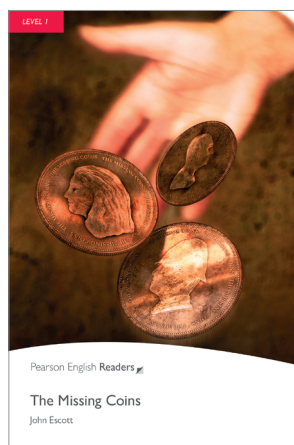


The Missing Coins

John Escott



Summary

The Missing Coins is a mystery story. Pete and Carla are students, visiting the city of Bath in England. While they are walking around looking at the shops and buildings they hear music in a quiet street. A man is playing a flute. He is standing next to the window of a shop which sells coins and stamps. They go into the shop and have a look. Pete wants some stamps, but they are expensive and the girl shop assistant is unfriendly. Pete and Carla then go to a café for a drink.

To their surprise, the shopkeeper comes to find them there. He says that some of his coins are missing. He thinks Pete and Carla have stolen them. He looks in Carla's bag and their pockets in front of a policeman, but it turns out that they have not taken them.

Later, Carla hears the music again. She realises how the coins were stolen: The girl in the shop has made a plan with the flute player. She drops the coins into the flute player's hat through the open window. Carla explains this to the policeman. The policeman finds the missing coins in the flute player's hat.

The shopkeeper is so pleased with Carla and Pete that he, in return, gives Pete the stamps that he wants.

Background and themes

Mystery: The story has a mystery, which the students can try and work out by looking at the picture on page 2.

Tourism and crime: Crime is often found in big cities, where tourists and other visitors stay for a short time.

Feelings: When they are in the shop before the coins are stolen, Carla feels that there is something wrong about the shop.

Discussion activities

Before reading

- Discuss:** Talk about visiting a new city. Put students into small groups. Have them discuss the following questions.
 - *What do you like doing when you visit a city for the first time?*
 - *Where is your favourite city? Why?*
 - *What is good to see in your favourite city?*
 When students are ready, ask some groups to share their opinions with the rest of the class.
- Describe:** Divide the class into two groups, A and B. Group A chooses a picture from the book but doesn't tell B which it is. The students in Group A take turns to describe the picture. Group B discusses and decides which picture it is by saying the page number. Then it is Group B's turn to choose another picture and describe it to Group A. Group A says which it is.
- Guess:** Divide the class into two groups again. This time, Group A chooses another picture from the book. Group B must find out which picture it is by asking Group A questions, e.g. *Is there a car in the picture? How many people are in the picture?* After Group B guesses the picture correctly, they swap roles. It's Group B's turn to choose another picture, and Group A guesses which one it is.
- Predict:** Have students look at all the pictures in the book. Ask them to think what the story is about. Encourage them to guess the answers to the following questions.
 - *Who is the main character?*
 - *What is the name of this place?*
 - *What is he or she doing?*
 - *What is happening?*
 - *Is it a happy ending or sad ending?*

After reading

- Retell:** Put students into groups. Have them choose to be one of the following characters: the policeman, the shop owner, the shop assistant, or the man with the flute. Have them discuss how to re-tell the story from their point of view.
- Research:** Have students work in groups. Ask them to use resources from outside the classroom, e.g. the Internet, library books and travel agencies to get some information about the city of Bath. Encourage them to find out what you can do, see, eat and buy there. You could ask them to find out about the famous people who lived in Bath or the history of Bath. When they are ready, ask each group to make a presentation to report on what they found out about the city.