

STORY SHEET – A TIME TO FLEE

SETTING THE SCENE – CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Dad works as a journalist on the local newspaper.

Mum is a mechanic.

They have recently had a baby. They have **a boy** and **a girl** at school.

Granny is a wheelchair user and house-bound since her stroke.

Uncle Ali, who is very religious, was a political prisoner for a number of years. He walks with difficulty and a limp since prison.

Mum and Dad have an old car. Dad has been a leading figure in the local journalists' trade union. The situation in the country has been changing quite dramatically recently.

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TELL THE STORY

Two months ago

A military coup took place. There was a lot of gunfire on the streets. Tanks and armoured cars were everywhere. A lot of people were killed and others arrested. A curfew has been imposed and everyone must now stay indoors after dark. The military rulers have taken over the TV and radio. It is very hard to know what is really going on.

A month ago

Dad was told that the new military rulers had arrested a number of people. Others, including religious figures, politicians, writers and trade unionists, have simply ‘gone missing’. Nobody knows where they are.

A fortnight ago

An article appeared in a local newspaper (which supported the military coup). Underneath a drawing of a skull and coffin was a long list of people in the town that it said were enemies of the state. Both Dad’s name and Uncle Ali’s appeared on this list. It was signed: ‘Friends of the Motherland’.

Last week

Soldiers came to the school looking for the dinner lady’s husband. He was not there. So they took away the dinner lady and her children instead.

Four days ago

It was announced that several trade unions, including the journalists’ union, had been banned.

Three days ago

A note was pushed through the door of the family home. It was made of letters cut out of newspapers. It said Dad was ‘a spy and an enemy agent’ and that ‘his days are numbered’. There was a drawing of a coffin and a skull, a noose and a gun. It was signed ‘Friends of the Motherland’.

Hand out copies of the note

Two days ago

Someone rang up Uncle Ali and told him he’d better get out, as some people were planning to set the house on fire.

Yesterday

Some children at the school said that snatch squads of soldiers had been searching the streets in a nearby neighbourhood and arresting people, including some members of Dad’s trade union.

Today

There has been the sound of gunfire in the main square and trucks full of military have been arriving in front of the Town Hall. There are roadblocks stopping all cars. All trains are being searched. The family meets together for a hurried discussion. What are they going to do? Dad says the family should flee, and seek political asylum abroad as refugees. It is under an hour to the border by car, but that journey would be very risky. By foot would mean a whole week’s journey through the desert and then the high forest across dangerous country to the frontier. Now they hear the military are starting to search their street. They have 10 minutes to make their minds up, get organised and get out.