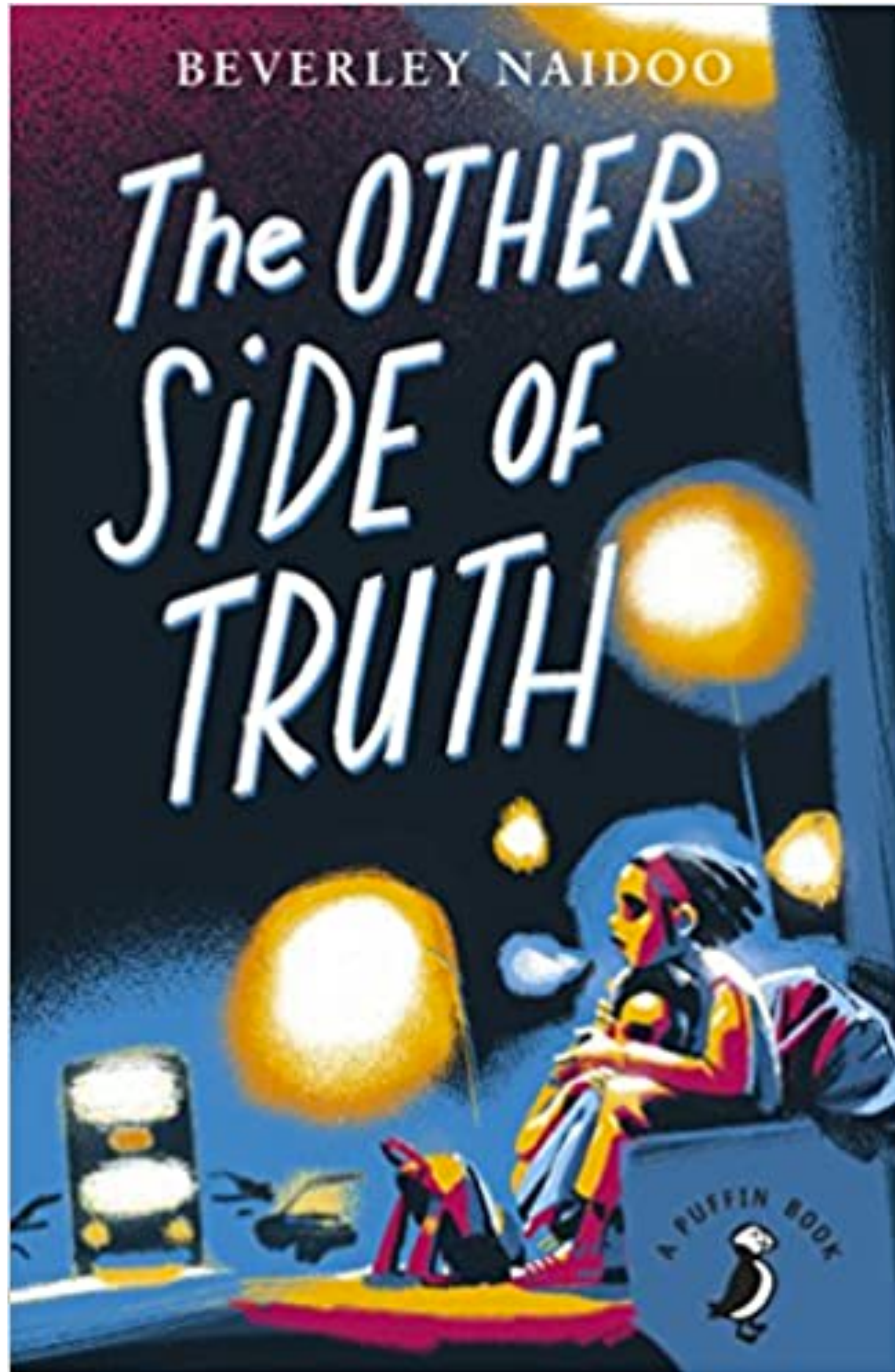


The OTHER SIDE OF TRUTH

WEEK 1: LESSON 1



The OTHER SIDE OF TRUTH

The Other Side of Truth is about the immigration of two young Nigerian children whose mother has been killed and whose father, a controversial journalist, is being watched by the Nigerian police.

Who we've met so far:

Sade Solaja is the main character, and narrates the story. She is a 12-year-old Nigerian girl, courageous and imaginative. She loves school and her native country, and uses her memories of the Family House in Ibadan, of her desk, of Iyawo and Oko (two sculptures she has in her bedroom in Nigeria), and her mother's sayings to keep hope and courage through the challenges she faces.

