

# Hotel Casanova

## Aims

- To introduce students to the key elements of stories in the romance genre.
- To focus students on the main characters.
- To stimulate students to read the book.

1 Write 'Hotel Casanova' on the board or overhead and tell the students it's the title of the book they're going to read. Do they know where it might be set? Elicit or tell them it's Venice.

2 Ask students to look at a picture or pictures of Venice depicting typical scenes. (If you can't find suitable ones, use the picture on the front of the book.) In pairs or small groups give students a few minutes to think of four or five things they know about Venice. This will help you to pre-teach some of the vocabulary in the book.

3 Take feedback.

**Suggestions:** in Europe, in northern Italy, has canals, gondolas, St Mark's square

4 Ask students what kind of story it might be, first of all just from the context – Venice – and then from the Blurb (see handout opposite). Establish that it's a romance. Ask students if they think that it's a good setting for romance. Why? Why not?

5 Ask students if they like romances. Why? Why not? Is it just girls who like romance? Or do boys like it too? Ask them to talk about their favourite romantic books and films. What makes a really good romantic story? If you know it well, use *Romeo and Juliet* as an example, or another romance that you know. Put their ideas on the board.

6 Discuss with students what kind of thing they would expect to read about in a romance. Possible things to elicit are: boy meets girl, girl meets boy, love triangle, something getting in the way of love.

### Optional extras

**a** Ask the students to look at the People in the Story list on the handout opposite. Can they predict what might happen from the list of people?

**b** If the class is very good at creating stories, ask them to work in small groups and make up a short story from the character list. Ask them to tell their stories to the whole class.

Note: These are both activities that are intended to whet the students' appetite for reading the book. The keys are to keep them fairly short, and don't tell them what really happens in the story at this stage!

7 Ask students to read Extracts 1–5. They are all from Level 1 stories. Which two are from romances? How do they know?

**Answers:** Extracts 2 and 5 are romances. Extract 2 is from *Next Door to Love* by Margaret Johnson, and Extract 5 is from *Hotel Casanova*.

Words which help: boyfriend, new men, good-looking, marry

Extracts 1, 3 and 4 are all thrillers: *John Doe* (Antoinette Moses), *Parallel* (Colin Campbell) and *Just like a Movie* (Sue Leather).

8 Focus students on *Hotel Casanova* again. Ask them to look at the list of people in the story on the handout opposite. From the list of people in the story, focus on Dino. What do we know from the blurb about him? Ask students to read Extracts 6–8 and to say whether the following statements are true or false.

### True or False?

**a** Dino worked in the reception of a hotel.

**b** He hated his job.

**c** He made a lot of money.

**d** He sometimes offered the guests a drink of wine.

**e** He had a room in the hotel.

**f** Dino's birthday was on 21 April.

**g** Dino's plan was to marry when he was twenty-six years old.

9 Pair students up to check answers.

10 Take class feedback.

### Answers

**a** True

**b** False

**c** False

**d** True

**e** True

**f** False (20th)

**g** True

11 Focus the students on the last line of Extract 8: 'The woman with the long dark hair came and stayed at Hotel Grand, and everything changed.' Ask them what they think changed?

12 If you have the books, hand them out and start reading to find out.

# Hotel Casanova

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## Blurb

Dino was 21 and worked in a hotel in the beautiful city of Venice. The women who came to the hotel liked to talk to him. Dino was kind to them. But he knew what he wanted. 'When I'm 26,' he thought, 'I'm going to meet a woman, the woman I want to marry.'

Then Dino met Carla and . . .

## People in the Story

**Dino Bracco:** A young man who works at the Hotel Grand in Venice.

**Carla Maretti:** A woman who comes to the hotel.

**Maria Luca:** A waitress at the hotel.

**Giovanni Tardelli:** Dino's boss.

**Beppo Rossi:** A young man who works with Dino at the Hotel Grand.

## Extract 1

'Ok,' said Detective Jenny Brown, 'Thank you. But you're right about John Roberts. He looks like anyone. He doesn't look dangerous. But he is, he's very dangerous.'

'I hope we can help you find John Roberts,' said Susan. 'He's out there, somewhere. Someone knows him.'

'Yes,' said Jenny. 'But we must find him before he finds someone else. We must find him before another person dies.'

## Extract 2

Janet always wanted me to go out and meet new men.

'You need to go out, Stella,' she often told me, 'you need to meet new people. New men.'

But I didn't want to meet new men, and I didn't want a boyfriend. I knew boyfriends didn't always make you happy. My last boyfriend, James, didn't make me happy.

Janet looked at me. 'You're thinking about James,' she said. Janet often knows what I'm thinking. 'Don't think about him,' she said, 'He wasn't any good for you. But you mustn't think all men are bad. Your neighbour looks nice.'

## Extract 3

It was late and it was getting dark. Max sat in the bedroom of his flat. He lived in London and the noise of cars outside never stopped. But now he didn't hear the noise. He sat on his bed. There was a gun on the bed beside him. The gun was still warm. Max's face was very white and he didn't feel well. He never felt well after he killed someone.

## Extract 4

How could I kill Carrie? In the movie it was easy. In the movie the husband was old and sick. But Carrie wasn't old and she wasn't sick. She was young. It was difficult. 'Wait and see,' I said to myself. 'Wait for an answer.' My life became more and more difficult.

## Extract 5

Women liked Dino. Well, why not? He was good-looking, with dark curly hair and beautiful brown eyes. And he was nice. The ones who came to the hotel alone liked to talk to him. Dino was kind to them. But women were not in Dino's plans. Not for the moment. 'When I'm twenty-six,' he thought, 'I'll meet a woman, the woman I want to marry.'

## Extract 6

Dino liked his work at the reception. When guests came in he said hello to them and he asked, 'Sir, madam, would you like a glass of Soave, one of Venice's famous wines?' He took their credit cards. When they weren't from Italy, he took their passports. Then he asked the boy to take their bags to their room. He helped the guests. 'Yes, madam, of course, madam.' Dino's boss, Giovanni Tardelli, thought he was a good boy.

## Extract 7

Dino worked very long hours and he didn't make much money. His room at the back of the hotel was very small. It just had a small bed, a table and light, and somewhere for his clothes.

But Dino didn't think about the long hours, the little money and the small room. He liked his job at the Hotel Grand. And it was only the start. He knew what he wanted. Every night he wrote about the day in his little black book. Then he looked at his plans. He liked to read them every day.

## Extract 8

The night of 20 April, his twenty-first birthday, Dino sat in his little room and looked at his little black book. He looked at his plans. 'Everything is good,' he thought. But on 21 April, something changed his plans. The woman with the long dark hair came and stayed at Hotel Grand, and everything changed.