



Candi Miller

Author of *Salt & Honey*

Though born in Zambia, Candi grew up and was educated in South Africa. She did a Bachelor degree in journalism and then went on to work in advertising, as a copywriter, for more than a decade - in both South Africa and America. She attests to the saying that advertising is the most fun you can have with your clothes on!

Candi moved to the UK seventeen years ago and is now a British Citizen. She's tutored creative writing for the last seven years and loves the work, finding the students, adult or undergrad, inspiring. She believes she learns as much about writing from teaching them, as she ever did from years and years of self-study. She is currently a senior lecturer in Creative and Professional Writing at the University of Wolverhampton.

However, it was in South Africa that she developed a keen interest in conservation and it was natural to her to extend this to the plight of the San people, driven from their traditional hunting grounds by settlers, both black and white. During the Apartheid government's war in Angola, she learned that groups of San, used by the military as trackers, were dying from eating contaminated food supplied to them. She determined then to write about these people and unearthed further disquieting claims, such as farmers in South West Africa being able to obtain a hunting license for shooting a Bushmen, much as they could for shooting a buck.

She undertook a very eventful research trip to the Kalahari desert: she was caught up in one of the largest veld fires ever to sweep the sub-continent; charged by a bull elephant and enchanted by Ju/'hoansi story-telling around a campfire. It was these stories that really gave her the heart of *Salt & Honey* as she sat in the sand, under a baobab tree, to write. In the topmost branch of this cathedral-sized old tree lived a tawny eagle with alarming table habits, Candi says. "He kept dropping his dinner from his beak, onto the sand below. The dinner was usually a live snake."

Salt & Honey developed slowly and many drafts and rejections later, Candi started to question whether she would ever get it right. But she remembered the little group of people she'd left behind in the Kalahari whose last words to her were: "Don't throw us away!". In a last-ditch effort, she approached an upcoming new publisher, Legend Press. Its managing director, Tom Chalmers, loved the novel. *Salt & Honey* was published by Legend Press in July 2006.

Candi has had several short stories published, but *Salt & Honey* is her first novel. She is currently working on a continuation of her heroine, Koba's, story. Should *Salt & Honey* win the World Book Day Award and additional funding can be found, she would like to go back into the Kalahari to find the small band of San who inspired her so. "It would be good to share my luck with them."