

The Ironing Man

Colin Campbell

Before reading

- Look at the front cover and read the back cover blurb. What do you think happens in the story?
- Look at page 5. Which character is the man on the front cover?
- Look at the picture on page 6. Find these things in the picture.

where you wash up
where you iron
a vacuum cleaner

What else can you see?

- Match the chapter titles and the sentences from each chapter.

Chapter 1 The fridge door
Chapter 2 The Ironing Man
Chapter 3 Teddy bears make poor soldiers
Chapter 4 Good 7 Bad 1
Chapter 5 Strangers on a train

- In this book he wrote down all the good and all the bad things that happened to him every day of his life.
 - But it was probably a good time for her, and the bear, to leave the junior army.
 - The idea of the game was to use all the letters on the fridge to make new words.
 - Tom was not very happy when he saw that a man was now sitting on the other side of the table.
 - 'You made a wish, remember? About your ironing? That's why I'm here.'
- If you have the cassette, listen to Chapter 1.

Check your reading

CHAPTER 1

- True or false?
 - Marina was unhappy living in Felton.
 - Tom is very organised.
 - Tom and Marina have got a few friends in Felton.
 - Marina would like to have an interesting job.
 - At the moment Marina hates ironing most of all.
- Who do you think is at the door? What do they want?

CHAPTER 2

- Match the beginnings and endings.

1 Marina went to the door	a because she had made a wish.
2 It was unusual for	b Marina opened the door.
3 The doorbell rang four times before	c the iron on top of a shirt.
4 The man came to Marina's house	d but she didn't open it immediately.
5 Marina had left	e anyone to come to the house.
- What is going to happen when Marina and the man go into the kitchen?

CHAPTER 3

- Put the events in the right order.
 - Marina saw a butterfly on the kitchen window.
 - The Ironing Man ironed the rest of the shirts.
 - Marina threw some water on the shirt.
 - Marina put the ironed shirts onto the bed.
 - Tom came home from work.
 - Marina took the iron off the ironing board.
 - Marina made some coffee and drank it.
 - Marina bought a plastic goldfish for her nephew.
 - The Ironing Man took the shirt outside.

CHAPTER 4

- Look at the words in italics. Who is *I*, *you*, *he*, *she*?
 - He* was worried that someone would arrive and sit opposite.
 - She* looked at him with eyes that were impossibly big and said, "Oh Tom!"
 - She* then told him a story about a man who had come to the house.
 - '*I've* had a wonderful day. *You* won't believe it!'
 - '*Im* going to learn to be happy being who I am.'
 - She* had not organised a going away party.

Marina Joanne Tom Tom's old girlfriend

CHAPTER 5

- Tick what Tom did on the train to work.
 - called his boss on his mobile phone
 - went to the toilet
 - thought about his father
 - thought about Marina
 - read his own newspaper
 - did some work
 - read someone else's newspaper
 - answered an advertisement in the newspaper

CHAPTER 6

- Match the descriptions with the characters.
 - twenty-nine years old, blonde, has a big smile, used to be married
 - twenty-nine years old, blonde, married
 - big, has big hands, isn't good with machines
 - young, good-looking, romantic
 - used to go to work, watch TV, go to the pub

Marina Tracy Tracy's husband
Tracy's boyfriend the private detective

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CHAPTER 7

1. True or false?
 - a Marina went to the National Gallery to meet Tom.
 - b When Marina and Tom first met, Tom talked about himself a lot.
 - c Now neither Tom nor Marina talked very much.
 - d Tom didn't like playing games with his nephew.
 - e The Ironing Man talked to Marina about her favourite picture.
 - f The Ironing Man wanted to help Marina and Tom.
 - g The Ironing Man and Marina went out for dinner together.

CHAPTER 8

1. Correct the summary.

As Tom was leaving the office his mobile phone rang. It was the detective calling from his mobile phone. Tom didn't want anyone to see them so they went to a park. They had to talk quietly because there were lots of people around. The detective started to tell Tom what he had seen. Two women and a man came out of Tom's house and drove off on a motorbike towards London. They went to a sports centre and played football. Then they went to a cheap Indian restaurant for dinner. After that they drove to the mountains and walked along a path. Finally, they went back to London, parked outside a big block of flats, and the man opened the front door with a key.

CHAPTER 9

1. Put the events in the right order.
 - a Tom got the train back to Felton.
 - b The detective gave Tom an envelope.
 - c The detective phoned Tom.
 - d Tom put his mobile phone down the toilet.
 - e Tom wrote about Marina's birthday in his notebook.
 - f The ticket inspector checked Tom's ticket.
 - g Tom looked at some photos of a man and a woman.
 - h Tom phoned his boss to say he was going on holiday.

CHAPTER 10

1. What happened when Tom got home from work?
2. Where are Tom and Marina on holiday? What is it like?
3. How do Tom and Marina feel now?

After reading

Choose some of these activities.

1. Make a list of the differences between Tom and Marina. Who are you most like?
2. Which character do you like the most? Why?
3. Make a list of your 'Top Five' like Marina's (the things you hate doing the most). Can you rearrange the letters to make any new words?
4. Look at page 22. Imagine you are Marina. What do you say to Tom when he gets home from work? Write the conversation.
5. Write a letter of advice to Marina or Tom about their future life.

6. Do you think *The Ironing Man* is a good title? Why or why not? Make up your own title for the book.
7. Imagine you are Marina on holiday. Write a postcard to a friend at home.
8. Imagine it is five years later. What has happened to Tom and Marina?
9. Make your own activities for other students to do. e.g. Make a word puzzle or write some True/False questions.
10. Here is the blurb from another book at this level.

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