Chapter summary

The Truly Married Woman. Ajayi lives a comfortable life with Ayo, his mistress for the last 12 years. She makes him tea in the mornings and looks after their house. She has had three children with him and is expecting a fourth. Ajayi has vague intentions of marrying her but has never got round to doing so. One day he has a surprise visit from some Americans. He remembers contacting them in the hope of getting free Bibles or pictures. The men take a photo of Ajayi and his family for their magazine, and this prompts Ajayi to marry Ayo. The morning after the wedding, Ajayi is taken aback when, for the first time, Ayo tells him to make his own tea.

The Road to Migowi. A nameless bus conductor has been travelling between the same two towns for nine years. The journey is slow and difficult, particularly in the rainy season when the bus frequently gets stuck in the mud. We learn that the conductor has a sad past; his father died when he was a boy, and his mother drank herself to death a few years later. One day the conductor imagines that he sees his father on the bus. He is overjoyed, and everything around him suddenly seems positive and beautiful. But the bus stops suddenly, stuck in the mud again, and his dream disappears.

Two Sisters. Mercy is a typist who believes that her only prospect of happiness lies with finding a rich man. She lives with her older sister Connie. Although she wants a husband and children, she has a succession of unsuitable boyfriends. The latest is Mensar-Arthur, an important politician who has a reputation as a womaniser. Connie, who loves only her husband despite his unreliability, is shocked. Mensar-Arthur finds a government house for Mercy. However, there is a sudden coup in the country, and Mensar-Arthur goes to prison. Connie expects Mercy to move back in, but the next visit from Mercy is to introduce her latest boyfriend – an important army officer, a married man with children and grandchildren, who works for the new government.

Blood Feuds. The narrator was born in Zimbabwe. His father was living there as an exile from Malawi. His father, like Uncle Phala, had fought for independence in the 1960s – but when independence came, the new government was repressive, and the two men, with many others, left the country to work in Zimbabwe, where they became important figures in exile politics. Later, the Malawian regime fell and the exiles and their children could return. But they returned to a country that was very different from their nostalgic vision. Ethnic divisions between southerners (like the narrator’s father) and northerners (like Uncle Phala) came to the fore. The narrator, married to uncle Phala’s daughter, sets up a business in the north of the country, but is hounded out by an angry mob who want to kill southerners. The ethnic tensions calm down to the extent that the narrator’s father and uncle Phala can meet again, but by now they are old and dispirited, and their final meeting is painful.

The Miracle Worker. Makinde makes a living, with difficulty, as a mechanic on a patch of land in Lagos. His wife Bisi is a religious woman who gives generously to her church, which frustrates Makinde as they barely have enough to eat. One day she sees a vision of the Virgin Mary in the windscreen of a battered old car in Makinde’s lot. Crowds of people start to arrive to pray and sing, making it impossible for Makinde to work. He decides to charge visitors to see the vision – until rain washes it away. A tax assessor, hearing about his earnings, pays a visit. Makinde refuses to co-operate, and instead gives his money to Rasaki, a disreputable figure who promises to give him huge returns by gambling the money on the pools. The money disappears. Makinde is despondent, and his wife is angry. But help is at hand; Bisi’s church has a fund to help with such emergencies, but Makinde must first join the church. This, it turns out, is exactly the miracle that Bisi prayed for when she first saw the Virgin Mary.
The Price of Peace: Stories from Africa
Retold by Christine Lindop

Pre-reading activity

Match the pictures with the words and the story titles

1  2  3  4
5  6  7  8

WORDS
a  Makinde started beating a piece of metal to drown the sound.
b  It was the church leaders who brought it into the open, reading out a letter in churches throughout the country.
c  Many a time the wheels go deep in the mud. ‘Everyone get out and push.’
d  And here she is herself, the pretty one. A happy, smiling Mercy.
e  As she stood in the centre of the circle, in a ceremony that she had stopped dreaming of for herself, Ayo cried with joy.
f  One morning we were woken by a noise like a bomb exploding.
g  Careful, Connie. Your little sister’s eyes are looking angry.
h  Rasaki studied the notes. He shook his head and smiled. ‘You got this by tricking believers?’

STORY TITLES
i  The Truly Married Woman
j  The Road to Migowi
k  Two Sisters
l  Blood Feuds
m  The Miracle Worker

to the teacher
Aim: To encourage students to predict the setting and themes of the stories.
Time: 30 minutes.
The Price of Peace: Stories from Africa
Retold by Christine Lindop

**While reading activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Ajayi</th>
<th>7 was from the United States</th>
<th>13 his parents died when he was young</th>
<th>19 was a teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ayo</td>
<td>8 was a typist</td>
<td>14 liked tea in bed every morning</td>
<td>20 was expecting her fourth child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Mr Olsen</td>
<td>9 sometimes borrowed a wedding ring</td>
<td>15 often worried about her sister</td>
<td>21 liked having rich boyfriends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The bus conductor</td>
<td>10 beat Oju for wetting the sleeping-mat</td>
<td>16 was travelling to India</td>
<td>22 wanted Ajayi to become a missionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>5 Mercy</td>
<td>11 her husband often came home late</td>
<td>17 had a new pair of shoes</td>
<td>23 took medicine every day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Connie</td>
<td>12 used to live on a large tea estate</td>
<td>18 was very patient</td>
<td>24 had the same journey every day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**To the teacher**

Where: After reading The Truly Married Woman, The Road to Migowi and Two Sisters.

Aim: To revise key characters and events.

Time: 15–20 minutes.

Organization: Give each student or group of students a copy of the worksheet. Ask students to match the names and the information. See how much they can do without referring back to the book. Go through the answers with the class, and where possible generate discussion about the information provided.

Key: 1 – 10, 14, 23; 2 – 9, 18, 20; 3 – 1, 16, 22; 4 – 12, 13, 24; 5 – 8, 17, 21; 6 – 11, 15, 19.
Find the answers to the clues below and fill in the word grid. When you have finished you will find another word running down the middle. What is the word?

1  The angry crowd outside Uncle Phala’s house was looking for a ________.
2  Ayo decided to wear a ________ wedding dress.
3  The bus conductor looked out at the yellow ________ in the fields.
4  In the 1960s, the British left Malawi and the country was finally ________.
5  Makinde worked as a ________ in Lagos.
6  Ajayi and his sister asked a soothsayer to look into the ________.
7  Uncle Phala live in ________ in Zimbabwe for many years.
8  The tax ________ wanted to know about Makinde’s earnings.
9  Bisi saw a vision of the Virgin Mary in the ________ of an old car.
10  Connie believed her husband was having an ________ with another woman.
11  Rasaki lost Makinde’s money playing ________.

To the teacher
Aim: To revise some key vocabulary and events.
Time: 15–20 minutes.
Organization: Give each student, or group of students, a copy of the word grid. Ask the students to read the clues, write in the words and find the word running down the centre. Go through the answers and see how much the students can remember, and what they think, about some of the events mentioned.
Key: 1 southerner; 2 grey; 3 maize; 4 independent; 5 mechanic; 6 future; 7 exile; 8 assessor; 9 windscreen; 10 affair; 11 pools. Hidden word: traditional.