

# Horse Snake *Huynh Quang Nhuong*



No matter who you are, life will present you with challenges. Perhaps you'll face danger from a natural disaster. Perhaps you'll find you have more work than you can do. Or maybe you'll be asked to carry emotional burdens that seem impossibly heavy. Will you be strong enough to take on every challenge alone? In "The Horse Snake," a community depends on teamwork to face a threat that is too big for just one person.

*What* goals and challenges would be easier to meet if you worked with a team rather than by yourself. Why would teamwork help bring success in each situation?

Narrative nonfiction tells true stories about events that really happened. To make these events interesting, writers use many of the elements found in short stories, such as

- **a conflict**, or struggle between opposing forces
- **suspense**, or the feeling of excitement or tension that makes you eager to find out what happens next

"The Horse Snake" is a type of narrative nonfiction called a memoir, in which the writer tells true stories from his or her life. As you read, notice how the author explains the conflict and creates suspense.

## chronological order

Often, writers of narrative nonfiction present events in the same order in which they happened in real life. This is called chronological order, or time order. To recognize time order, look for clue words that tell when events occurred, such as *a few seconds later*, *shortly after midnight*, or *the next day*.

As you read, use a timeline to track the order of events and the time of day each event occurred.

## About the Author

Growing up in a small village in Vietnam, Huynh Quang Nhuong was tending rice fields by the time he was six years old. He also watched over his family's water buffaloes, including his favorite, Tank. There were no stores, cars, or televisions in the village. For entertainment, Huynh, his family, and his neighbors listened to one another tell stories. When he was older, Huynh received a scholarship to Saigon University, and he left home. He planned to return to his village as a teacher.

Instead, Huynh was drafted into the army of South Vietnam in the 1960s. After being paralyzed by a bullet, he traveled to the United States for treatment. Huynh never returned to Vietnam. However, his memoirs, poems, and plays brought his memories of Vietnam and the stories he heard there to audiences in the United States.

"The Horse Snake" is a chapter in Huynh's memoir *The Land I Lost*. The memoir is set in Huynh's childhood village, which was surrounded by jungle on one side and mountains on the other. Huynh describes the realities of living close to fascinating and dangerous animals.