Femi Solaja: Sade's 10-year-old brother, closes up easily and relies on Sade a lot. He loves playing football, and is hugely affected by his mother's death. Since the incident he has become extremely quiet. He really doesn't want to go to England; he wants to run away but Sade persuades him not to.

Folarin Solaja is Sade and Femi's father; he is an outspoken journalist for *Speak*, an uncensored newspaper. He is in danger because of his articles: Nigeria's government doesn't allow freedom of speech, and any journalists who want to tell the truth are threatened, as well as their families. His wife was murdered as a consequence of his outspokenness. Due to his passport being seized he cannot travel with his children.

Uncle Tunde is a lawyer in Nigeria, and Folarin's brother. He takes charge of getting the children out of the country after their mother's death. He is a very good lawyer, able to get to the bottom of things: "Papa used to joke that Uncle Tunde should have been a detective rather than a lawyer because he was so good at getting to the truth" (p.86).

Mama Buki: the maid of the house who is like a second mother to the children. She is devastated by the death of Mama but quickly helps the children pack their bags so they can prepare for England and safety. They will be staying with Uncle Dele in London.

Mama: Mama was a loving lady whose children adore her. She died suddenly when shot by an unknown gunman. We know she was good at dressmaking and that she worked as a nurse.

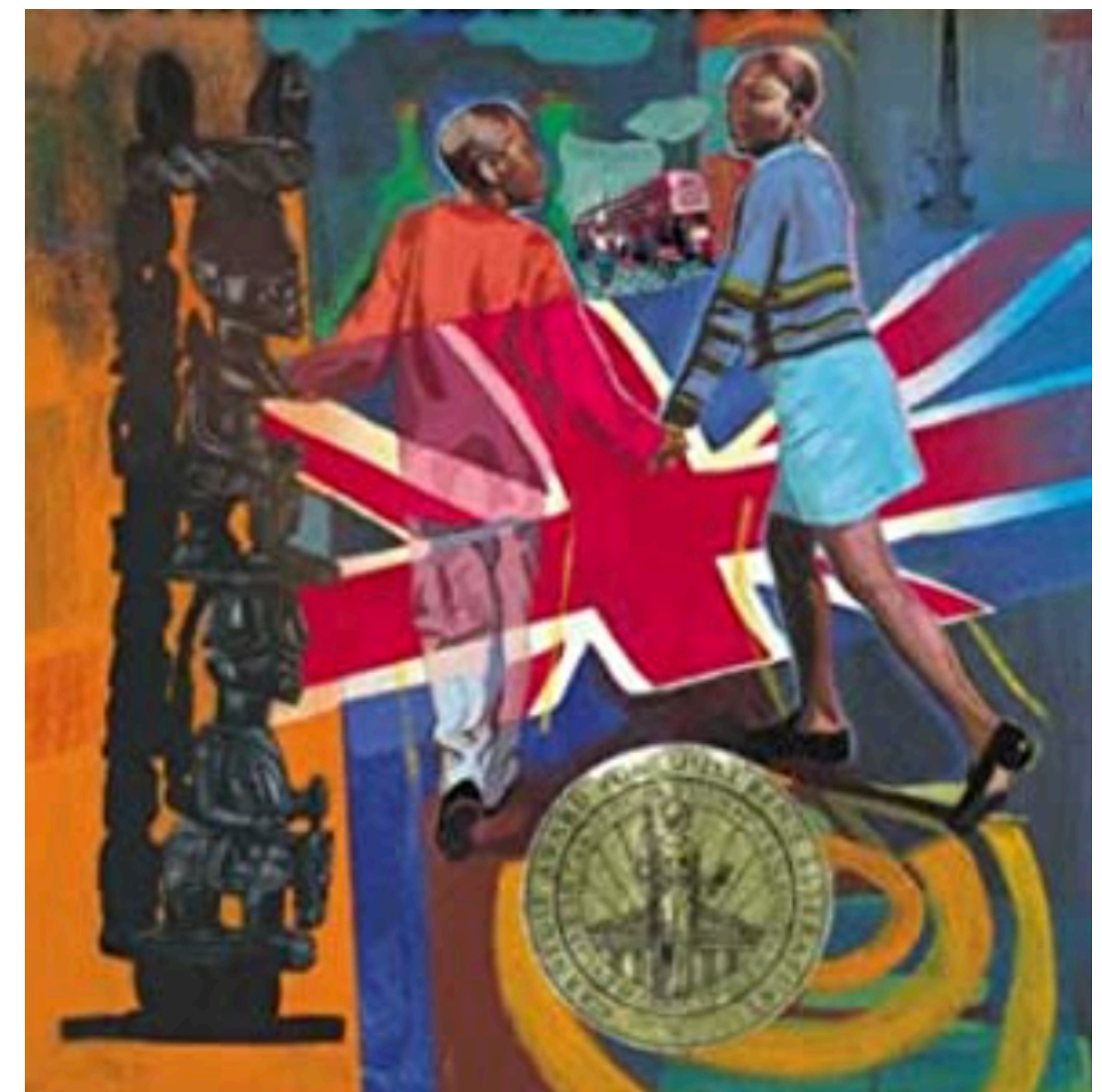
Mrs Bankole: Mrs Bankole has agreed to smuggle the children to London. We do not know much more about her except that she is a suspicious character who bribes police so that they don't search her bag at the airport. Sade and Femi need to pretend that she is their Mama on the very same day their Mama died.



