

# Just Like a Movie

## Aims

- To explore the thriller genre.
- To stimulate students to read the book.

1 Put the word 'blurb' on the board and ask students if they know what it means. Show them the backs of a few books and point out the blurbs. Ask students to read through the five level 1 reader titles and match them to the blurbs from the backs of the books (next page).

**Answers:** 1 c, 2 a, 3 d, 4 e, 5 b

**Alternative:** You can make this activity a little more active by giving half of the students a title and the other half a blurb. Each student has to find his or her other half as quickly as possible by moving around the room.

2 Elicit types of story from the students. Make sure you get the following genres on the board: romance, comedy, detective story, thriller, adventure, science fiction.

Elicit or give brief explanations of the terms. Ask for examples in each category.

3 Tell students that they are going to read *Just Like a Movie*. Show them the front cover and elicit ideas and vocabulary (e.g. get married, wedding). It looks like it could be a romance, a love story. Ask students to think about the title, *Just Like a Movie*. What usually happens in love stories in the movies? Ask them to read the blurb again and the extracts (next page).

Ask students: Is it a love story? (partly). Do they think the ending will be happy or sad?

Elicit the fact that it is actually a thriller. It's a story that tells an exciting story about a murder or crime. Ask students which words in the extracts suggest this? (police, killer, dead) Ask the students if they have read other thrillers and, if so, which ones. Did they enjoy them? Why? Why not?

4 Put the blurb from the back of the book up on the board or overhead.

'Brad Black likes the movies. He goes every weekend with his girlfriend, Gina. They are happy, but they have no money. Then Brad has an idea and thinks that real life can be just like the movies – and that's when things go wrong.'

Put the students in groups of three or four and ask them to come up with five ways that Brad could get money. You can give them some ideas to get going: e.g. he robs a bank; he gets a better job; a rich relative dies.

Ask the group spokespersons to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

5 Tell students they are going to read the first chapter of *Just Like a Movie*. Ask students to read the true/false statements below and check vocabulary. Once they've read the first chapter, ask them to note whether the statements are true or false.

- a The story happens in Canada.
- b Brad's girlfriend is a nurse.
- c Brad met his girlfriend at the cinema.
- d They met in the summer.
- e Brad is very rich.
- f He works as a handyman.
- g Brad and Gina fall in love.
- h Brad wants to live in London.

Ask students to read and answer individually, then check in pairs, then as a whole class.

**Answers:** a T (Toronto), b F (teacher), c T, d F (it was October), e F, f T, g T, h F (Paris)

### Alternatives/extras:

1 If you have the recording, you can play the first chapter to them once you've checked the answers.

2 You can do this as a listening exercise, instead of as a reading.

6 Finally, ask the students what happens at the end of the chapter and what they think will happen next. If you have the books, hand them out and start reading.

**Optional extras:** Ask students to look at only the pictures from the first chapter. They can use the pictures to predict the story of the chapter before reading.

# Just Like a Movie

## Titles

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1 John Doe          | 4 Hotel Casanova |
| 2 Just Like a Movie | 5 Help!          |
| 3 The Big Picture   |                  |

## Blurbs

- a Brad Black likes the movies. He goes every weekend with his girlfriend, Gina. They are happy, but they have no money. Then Brad has an idea and thinks that real life can be just like the movies – and that's when things go wrong.
- b Frank Wormold is a writer. He doesn't have much money and his wife is unhappy. To help him finish one of his stories he starts to use a computer. But the computer gives him more help than he wants. Then he really needs 'help'!
- c The man they call John Doe lies in a hospital bed. He watches and thinks but says nothing. The doctor wants to know who he is. But John Doe doesn't answer his questions. Then, after John Doe leaves hospital, the doctor finds out more about him than just his real name.
- d Tokyo. Ken Harada takes photos for newspapers. But life gets dangerous when Ken takes a photo of a sumo star. Someone wants the photo badly. But who? And why?
- e 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 . . .

## Extract 1

A week later the police came back to the house. 'There's a killer in Rosedale, Mr Black,' they said. 'There are three women dead.' They thought that he was Carrie's killer too. My face was sad.

