

High Life, Low Life

Alan Battersby

Before reading

- Look at the title and picture on the front cover. What do you think *High Life, Low Life* means?
- Look at the map of New York on page 5. What do you know about this city?
- Read the back cover blurb. Are there parts of your town or city you have never visited? Why? Where are they?
- Match the chapter titles and sentences from each chapter.

Chapter 1	Summer in the city
Chapter 2	Central Park West
Chapter 3	The will
Chapter 4	Beneath the city streets
Chapter 5	Inside information

 - I'd heard of people living underground in New York, but I'd never seen it for myself.
 - It was going to be another one of those hot, uncomfortable days.
 - That's one expensive address.
 - 'I'd like to ask you a few questions about Mrs. Whittaker.'
 - 'Nat, we have a problem,' she said. 'Mrs. Whittaker wants to make you rich.'
- If you have the cassette, listen to Chapter 1.

Check your reading

CHAPTER 1

- Who said what?
 - 'Sure you're feeling all right, Annie?'
 - 'Just give me a minute. It's this pain in my chest.'
 - 'Someone call 911. Get an ambulance!'
 - 'Nat, when are we going to get air conditioning?'
 - 'So you're the guy who saved Mrs. Clayton at Grand Central?'
 - 'Nat, can you find me a lawyer? I want to make a will.'

Annie Clayton Stella Delgado Dr. Fischer Nat Marley

CHAPTER 2

- Look at the words in italics. Who is *me, we, I, etc.*?
 - I would like your agency to do a special service for *me*.
 - We* could be visiting several million dollars so we had to look cool and fresh.
 - 'Martha does everything for me – *I* never leave the apartment.'
 - Someone* didn't like being called part of the furniture.
 - She* knew exactly what to do. I'm no good in situations like these.
 - 'You know, *you* look so much like my poor dead husband.'

Martha Bianchi Stella Delgado Mrs. Joanna Whittaker
Nat Marley

CHAPTER 3

- Match the beginnings and endings.
 - Mrs. Whittaker asked Marley to find a lawyer
 - Stella wondered why
 - Mrs. Whittaker was surprised
 - Mrs. Whittaker wanted to leave Marley everything

- Marley noticed the photo of Tom Whittaker
- Marley asked Wilma Patterson to persuade
 - but give nothing to her son and daughter.
 - so she could make a will.
 - Mrs. Whittaker to change her will.
 - and realised how similar they both looked.
 - to meet a female lawyer.
 - Mrs. Whittaker called Marley 'Tom'.

CHAPTER 4

- Put the events in the right order.
 - Marley was surprised to see electric fans in the office.
 - Leona took Marley uptown to Annie's underground home.
 - Annie told Marley about her lost son, Jackie.
 - Annie asked Marley to find Jackie before she died.
 - Marley took the box to Annie in Bellevue Hospital.
 - Ed Winchester told Marley about Tom Whittaker's airline business.

CHAPTER 5

- True or false?
 - Tom Whittaker had been a pilot in the First World War.
 - Tom Whittaker had started an airline business in the 1950s.
 - Tom Whittaker had been a good husband.
 - Mrs. Whittaker sometimes left the apartment.
 - Mrs. Whittaker's son and daughter used to visit her.
 - Martha was the only person who Mrs. Whittaker saw now.

CHAPTER 6

- Who gave Marley the information?
 - Jackie Clayton was not in prison.
 - Jackie's business was buying what people had stolen.
 - Jackie could be working for Wiseman Cabs.
 - Jackie's old boss wanted to find him.
 - Mrs. Whittaker's opinion of Marley.
 - Charlie Whittaker's home phone number.
 - Charlie Whittaker had agreed to set up a family meeting.

bartender at Vazac's Joe Blaney Wilma Patterson
Mr. Wiseman Lieutenant Brandstein

CHAPTER 7

- Complete the summary with the names of the characters.

..... had been taking photos of Wiseman Cabs all afternoon. phoned from the hospital to say that was getting much worse. At McFadden's Bar, showed Marley a newspaper story. Five years ago, and had been found not guilty of buying stolen property. Marley compared the newspaper photo with Joe's photo, realised that and were the same person and called at police headquarters. Finally, persuaded Marley to buy air conditioning for the office.