Tuesday 23rd February, 2021

L1: I can recall key story events in chronological order

- *En route to the airport Uncle Tunde is stopped by police and tells them he is going to collect his mother.*
- *Hidden under the blanket, they pass Mr Abiona's grocery table.*
- *Femi would pester Papa to play football with him between the pawpaw and flaming forest trees.*
- *Mama Buki packed Femi's case.*
- *Uncle Tunde set out to find passports for the children.*
- *Sade was in the study when the telephone rang and a man's voice spoke softly and clearly.*



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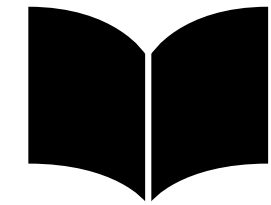
1. Femi would pester Papa to play football with him between the pawpaw and flaming forest trees.



2. Sade was in the study when the telephone rang and a man's voice spoke softly and clearly.



3. Uncle Tunde set out to find passports for the children.



4. Mama Buki packed Femi's case.



5. Hidden under the blanket, they pass Mr Abiona's grocery table.



6. En route to the airport Uncle Tunde is stopped by police and tells them he is going to collect his mother.



Tuesday 23rd February, 2021

L1: I can imagine and explore feelings

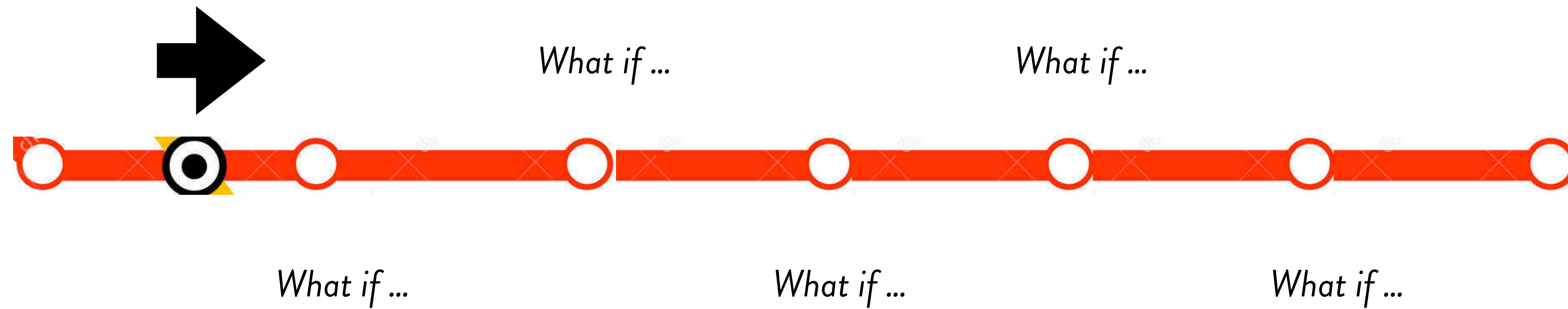


- *SC: I have used third-person perspective*
- *SC: I have used powerful adjectives to convey feelings*
- *SC: I have used adverbial time openers: while, later, immediately...*

