

Level: B1

UNDER THE WATER

Teaching point: Reading

Theme: Mystery

Activity: Read and discuss

PROCEDURE

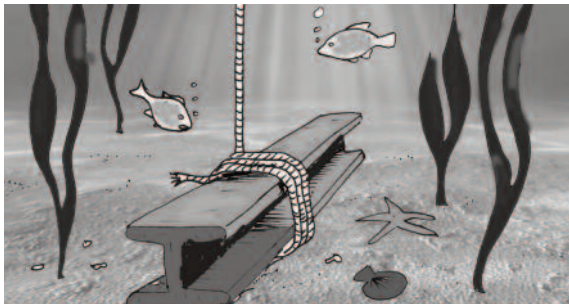
1. Ask students to name and murder mystery stories they can remember. They may be books or films.
2. Give out PART 1 of the story. Ask students to read the story and answer the questions.
3. Ask students to compare their answers with a partner. Then discuss the answers as a class. Ask them to give reasons for their answers.

Suggested answers:

1. Steve was visiting this place as a tourist: the woman says 'We don't see many tourists around here'.
 2. 'She' is the woman who lives in the house where Steve is staying. Perhaps she is the landlady of a guesthouse. She is nervous because she is lying for some reason.
 3. Perhaps he saw it in the bedroom in the house. He thought it looked like a girl's bedroom.
 4. Perhaps he fainted. Perhaps somebody hit him.
4. Give out PART 2 of the story. Ask students to read the story and answer the questions.
 5. Ask students to compare their answers with a partner. Then discuss the answers as a class. Ask them to give reasons for their answers.

Suggested answers:

1. Yes, it is. The woman and her husband are murdering Steve. They didn't murder their daughter Josie – that was an accident.
2. He was unlucky to visit that house. He was unlucky to go swimming that morning. He was unlucky to have seen the girl in the water.
3. Because the story was not a ghost story – it was what actually happened to their daughter.
4. Steve was suspicious when the woman wanted him to sleep, and when he saw the husband putting things in the boat. But he really understood when he saw the red shoe and knew it belonged to the dead girl in the water.



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LISTENING ALTERNATIVE

You can download an audio version of this story being read aloud, if you'd like to do this as a listening activity instead.

7. As a follow up, ask student in pairs or groups to plan a TV version of the story:
- Which famous actors should they use?
 - Where should they film it?
 - How many episodes should there be? What should be in each episode?
 - Should the story be changed in any way? How should it end?

This story was inspired by a Roald Dahl tale called The Landlady. It was first published in New Ways to Go 4 (CUP 2003).

UNDER THE WATER (PART 1)

'We don't get many tourists around here', she said. Steve was just visiting the place and needed a room. The place was just a single house by the sea. 'No problem', said Steve. 'I like peace and quiet'.

She took him to a small room with a bed. 'You can sleep in here', she said, and left. It looked like a girl's bedroom and Steve wondered who it belonged to.

He woke up in the morning and went downstairs. She gave him coffee and toast. He asked her how many people lived there. She said, 'Only us: me, my husband and... I mean, just two of us.' She looked nervous.

The sea looked lovely and blue and Steve decided to go for a swim. He saw a fish and swam under the water to take look at it. Then he noticed something red: a girl's shoe. 'I've seen a shoe like that', he thought. 'Where was it?' Near the shoe was a heavy piece of metal and a rope going up from it. He had to go up for air.

Then, as he was going up, he saw her.

It was a teenage girl, with her foot tied to the rope. He didn't actually have time to look carefully, but he noticed that her mouth was open and saw a small fish swim out. He reached the top. He was very scared and took in big mouthfuls of air. Then suddenly, everything went black.

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1. Why was Steve visiting this place?
 2. 'She looked nervous': Who is 'She', and why do you think she is nervous?
 3. Steve thinks: 'I've seen a shoe like that'. When and where do you think Steve first saw a red shoe?
 4. 'Everything went black': What do you think happened to Steve?

UNDER THE WATER (PART 2)

He woke up in a small room. He had a bad headache. The woman came in and told him what had happened: 'My husband's boat hit you while you were swimming. He didn't see you, I'm afraid'. Then she gave him a glass of water with some pills in it for his headache. Steve drank it and told her about the girl under the water.

'Oh, so you saw Josie, then?' she said. 'You saw Josie's ghost.' And she told Steve the story:

'Many years ago, a family lived here in this house: a man, a woman and their daughter Josie. Josie fell in love with a boy, but her father didn't like the boy and said she mustn't see him again. Then one night, he found them together. He was very angry. The boy escaped. Josie tried to run away but she fell down the stairs and died. The man was afraid to tell the police, so he and his wife took her out in the boat and threw her in the sea, with her leg tied to a heavy piece of metal.'

At the end of her story, the woman looked very sad, almost crying. Then she looked at Steve. 'You look very sleepy, young man', she said. 'I think the pills are working. I'll leave you now. Just try to get some sleep.'

When the woman left, Steve was thinking, 'What does she mean about the pills working? Why does she want me to sleep?' He got out of bed. Out of the window, he could see a man – the husband, he guessed. He was putting a heavy piece of metal and some rope in the boat.

Steve was very tired, but he looked around for his clothes. Then he noticed it again: that red shoe. A real shoe, not a ghost's shoe. The other one was out there in the water. Suddenly, Steve understood: the woman's story was true, but it wasn't a ghost story. The woman and her husband had thrown the girl in the water, and now Steve knew their terrible secret.

And they knew he knew!

'I must get away', Steve thought, as he fell asleep. Forever.

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5. Is this a murder story? Who committed the crime and who is the victim?
 6. Steve was very unlucky. What do you think was his first piece of bad luck?
 7. 'The woman looked very sad, almost crying'. Why was she so sad?
 8. What made Steve finally understand what was happening?