

The Mystery of the Colour Thief
by Ewa Jozefkowicz

He came out of nowhere, a man in the smoke. He was nothing more than a shadow at first, a smudge of black in the grey. But as he loomed closer, he grew bigger, became more solid. My heart was a drum. He was shouting at me, but the sound bounced off my ears in eerie echoes. His long arms reached out. He was so close that I could smell him - a mix of sweat and burning rubber. He leaned in...

3.05 a.m.



The luminous figures stared back at me in the dark. The glow of a street lamp seeped through the wooden slats of my blinds. It was quiet. The man had gone. A nightmare. Though somewhere in the depths of my mind I knew that it was more than a nightmare.

That morning I was late getting ready because Milo wouldn't come in from the garden. He'd been leaping around like a maniac, chasing a tiny vole that he'd found. Eventually I managed to get him indoors and I waited for my best friend, Lou, while grabbing scraps of breakfast. Dad had gone to work already, leaving me a note on the kitchen table:

Diz, see you after school. Have a good day x.

Lou usually arrived at 8.45 a.m. on the dot, so we didn't have to rush, but it was almost 8.50 a.m., and she wasn't here. She must have been running late herself and decided to go in on her own. I couldn't wait any longer.

I broke into a run as soon as I was outside. My feet hit the pavement in sync with the beating of my heart. The houses on either side of Gulliver Avenue shifted and swayed, and my ears ached inside from the sharp nip in the early autumn air. Clusters of people huddled at the bus stop passed me in a burst of charcoal greys, the white and black of offices and banks and traffic merged into a single, moving stream.

I ran and ran until I reached the finish line of the school gates, my arms propped against the railings, my chest ready to burst. The bell had gone. Even the usual crowds of sixth formers with their slouchy rucksacks and rolled-up blazer sleeves had disappeared inside. I walked into the empty entrance hall.

Retrieval questions

1. What time of year was it?
2. Is Lou a boy or a girl?
3. Who was 'a smudge of black in the grey'?

Inference questions.

1. Who was Milo? - *Support your answer with evidence from the text.*
2. Was the narrator late for school? - *Support your answer with evidence from the text.*
3. Is it a cold day? - *Support your answer with evidence from the text.*

Choice questions

1. Which word in the text means 'radiating light'?
2. Which word in the text means 'to gather in a close group'?
3. What does the phrase 'in sync' mean?
4. What does the author mean in the line 'the finishing line of the school gates'?
5. The author uses a metaphor in paragraph one can you identify it?
6. The author uses short sentences in paragraph two - what effect does this have on the reader?

Challenge question Write your own description of a mysterious figure. *Use paragraph one to help you.*