

KEYS / THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY

1- What age did Chimamanda Adichie start reading?

b- 4 years old (although her mum says it's 2 and 7 is the age of her starting writing)

2- What kind of stories did she start writing about and why?

She wrote exactly the kinds of stories she was reading (British and American stories): All her characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out.

3- What's her social background?

She comes from a middle-class Nigerian family. Her father was a professor, her mother an administrator.

4- What's the single story she had of Fide's family?

Fide was her family's domestic help (boy) and the only thing her mother would tell her about Fide and his family was that they were poor... She did not know that they were artists.

5- What's her personal experience of a single story when she left Nigeria and entered an American university?

It was when her American roommate asked where she had learned to speak English so well, and she was confused to say that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language. She asked if she could listen to what she called her "tribal music," and was consequently very disappointed when she produced her tape of Mariah Carey.

6- What is the most recent example she had of Africa being referred to as a country?

It was in her last flight from Lagos, in which there was an announcement on the Virgin flight about the charity work in "India, Africa and other countries."

7- Where does the single story of Africa come from?

This single story of Africa ultimately comes from Western literature. Now, here is a quote from the writing of a London merchant called John Lok, who sailed to west Africa in 1561 and kept a fascinating account of his voyage. After referring to the black Africans as "beasts who have no houses," he writes, "They are also people without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breasts."