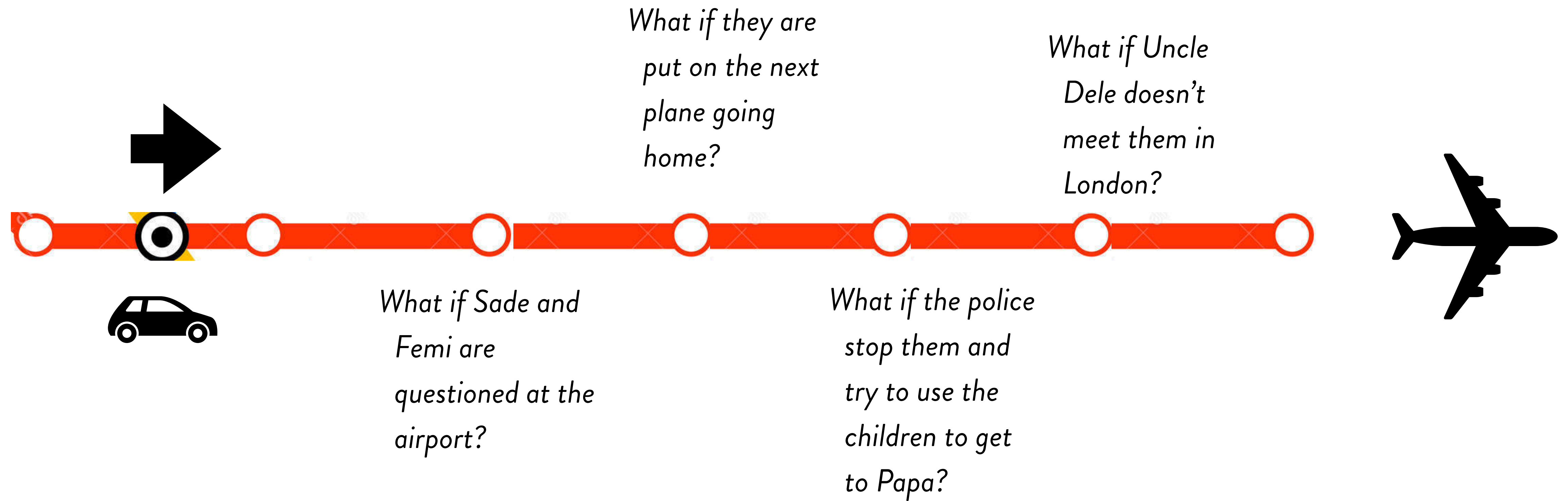
How do Sade and Femi feel about leaving Nigeria?

What fears might they have at leaving their home?

Plot these on the worry line



How do Sade and Femi feel about leaving Nigeria?



SHARED WRITE

Describing the car journey, and how it felt for the siblings to leave Nigeria (3rd person).

YOU COULD INCLUDE:

- *Being hidden under blanket (pp.29-30).*
- *Being stopped by the officer (p.31)*
- *Uncle Tunde giving the agent money (p.34).*
- *Learning their fake name and date of birth (pp.36-37).*
- *Children's impressions of Mrs Bankole (Mrs 'Peacock').*

Whenever would they see Grandma again?
Sade pressed her face against her knees, her body shaking with each jolt through the floor of the car. She and Femi were like two pebbles rattling in a tin; about to be flung away.

‘Sade! Femi! Stay absolutely still! Police check!’

Uncle Tunde’s voice was taut as the car slowed down. They had been going faster. They must have left the jostling city streets and were travelling on the open road out of Lagos. Femi’s fingers grazed

blacked

Sade's arm under the blanket. She grasped his hand. The engine rumbled as the car shuddered almost to a halt, then revved up again. The police must be letting them through. Femi pulled his hand away.

'Well, that's Number One!' muttered Uncle Tunde, like a grim sports commentator. But he was calmer than Papa would have been. Police were always setting up roadblocks and Papa's anger simmered like pepper soup. The last time he had driven them to Grandma's they had been stopped more than twenty times on the road to Ibadan. Sade and Femi played a game. Who could spot the naira note as the policeman's hand swept expertly past that of the driver in front? Mostly taxi drivers with minibuses full of passengers had to pay up. Usually the policemen stared rudely at Papa, sometimes demanding to know where he was going, but they never actually demanded money. Something in his manner must have warned them. But when Papa had driven on, his anger would erupt as he fumed about the daylight robbery of innocent people. Mama would place her hand gently on his shoulder.

