Tell the class.

 When Janet came home from work on a hot day in August she picked up the mail. 'Bills, bills, bills,' she thought. Then she saw a blue envelope. She looked at the postmark. 'Who is writing to me from Scotland?' she wondered and she opened the letter and started to read.

*Dear Janet,
I hope you still live at the same address. This is Donald McKinnon. I hope you remember me and the brilliant time we had when we were skiing in Switzerland all those years ago. I often think of you and the time we spent together. I want to ask you a favour. Can I invite you to come to my house in Scotland on the last weekend of September? I don't know how busy you are, but I really hope that you can come. Please write to me and let me know.
Love,
Donald*

Janet put the letter on the table and sat down. Of course she remembered Donald and their holiday in Switzerland. They were in love and everything seemed perfect.

GLOSSARY

- **bills:** letters to say you must pay something
- **favour:** thing you do to help someone
- **mail:** letters
- **postmark:** official mark on a letter that says where it comes from and when it is sent
- **wondered:** asked herself



After that holiday she moved to London to work and Donald stayed in Scotland. They wrote to each other for a while[•] but after a few months they broke up[•].

‘Donald McKinnon...’ she thought. ‘I wonder what he’s doing now.’ Then she looked at her calendar. ‘The last weekend in September, why not?’ she thought. ‘I’ll send him an email straight away[•].’ She checked the letter but there was no email address or phone number. So she sat down and wrote to Donald just like all those years ago...

GLOSSARY

- **broke up:** stopped being boyfriend and girlfriend
- **straight away:** immediately
- **while:** short period of time

Before she went to Scotland Janet bought a present for Donald. It was a small silver elephant. She got it in an African shop. Janet remembered• that Donald loved Africa. He always said that he wanted to go there one day.

She was excited• on Saturday as she went to the airport. She flew to Edinburgh and then she hired• a car at the airport when she arrived. The village where Donald lived was nearly an hour from the airport. When she arrived at the house the door was open but there was nobody there. There was a note• for Janet on the table in the hall. It said:

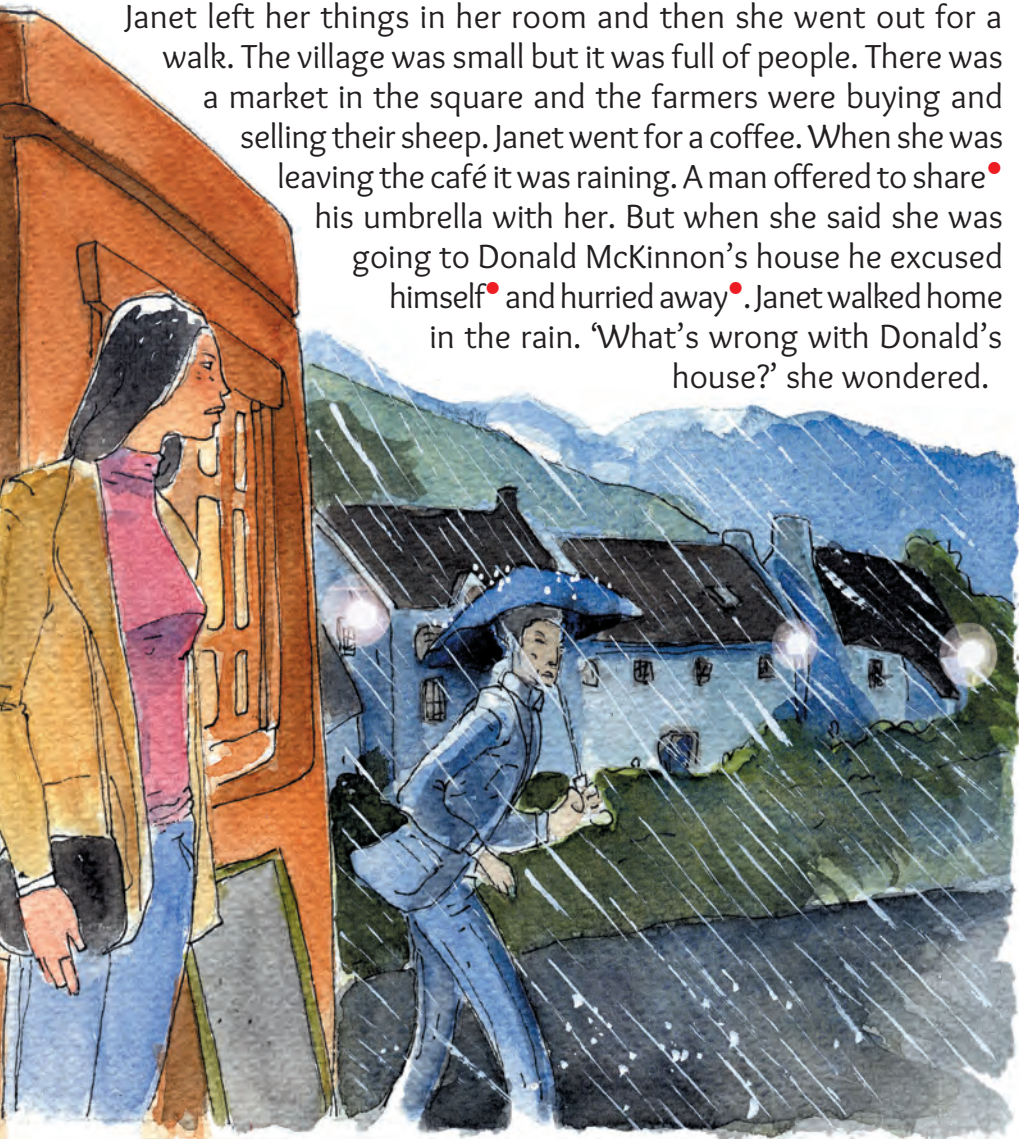
‘Make yourself comfortable•. Your bedroom is the first room on the left upstairs. Dinner is at seven-thirty. See you then, D.’



- **excited:** very happy and enthusiastic
- **hired:** paid money to use for a short period of time

- **make yourself comfortable:** relax
- **note:** short letter
- **remembered:** recalled; thought of something again

Janet left her things in her room and then she went out for a walk. The village was small but it was full of people. There was a market in the square and the farmers were buying and selling their sheep. Janet went for a coffee. When she was leaving the café it was raining. A man offered to share his umbrella with her. But when she said she was going to Donald McKinnon's house he excused himself and hurried away. Janet walked home in the rain. 'What's wrong with Donald's house?' she wondered.



GLOSSARY

- **excused himself:** made an excuse and left
- **share:** (here) use together
- **hurried away:** went away in a hurry

After Reading

1 Who says or thinks this? Match the characters with the speech bubbles.

a



b



c



d



1 I know, Donald died two weeks ago.

2 Those were the best days of my life.

3 I think there's a ghost in the house.

4 What's wrong with Donald's house?

2 Complete the sentences with the characters' names.

Donald (x2) Janet Anna Jobe

- a went on a skiing holiday with Donald many years ago.
- b lived in Africa for five years.
- c 's house is in a little village in Scotland.
- d 's family believed that the beautiful wooden mask brought them luck.
- e told Janet to take the mask back to Africa.