

The House by the Sea

Patricia Aspinall

Before reading

- Look at the front cover and read the back cover blurb. What sort of story is this?
- Read the contents page. Can you imagine what is going to happen in the story?
- Match the chapter titles with the sentences from each chapter.

Chapter 1 Old friends
 Chapter 2 Waiting for Linda
 Chapter 3 Mad Tom
 Chapter 4 A voice in the dark
 Chapter 5 The smell of death

- 'Will you come down on the train? I'll meet you at the station.'
 - I tried to remember where I had heard his voice before.
 - There was blood on the blankets. There was somebody in the bed!
 - All that I could think about was that madman's face.
 - I realised it was someone I had been at university with five years ago.
4. If you have the cassette, listen to Chapter 1.

Check your reading

CHAPTER 1

1. Match the beginnings and endings.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 John was very surprised at | a John asked him about his wife, Linda. |
| 2 Carl didn't answer when | b Carl and Linda to get married. |
| 3 John had never expected | c why his friend had changed so much. |
| 4 Carl wasn't interested | d because he worked so hard. |
| 5 Carl said that their marriage had finished | e in what John was doing at the newspaper. |
| 6 John wanted to find out | f how much older his friend Carl looked. |

2. What do you think happened between Carl and Linda?

CHAPTER 2

1. Who said what?

- 'Let's just have a quiet night tonight.'
- 'You're so boring.'
- 'You know you should spend more time with your wife.'
- 'I'm sorry about not seeing much of you.'
- 'If you want to go there, that's fine.'

Carl Linda Melissa

2. Put the events in the right order.

- A strange man with blood on his face entered the pub.
- Someone was using Carl's parking place.
- Linda didn't phone Carl at the pub.
- The milk in the fridge didn't smell horrible.
- Carl found yesterday's newspaper in the house.

CHAPTER 3

1. Complete the summary.

Carl drove back to the house. A car passed him and he read the words on its side. Linda was not at home so Carl drove to Woodbridge he could. The last train from had just arrived but Linda wasn't on it. Then, Carl phoned but the answerphone was on. He was worried and decided to talk to in the pub. It was when he got there but she was still awake and invited him in. She told him that Tom Parker in Carl's house, and that his had died at sea.

CHAPTER 4

1. Carl heard a voice in the darkness in the church. Who do you think it was?

2. Match the beginnings and endings.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 In the morning, Carl walked along the beach | a with two shoes that he'd found on the beach. |
| 2 In the church Carl saw a picture | b and found an old car with clothes inside it. |
| 3 Carl returned to the pub | c to return to the house by the sea. |
| 4 Mary told Carl that the postman | d had seen Linda in Woodbridge. |
| 5 Mary called the police and told Carl | e of a whale with a man in its mouth. |

3. What do you think has happened to Linda?

CHAPTER 5

1. Look at the words in italics. Who or what is *she, we, it* etc.?

- She* wasn't there, but there was a terrible smell.
- We* both looked so happy. Now it made me want to cry.
- This one smells like fish. *It's* been in the sea, you say?
- He* may not live like the rest of us but I'm sure he wouldn't harm anybody.
- I didn't want to call *them*.

2. Who do you think put the fish head in the bed? Why?

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CHAPTER 6

1. Match the questions with the answers.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 'The doctor thinks I'm mad, doesn't he?' | a 'I spoke to her on Wednesday, I think. |
| 2 'But why does he think it's his father?' | b 'We don't know, sir.' |
| 3 'How did he get a key?' | c 'Well, Tom Parker has always been a bit strange.' |
| 4 'Did you speak to her yesterday?' | d 'Well, that's what the newspapers say, but we don't know.' |
| 5 'They found her body in the river, didn't they? And her head had been cut off.' | e 'I don't think you're mad, Carl, but you are very worried about your wife.' |

2. Do you think Carl is going mad?

CHAPTER 7

1. Who said what?

- | |
|---|
| a 'It's about Linda. You must believe me. Something has happened to her.' |
| b 'You were in love with <i>work</i> . Not with <i>her</i> .' |
| c 'I don't think Tom had anything to do with your wife.' |
| d 'The man is mad. They should put him in prison.' |
| e 'We need to know where you have been for the last few days and so on.' |

Carl Melissa Mary PC Grant

2. Carl found two coffee cups at the flat in London. Who do you think had been at the flat while Carl was away?

CHAPTER 8

1. Match the beginnings and endings.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Carl was worried that the police might think | a Tom's brother, Bill Parker. |
| 2 At the police station they met | b if he thought his wife was still in the area. |
| 3 The police wanted to know where | c but Carl preferred to sleep at the house. |
| 4 The police asked Carl why he had returned to London | d he had killed both Linda and Mad Tom. |
| 5 Mary invited Carl to stay at the pub | e Carl had been from Monday to Wednesday. |

2. Who do you think Carl saw in the kitchen?

CHAPTER 9

1. True or false?

- | |
|--|
| a Linda wasn't sure if she still loved Carl. |
| b Linda fell in love with another man when she first came to Little Moreton. |
| c Linda used to think about Carl during her weekends at the house. |
| d This was the first time Carl had been at the house with Linda. |
| e Linda didn't know what a terrible experience Carl had been through. |
| f Linda feels Tom's death was her fault in some way. |
| g Carl thought there was still hope for their marriage. |

CHAPTER 10

1. Complete the summary.

John wanted to ask Carl some questions but didn't want to him. Finally, Carl asked John if he thought he was to let Linda go. John said he wasn't. John said that things had been between them for a long time and told Carl to her. Carl was angry and said John hadn't Then, he John for helping him to realise that he had to again. Carl left the bag with Linda's and shoes in the pub. John realised that he might have left it to help him move on.

After reading

- At the end of the story, John says he had kept the bag 'So that I never forget how easy it is to lose the things you love'. Do you keep any objects to remind you of someone or something?
- Do you think *The House by the Sea* is a good title? Make up a different title.
- Carl is the most important character in the story. What do you like or dislike about him?
- Imagine five years have passed. What do you think is happening in Carl and Linda's lives now?
- Write a letter from John to Carl, advising him what to do with his life.
- Imagine John meets Carl again a year later. Write the conversation between Carl and John.
- If you were a film director making a film of *The House by the Sea*, which actors would you choose to play the parts of John, Carl, Linda, Mary and Mad Tom? Would you make any changes to the story?
- Make a quiz for other students to do. e.g. Write some 'Who said what?' questions.
- Here is the blurb from another book at this level.

Just Good Friends

It's Stephany and Max's first holiday away together and they want to get to know each other. They go to Italy and stay at Stephany's friend Carlo's flat in a Mediterranean village. But Carlo's wife is not very happy to see Stephany – and the two couples find out why, and a lot of other things about each other, in a hot Italian summer.

Do you want to read *Just Good Friends*?

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