'Don't give yourself a heart attack, Folarin. That would please them.'

Yet Mama had never told him not to write.

Uncle Tunde was slowing down again.

'Don't move, children! This one has a torch.'

The car lurched to a halt and Sade heard the window being rolled down. She held her breath and hoped Femi was doing the same.

'I'm late, officer. My mother is coming to the airport now. I must be the first one she sets her eyes on. You know how it is with mothers!' Uncle Tunde laughed lightly, his tone smooth and polite.

'Oga, open de door! Wetin you carry for back?' the policeman barked.

'Oh, it's only rubbish at the back, officer!' Their uncle's voice rose on the word 'rubbish', as if

enjoying a joke. 'I threw the blanket on top so my mother won't complain that her son is untidy!'

'OK, OK. Carry on!' The policeman was impatient.

'Thank you, officer. Very understanding.'

The engine stormed into life again.

As soon as they had left the roadblock behind, Uncle Tunde instructed them to throw off the blanket and to sit on the back seat.

'Did you give him money, Uncle?' Sade asked, her heart pumping rapidly.

'Never you mind. That could have been nasty! If he insisted on looking, we would have been in big, big trouble.'

'He would think you were kidnapping us!' Femi muttered, sniffing. He brushed his arm across his eyes. Had he been crying? He wriggled on the seat, stretching his legs, and turned away from Sade.

The... Airport

When Uncle Tunde opened the door, a short woman with mango-shaped cheeks stood beside him. Her green headscarf and dress glinted in the beams from an overhead lamp.

'Come out, children. This is Mrs Bankole.'

'So, you two will be my children!' The lady formed a little smile with lips that glistened a deep purple. Mama never wore lipstick.

Mrs Peacock! Sade thought. She imagined a fan of feathers swooping up behind the lady. She loved making up names for people and, normally, this would have been a joke to share with Femi. But Papa's words rang in her ears.

'Until you are safely there, your surname is "Bankole" and you must only use the names in the passport.'

Sade tried to force the fanciful picture from her mind as they stepped hesitantly out of the car.



Both children held back as Mrs Bankole stretched out her hands. Her wrists jingled with gold bangles and her chubby fingers were heavily ringed. Her nails matched her purple lips.

'Oh but you have to look the part!' A man in a pale suit, with a pink handkerchief flowering out of the top pocket, emerged from behind the lady. His cream jacket bulged out well beyond his legs.

'If you look out of place that will make trouble for everyone, including your father.' His eyes narrowed as if to pin them down. He spoke briskly and his words carried the jagged edges of a warning. He was clearly the man who had fixed this all. The agent.

'It's very true, children. I'm sure you understand!' Uncle Tunde's voice carried a touch of the urgent pleading that Sade had heard him use earlier with Papa. It was different from his ordinary voice and not at all like his 'court voice' when Papa had taken her to see his older brother at work. They had sat in the gallery and Papa had explained how Uncle Tunde was pleading for his client to the judge. His words and manner had been so confident. But now, did she detect uncertainty – even a hint of desperation – behind his words?

'It's only for one night - until Mrs Bankole hands you over to your Uncle Dele. Don't forget your bags at the back.' Uncle Tunde turned away, almost brusquely, as if not to let them see the concern in his eyes.

Slipping on her rucksack, Sade saw her uncle draw Mr Fix-It aside and hand him a fat envelope. With his back to passers-by, and partly shielded by Uncle Tunde and the car, Mr Fix-It rapidly began counting through the wad of naira notes. In the flickering light, his stout forefinger jiggled at the speed of a fox pawing back earth around a rabbit hole.

Once again, Mrs Bankole held out her ringed fingers. This time, reluctantly, Sade and Femi each took a hand.

'You are now my daughter, Yemi,' she confided to Sade. 'She will be thirteen next month. The thirteenth of December. You will remember that?'

Sade did not reply. The lady's hand felt slightly damp and sweaty and Sade winced at the thought of touching any of her jewellery. Mama only wore one simple wedding ring.

SHARED WRITE

Huddling under the blanket, her face pressed awkwardly against her knees, Sade felt every bump and jolt as the car...

Before this nightmare had begun, the siblings used to play a game when they reached roadblocks like this. Who could spot...

Now however,

SHARED WRITE

**If you were to give the children advice on arrival at the airport,
what would it be?**



Sade and Femi bolted out of the café.



They walked to the Number 36 bus to go to the London College of Art.