## Extract 2

The next day at five o'clock in the afternoon, I had a telephone call. It was the police.

'Mr Black, I'm afraid we have some bad news,' said the policeman. 'Someone found your wife's pen near the lake. They saw her name in the newspaper, so they knew it was hers.'

'Oh,' I said, 'So . . . she's dead?'

## Extract 3

My life was very difficult. I didn't love Carrie; I loved Gina. Then one day I had a good idea. A really good idea. The weather was really bad. It was very windy and I needed to fix the roof of the house again.

'Please come and help me on the roof, Carrie,' I said.

## Extract 4

I love the movies. New movies, old movies. I went to the movies a lot in Toronto. And it all started when I met Gina at the movies.

Gina! We met in October. Four years ago. We met outside a cinema. There was no snow but it was cold. It's cold in Toronto in fall. I was there to buy a ticket for a movie. It was *Forrest Gump*. She was there too, and we started to talk. Just like that.

'Hi,' I said, 'do you live around here?'

'Yes, I do. I live very near here,' she said.

'Do you? Me too,' I said.

She was nice. Really nice. I liked her smile. She gave me her telephone number. Before she went, she said, 'Oh, you didn't tell me your name.' I laughed.

'My name's Brad, Brad Black.'

I phoned her the next day. 'Why don't you come out with me?' I asked. 'To Salvo's Italian restaurant. It's cheap but nice. The spaghetti's very good.'

'Mmm, I love Italian food. My mum's Italian, you know. I love spaghetti,' she said. I was surprised. Really surprised. She was beautiful.

I went to her house at 7.30, to the address she gave me. We lived in the same area of the city. The poor area. She lived with her mother, who was old and sometimes sick. I went in the house to wait for Gina.

'Look after my daughter,' her mother said to me.

'Sure,' I said. I smiled my best smile. My good boy smile. Her mother looked at me. Was I good for her daughter? I was wearing my new shirt and pants. I looked good. Handsome. Black hair and blue eyes. She smiled at me.

Gina and I went to Salvo's. From that night it was our restaurant, our place. I started seeing her a lot. We fell in love. We were happy. I mean, really happy. Like in a movie. Like in *Love Story*. I loved that movie. I saw it five times.

Three months later we went to Salvo's restaurant again. I said, 'Gina, I love you. I want to marry you . . . but we need more money.' We were so happy, but we had no money. I was a handyman and I didn't make much money. And Gina was a teacher of small children. She was poor too.

Gina wanted to marry me. 'Brad,' said Gina, 'money's not important. We're poor, but we're happy.'

'But, Gina,' I said, 'if we want to get married and have children, we need money. We need a car, clothes, a beautiful house in Paris.'

I saw Paris in the movies and I wanted to live there. Gina smiled.

Gina and I talked a lot about money. Gina always smiled at me. She was happy, but I wanted everything. Just like in the movies.

'I'm a handyman,' I said. 'I'm not a rich man! How can I make a lot of money?'

Like I told you, I like old movies. Gina and I went to the cinema every week. Every Saturday night. One Saturday we went to see a movie called *Dead Money*. It was about a man and a woman. Poor, just like us.

This man and woman, they had an idea, a very good idea. Well . . . she had the idea. She knew a man, another man. He was really rich but very old and sick. This man liked her. He was lonely. She married him. Then, about six months later, he died suddenly. She got all his money. It was millions of dollars. She got the money and married her young boyfriend. Happy ever after!

After the movie, we went for a drink.

'That's it!' I said to Gina. 'That's it, Gina! We can get money like that.'

Gina looked at me and smiled. 'Please, Brad,' she said, 'don't say those things. Money isn't everything!'

'But, Gina,' I said, 'how can you say that? We must have money!'

Gina looked at me again. She didn't smile. 'Listen to me, Brad,' she said. 'It's just a movie. It's just a stupid movie.'

Stupid eh? Well, maybe it wasn't so stupid. I thought about it a lot.

Then one day I met Carrie.