Dr Fischer Captain Oldenberg Annie Clayton
Jackie Clayton Stella Delgado Ed Winchester
Mr. Wiseman / Ernst Weissmann Joe Blaney

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CHAPTER 8

1. Match the questions to the answers.

- 1 'Has the doctor already seen her?'
 - 2 'When did you last see Mrs. Whittaker alive?'
 - 3 'Do you normally give Mrs. Whittaker her pills?'
 - 4 'You haven't touched anything in her room?'
 - 5 'Did Mrs. Whittaker take sleeping pills regularly, doctor?'
 - 6 'Now, Mr. Marley, surely you don't think ...?'
- a 'No sir ... I know that from detective stories.'
 - b 'Sure I do. Two at bedtime to help her sleep.'
 - c 'Yes. I suggested she take them.'
 - d 'Why should he? Not much he can do for her now.'
 - e 'I don't know what to think, doctor. That's the problem.'
 - f 'When I took in her hot chocolate ... Ten o'clock last night.'

2. Did Mrs. Whittaker die naturally or was she murdered? What do you think?

CHAPTER 9

1. Match the descriptions to the characters.

- a 'You could be my father's ghost.'
- b 'Her behavior's very strange.'
- c Physically, he seemed in worse shape than Mrs. Whittaker.
- d Sitting in his car with his hat pulled down over his eyes, he looked just like a guy sleeping.
- e He just looked like any normal guy going about his normal business.
- f I was tired, hot, and hungry.

Martha Bianchi Joe Blaney Jackie Clayton Nat Marley
Mr. Wiseman

CHAPTER 10

1. Are the following sentences fact or possibility?

- a Nobody knew where Martha was.
- b Martha had murdered Mrs. Whittaker.
- c Martha enjoyed reading detective stories.
- d Martha had taken all Mrs. Whittaker's money.
- e At first, Jackie didn't believe Marley.
- f Jackie was going to see his mother before she died.

CHAPTER 11

1. Correct the mistakes in the summary.

Jackie had been hiding from Wiseman for the last six months because he wanted an exciting life. Martha had taken out thousands of dollars from Mrs. Whittaker's bank account. Marley noticed that Martha had underlined sentences in a book called *The Perfect Crime*; Joe thought Martha's message 'Gone to play ball' probably meant that she was interested in baseball. Marley and Joe went to look for Martha in Las Vegas, which was seven hours away from New York.

CHAPTER 12

1. Who did what?

- a Who never left his mother's bedside?
- b Who found Martha in the Golden Palace?
- c Who won on number 7?
- d Who admitted to the murder of Mrs. Whittaker?
- e Who told Jackie that his mother was dead?
- f Who had never given up hope for Jackie?
- g Who had tears in his eyes?

Martha Bianchi Joe Blaney Annie Clayton
Jackie Clayton Dr. Fischer Nat Marley

CHAPTER 13

1. Tick (✓) the things which were in Annie Clayton's box.

- a Annie's will
- b letter from Annie to Jackie
- c letter from Tom Whittaker to Annie
- d letter from Tom Whittaker to Jackie
- e family photographs
- f pile of money
- g stock certificates

2. What is the relationship between ...

- a Tom Whittaker and Jackie Clayton?
- b Charlie Whittaker and Betty Osborne?
- c Jackie Clayton and Charlie Whittaker?

CHAPTER 14

1. Which characters ...

- a lost their mothers?
- b refused love to a mother?
- c have a lot in common?
- d came from the Bronx?
- e had a difficult childhood?
- f got into trouble on the streets?
- g had a cold, unloving father?
- h did something to improve people's lives?

Jackie Clayton Betty Osborne Charlie Whittaker
all of them

After reading

Choose some of these activities.

1. Would you like to live and work in a city like New York? Explain your answer.
2. Look at page 37. Marley felt, 'Sad for the people who had to live out their lives on the streets. Angry about the society that put them on the streets.' What do you think about homeless people?
3. Make two lists of the characters: 1. characters from the 'high life', 2. characters from the 'low life'. Which characters do you like best or least from the two lists?
4. Look at page 78. 'Television cameras turned at the same time. Interviews with reporters followed.' Imagine you are a TV reporter. What questions would you ask Marley?
5. Marley's team includes Stella Delgado and Joe Blaney. How did Stella and Joe help Marley in the investigation?
6. Imagine you are making a film of *High Life, Low Life*. Which actors would you choose to play the characters. Would you change anything in the story?
7. Look at page 76. Write Marley's reply to Martha's letter from jail.
8. Imagine you are a *Daily News* reporter. Finish the news story beginning on page 11.
9. Make your own activities for other students to do. e.g. Write some 'Who said what?' questions.
10. Here is the blurb from another book at this level

The Amsterdam Connection

Reporter Kate Jensen travels to Amsterdam when a friend is found dead there. Her search for the murderer takes her to parts of the city that tourists never see, and to a man prepared to kill to hide the truth. Kate soon discovers that football can be a very dangerous game.

Do you want to read *The Amsterdam Connection*?