He hasn't been in for a whole week.
The police are following it up.

We are looking for Doctor Dele
Solaja please

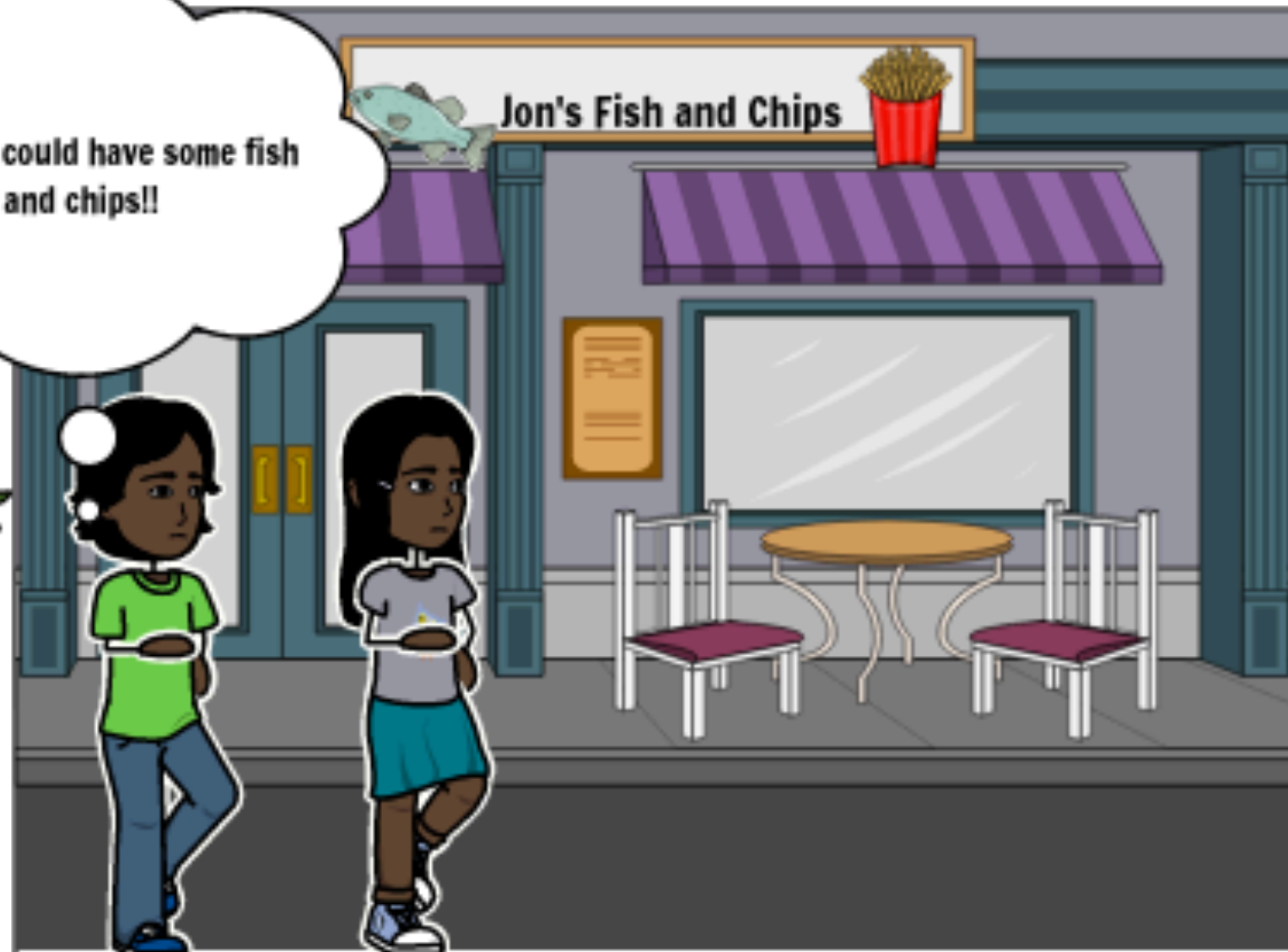
In the London College of Art they asked the lady at the reception about their uncle.



I want Papa...and Mama!

I wish we could have some fish
and chips!!

Sade and Femi are back on the road lost in London.



As they walked by the cafes they could feel how hungry
they were but they had no money for any food.



Clear off! This place is mine!

When they finally found an alley to sleep in for the night
a shape rose up and chased them off!