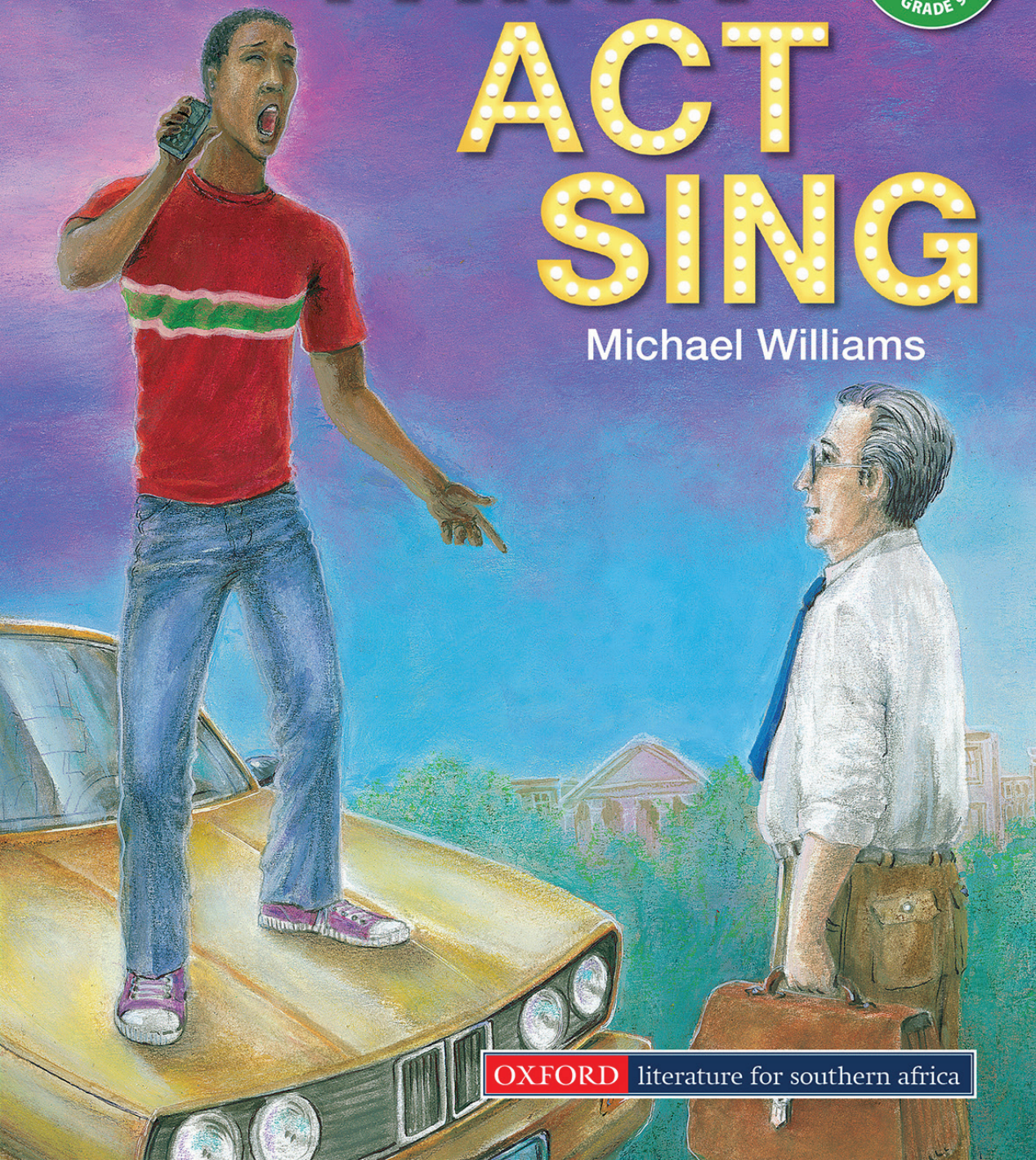


THINK ACT SING

FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
CAPS
APPROVED
GRADE 9

Michael Williams



OXFORD literature for southern africa

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Michael Williams

with additional material by Chantelle Ingpen

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

SOUTHERN AFRICA

“I’m George. Pleased to meet you.”

