

Frozen Pizza and other slices of life

Antoinette Moses

Before reading

1. What do you think 'a slice of life' means? Check the expression in a dictionary.
2. Read the list of themes in the back cover blurb. Which one are you most interested in?
3. Read the beginnings of each story to find which story contains the theme you are most interested in.
4. If you have the cassette, listen to the story of your choice.

Check your reading

Two Worlds

1. What problems is the author referring to?

- 1 The haves and the have-nots. (page 6)
- 2 The north-south divide. (page 6)
- 3 A lost generation of children. (page 11)
- 4 A sink estate. (page 15)

Now match the problems to the sentences.

- a '... they've pulled the plug on us like we're just dirty bath water ...'
 - b 'Everyone thinks I'm stupid because I have a Manchester accent ...'
 - c It was as if there were two different Englands living side by side.
 - d ... they couldn't see any point in an education.
2. Were you surprised to read about these problems existing in England? Do any of the problems exist in your country?

The Old Oak Bowl

1. At the beginning of the story, what does Mr Walker think is right or wrong?

- a Boys and girls together in the same school.
- b Allowing a lot of foreigners into England.
- c Making money on his restoration work.
- d Always telling the truth, even if it hurts people.
- e Change.
- f England was at its best in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Which of his opinions had changed by the end of the story?

2. Match the beginnings and endings.

- 1 Mr Walker, unable to accept the idea of a multicultural society,
- 2 In return for restoring an old table,
- 3 In his dream, he saw a monk with his bowl in a monastery
- 4 Greg Mount said there was nothing unusual about
- 5 He also told him about the region's historical links with Holland,
- 6 After discovering what Greg had said was true,

- a but heard a language that was neither English nor Latin.
 - b Mr Walker changed his ideas on what it meant to be English.
 - c thought of black people as foreigners rather than English.
 - d and explained that his name was Flemish in origin.
 - e Mr Walker was given an old oak bowl.
 - f people not speaking English after 1066.
3. Have people from your country emigrated to other countries in the past? If so, are there any particular countries where they have settled?

One of the Lads

1. Match the people and places to the definitions.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 Fulham | a a top London football club |
| 2 Chelsea | b where the Headhunters stood in the old stadium |
| 3 Stamford Bridge | c a gang that used to organise football violence |
| 4 The Chelsea Headhunters | d a great, former Chelsea player |
| 5 The Shed | e the stadium of Chelsea F.C. |
| 6 Peter Bonetti | f an area of London |

2. Complete the summary.

Luke, a Chelsea and unwilling member of a gang of football , was always He was needed by the gang because he was but was never an in the gang. He was frightened of being rejected by the lads. He left school with no and decided to become a and enjoyed the work. In fact, he had been offered a good job making He didn't dare admit this to the lads – their only safe topic of conversation was On a trip to , to watch England against Holland, Luke realised he didn't have to stay with the gang. He could do what he wanted, leave London and work in the

3. How popular is football in your country? Can you say why? To what extent are there problems with hooligans?

Frozen Pizza

1. Mrs Stonehouse's house or the young man's home? Which features are typical?

| | Mrs Stonehouse | The young man |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Conversation. | | |
| A neat, tidy house. | | |
| Eating together as a family. | | |
| Kitchen: centre of family life. | | |
| Home made food. | | |
| Microwaved fast food. | | |
| Independent lifestyles. | | |

2. How typical do you think Mrs Stonehouse's way of life is in England? Is this similar to your home life?
3. How popular is fast food among your generation in your country?

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Sweetie

- What's the recipe for success at university? Write *Do* or *Don't* after the sentences.
 - Attend seminars regularly.
 - Get into debt.
 - Complete essays on time.
 - Dress fashionably.
 - Study in the library.
 - Borrow money.
 - Take notes in seminars.
 - Have a great social life.
 - Ask friends to make excuses for you.
 - Have serious conversations.
 - Lie to family and lecturers.
- Which student lifestyle is/was more similar to your own? Nikki's or Sue's?
- Where does Nikki's money come from? In your country who do students receive money from? Is this satisfactory?

