



Let the story do the work

A2-B1 · Teens and adults · 40-50 minutes

Share: Learner pages **1-4**; keep pages **5-7** and the scripts private.

Audio: Four short chapters, plus one combined MP3. Play separately or pause the combined track at each part break. Microsoft synthetic voices: Maya/British, Ben/Irish, Sara/Australian, Jo/French multilingual. Keep each character's voice consistent.

Aim: Follow a story, predict using clues, then use past scene-and-event language to tell it.

A flexible 40-50 minute route

Picture and brief grammar | 6 minutes. Keep the existing opening. Describe the activities, make two predictions, then move on.

Parts 1-2 | 10 minutes. Listen, compare ideas and answer briefly. Stop at the crash; let learners commit to one explanation.

Parts 3-4 | 10 minutes. Compare clues, revise predictions and hear the explanation. React to the ending. Do not analyse every sentence.

Jo's voice message | 6 minutes. Allow 30 seconds of notes, take turns telling, then ask a follow-up. Give one useful language correction after the story.

Choose and chat | 8-18 minutes. Explore a few questions on page 4. Homework is optional.

Listening answers and open responses

Part 1: The lights went out. Maya put down the knife; Ben decided to switch off the cooker. First-action suggestions vary; accept a plausible response to the scene.

Part 2: Jo brought a torch. Ben was looking in the drawer when the phone rang. He found old batteries, a key and a birthday candle; accept any two. Crash explanations are predictions, not facts.

Part 3: The plates were still on the table; a flour bag was on the floor. The cat was under a chair. The white line was beside Ben's shoes. Accept supported predictions; the cause is still unrevealed.

Part 4: Ben pulled the tea towel, which brought the flour bag off the chair. Sara was moving the bag when the lights returned. Jo jokes that dessert would be more useful than a torch next time. Other reactions are open.

Homework: 1 **was slicing**; 2 **was looking for the torch**; 3 **pulled / fell**; 4 **was / doing**. Check the learner's own example for coherent time and meaning.

Keep it light and adaptable

Support: Check torch, flour, tea towel and power cut. Allow short answers and keywords. Replay a difficult detail rather than restarting the whole lesson.

Online / one-to-one: Share only learner pages; let the teacher be the prediction partner. Use the linked chapter MP3s.

30-minute route: Picture 5; Parts 1-2 and one prediction 8; Parts 3-4 and explanation 8; voice message 5; one conversation question/feedback 4.

Without playback: Read each scripted part using the speaker labels. Grammar focus is was/were + -ing for a past activity and past simple for a story event. When/while do not automatically determine tense; an event need not stop an activity.



The story, word for word

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Part 1: The lights go out

Maya: Part one. Dinner was going well. It was five to seven, and Jo was coming for dinner. I was slicing tomatoes. Ben was stirring the sauce, and Sara was laying the table. The cat was sitting beside the shopping bag, watching us. For once, everything was nearly ready.

Ben: That smells good. Do you want me to turn the heat down?

Maya: Before I could answer, the lights went out. The cooker fan stopped, and the kitchen went quiet. I put the knife down.

Sara: Nobody move. There are bags on the floor. Where is the torch?

Ben: In the drawer, I think. I'll switch off the cooker first.

Part 2: A visitor in the dark

Maya: Part two. Ben was looking in the drawer when the phone rang. My hands were wet, so Sara picked it up.

Sara: Hello? Jo? Are you outside? Yes, we're here. The power has gone off. Give me a moment.

Maya: Then the doorbell rang. Sara walked carefully to the door. Ben was still looking for the torch.

Ben: It isn't here. I can find three old batteries, a key and a birthday candle. But no torch.

Sara: You can stop looking. Jo's got one.

Jo: I was walking down the road when the street lights went out. I had a torch in my bag, so I brought it to the door. Is dinner still happening?

Maya: Just then, we heard a crash behind us.

Original fictional story. Synthetic Microsoft voices; no real speaker endorsement is implied.



The story, word for word

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Part 3: What fell?

Maya: Part three. Jo held up the torch. Sara was standing by the door. Ben was near the cooker. I was beside the chopping board. The shopping bag was on its side, and the cat was under a chair.

Ben: Oh, no. Was that the plate with the tomatoes?

Maya: Jo shone the torch across the table. The plates were still there. Then he pointed the light at the floor.

Sara: There's a bag of flour down there. Don't walk through it.

Maya: A white line crossed the floor beside Ben's shoes. Ben looked down at the chair next to him.

Ben: I think I know what happened. But it wasn't the cat.

Part 4: The explanation

Maya: Part four. Ben showed us the tea towel he was holding.

Ben: I left this on the chair while I was cooking. The flour was on the chair too. When I pulled the towel, the bag fell. I didn't see it in the dark.

Maya: We checked the shopping bag. The bread was still inside, and the cat was just hiding under the chair. While Sara was moving the flour bag out of the way, the lights came back on.

Jo: Excellent. I carried a torch all this way and used it for about two minutes.

Sara: You helped us find the flour. That counts.

Maya: We cleared the floor before cooking again. Then Jo put the torch away and smiled.

Jo: Next time, I'm bringing dessert.

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