“I’m Thato,” he said, shaking the young man’s hand. “How did you learn to sing like that?”

George laughed. “Did you enjoy it?”

“Oh yes. I’ve never heard anything like it before.”

“I’ve been training at the Good Hope Opera College in Cape Town for the last three years,” said George.

“You’ve come all the way from Cape Town to sing in Boitekong?”

“I work for Cape Opera. We’re on a national tour, driving to Johannesburg later on today, and then down to Durban and on through the Eastern Cape next week. Two days in Queenstown, then on to Port Elizabeth and then home. It’s hard work, but it is also fun.”

Without thinking, Thato heard himself saying, “I want to sing opera, too. Like you.”

George looked at Thato for a moment. “You seem pretty serious. Wait here a moment.” He walked to the back of the combi and scratched around in some boxes. When he returned, he handed a brochure to Thato. “Here’s some information about Cape Opera. But before you can sing in the opera you must study voice at the opera college.”

Thato nodded, thinking, How difficult could it be to study singing?

“Thank you,” he said. “Thank you very much.”

“Oh, one more thing,” said George. “Stop wasting time dreaming. There’s no magic potion. You must make a decision, begin and then work very hard to get where you want to go.”

Thato felt the hand of his little sister Lerato slip into his own. Together, they walked out of the school, down Phiri Street and back home. He did not hear Lerato’s excited account of the performance at her school, nor Gogo’s greeting when he stepped into the kitchen. He did not respond to his brother’s sarcastic remark about becoming a babysitter. All Thato could hear was the melody of the mysterious song sung by the voice he had heard that afternoon. He was sure that voice had changed his life forever.

Theme

“Stop wasting time dreaming.” Is this good advice? Do you think Thato should follow George’s advice? Why?

Style

Sarcasm is used to hurt. Why would Malome’s words be hurtful to Thato?

3 Shining star

Miracle Yili remembered the exact moment that she realised she had to leave Ezibeleni. The idea had been hiding in the shadows of her mind all through the final term at school. But stubbornly she had refused to allow it into the light, afraid of the enormity¹ of the idea, and scared, too, of what she would lose. Leaving Ezibeleni would also mean leaving the Shining Star Gospel Choir.

The voices of the choir soared around her in a cathedral of sound: the tenors² providing pillars of harmony for the elaborate moulding of the darker tones of the mezzos³, while the first sopranos⁴ teased light out of a stained glass melody and the rumbling basses⁵ cemented the sturdy foundation in the Easter hymn.

Lord, accept this gift of song to your glory, Miracle prayed before stepping forward to sing. And when I tell everyone that I am leaving Ezibeleni, please do not let them hate me.

As she began to sing, everyone in the congregation at the Church of the Resurrection looked at Miracle. It was impossible to look anywhere else but at the young woman, dressed in white, standing before the choir. Her beautiful voice stirred every heart in the church. When the hymn was over, the congregation collectively took a huge inhalation of breath, as if everyone had momentarily stopped breathing.

The tingling silence that filled the church after the final note was all the acknowledgement that Miracle needed. She knew the Lord had heard her prayer, for when she looked at the smiling faces of her parents, she was sure they would understand why she had to leave Ezibeleni.

Style

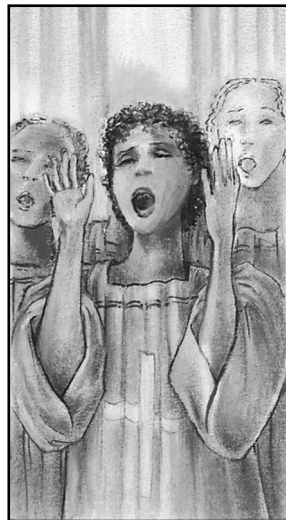
Explain the personification. (See page 68 in the Novel toolbox if you need a clue.)

Style

This is an extended metaphor. What is being compared to what? Is this an effective comparison? Why?

Character

What do her prayers tell us about Miracle?



1 **enormity**: hugeness

2 **tenors**: singers with voices in the highest range for a man

3 **mezzos**: singers with voices in the lowest range for a woman

4 **sopranos**: singers with voices in the highest range for a woman

5 **basses**: singers with voices in the lowest range for a man