The Star Reporter

- What do you expect to find in British broadsheets or tabloids? Tick the features.

| | broadsheets | tabloids |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| a Large paper size. | | |
| b Small paper size. | | |
| c Intellectual content. | | |
| d Large, dramatic headlines. | | |
| e Soap star gossip. | | |

- Which aspects of the Carol Peters story do you think the tabloids would focus on or ignore?
 - Her house was vulnerable to flooding.
 - The land used to be owned by the university.
 - She had a terrible childhood.
 - She may have killed a child in her care.
 - She spent five years in a young offenders' prison.
 - She was a loving, caring mother to Robbie.
 - She had little money.
 - Her need to live anonymously.
 - She could still be a danger to other children.
- Do you have tabloids and broadsheets in your country? What is the most popular newspaper in your country, and why do you think it is so popular?

Don't Miss the Mozart!

- Match up the misunderstandings between Mel and Nicole Leconte.
 - 'I didn't expect anyone to come and meet me at the station.'
 - 'I didn't expect a hotel ... I thought I'd be staying in someone's house.'
 - 'I don't need all that time ... I like to be fresh. I just go on and do it.'
 - 'I thought you'd be rather distant and serious. And you're younger than I thought, too.'
 - 'I expect you're right ... Don't miss it!'
 - 'Not you ... You're a star, aren't you?'
 - 'I never thought you'd be so funny.'
 - 'I'm older than you think ... It must be a good day.'
 - 'Didn't the office tell you? ... Or your agent?'
 - 'Oh, fine. We didn't know ... I'd better tell the office.'

- At what point do you think Mel should have realised her mistake?
- How popular are concerts in your country? What other leisure activities are popular?

The Shivering Mountain

- Look at the words in italics. Who or what is *it*, *we*, *he* etc.?
 - 'It doesn't sound very promising.'
 - '... the one thing *we're* all mad about ... is birdwatching.'
 - It was as if *he* had become a different person in the country.
 - ... *he* would start the term as the only boy in the school who didn't have a suntan.
 - 'Couldn't you see where you were going?'
 - '*They* came from down there.'
 - '*It's* amazing.'
- Would you prefer to holiday in the Peak District, England or in Marina di Cecina, Italy? Give your reasons why.
- What are the positive and negative effects of tourism in your country?

After reading

Choose some of these activities.

- If you were touring around Britain, which places in *Frozen Pizza* would you like to visit?
- If you were writing 'slice of life' stories about your country, would you choose similar or different themes to those in *Frozen Pizza*?
- Which statement is closest to your outlook on life? Why?

'Things are not always what you believe them to be.'
(page 18, *Old Oak Bowl*)

'Of course it's true. It's in a book, isn't it?'
(page 34, *One of the Lads*)
- Which of the stories in *Frozen Pizza* made the deepest impression on you? Why?
- What new aspects of British life did you discover from the stories?
- Imagine you are a tabloid journalist. Choose a headline from page 84 and write your article about Carol Peters.
- Write one of the following:

Mrs Martins' official letter to Nikki. (See page 72.)

Peter Apton's phone conversation with Nikki. (See page 73.)

Sue Fordham's reply to Nikki's final email. (See page 75.)
- Persuade a friend to read something from *Frozen Pizza*. Write a review of the story you enjoyed most.
- Make your own activities for other students to do. e.g. Write some True or False questions.
- Here is the blurb from another book at this level.

Deadly Harvest

Chief Inspector Jane Honeywell is a city detective in a sleepy country town who wonders why she moved there. But then the rural peace and quiet is suddenly disturbed by a particularly horrible murder, and Jane starts the dangerous pursuit of the killer, or killers.

Do you want to read *Deadly Harvest*?