Stage 4 B2

Young Adult Readers

Original

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THE MISSING VASE



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Pauline Russo

The Missing Vase

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Young Adult Readers

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Main Characters

Sylvia Mackenzie



Gloria Robbins



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Giovanni Marchetti



Inspector Andrew Wilson



Mrs Marchetti



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Grammar B2 FIRST

1 Complete the text with one suitable word in each gap.

Sylvia is the young curator of a small museum **(1)** ..... Glasgow. She has agreed to lend **(2)** ..... of the museum's most valuable vases to her friend, Gloria, **(3)** ..... is organising a special exhibition of Chinese porcelain pieces in London. Sylvia asks her assistant, Giovanni, to fly **(4)** ..... London and take the vase to Gloria. When Giovanni arrives **(5)** ..... Gloria's museum, he discovers the vase is missing. When Sylvia finds **(6)** ....., she goes to London and meets Giovanni at Scotland Yard. Inspector Wilson tells her what **(7)** ..... happened. Sylvia offers to help him investigate the theft **(8)** ..... the vase.

Vocabulary

2 Match the words (1-10) to the meanings (a-j) opposite.

1	☐ precious	**a**	a large bag used for travelling
2	☐ exhibition	**b**	to get something back
3	☐ recover	**c**	a person in charge of a museum
4	☐ priceless	**d**	rare and valuable
5	☐ lend	**e**	a type of ceramics
6	☐ holdall	**f**	so valuable that it has no price
7	☐ unpredictable	**g**	to give something temporarily; opposite of borrow
8	☐ publicity	**h**	not expected
9	☐ curator	**i**	advertising, attention
10	☐ porcelain	**j**	a show or display of objects

Listening

2 **3 Listen to the beginning of Chapter 1. Decide if the following sentences are true (T) or false (F).**

		T	F
1	Sylvia's museum was having a new exhibition that month.	☐	☐
2	Sylvia's museum was in London.	☐	☐
3	It was snowing in Glasgow.	☐	☐

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4 The vase in the Kelvin Museum had a spring scene on it. ☐ ☐

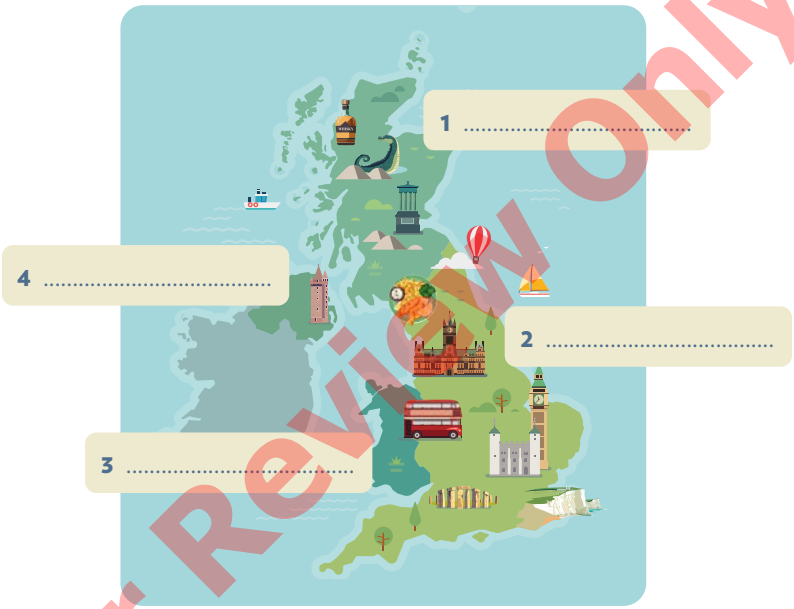
5 The vase had been sold 18 years before. ☐ ☐

6 The owner didn't want to sell the vase to the museum in China. ☐ ☐

Online Research – Pair Work

21st-century Skills

4 A Look at the map. Work with a partner to identify the four nations that make up the United Kingdom. Use the Internet to help you. Write the names in the correct boxes (1-4) on the map.



4 B Name the four capital cities of these nations.

1 ..... : (capital city) .....

2 ..... : (capital city) .....

3 ..... : (capital city) .....

4 ..... : (capital city) .....

4 C In *The Missing Vase*, the story begins in Glasgow, Scotland's second city. What do you know about Glasgow? Compare notes with your classmates.

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Chapter 1

Bad News for Sylvia

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2 Annabel rushed into her boss's office, and cried out, 'It's gone.'

'What do you mean? What's gone?' said Sylvia Mackenzie, jumping up from her chair.

The young curator of the Kelvin Museum in Glasgow had been checking over the lists of items* for a new exhibition that month. The sound of the constant rain outside the window and the heat from the radiator in her small office had made her feel sleepy. Even in the summer, these old buildings felt cold when it rained. She'd almost been nodding off* when her secretary had come in and surprised her.

Annabel continued, talking very quickly, 'Our vase! Our Chinese vase! It wasn't there when they opened the box. It's been stolen!'

The Kelvin Museum is fictional. Kelvin is the name of one of the rivers in Glasgow. Real places in the city's west end are Kelvingrove Park, Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, and Kelvin Hall.

Just a month before, Sylvia had authorised the loan of a precious vase from their Chinese collection to a small museum in London. Originally, it was part of a series* of four blue and white porcelain vases each showing different garden scenes in each of the four seasons of the year. Three of them were now on display in a museum in China. The vase with a winter scene had been sold over 80 years before and had found its way into the Kelvin Museum. It was the only

item a single thing
nod off to fall asleep
series a collection of similar things


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piece in the series that the museum in China didn't have, and some said they would love to have it to complete their collection. However, the owner of the Kelvin Museum, a rich businessman, refused to sell it.

3 The vase was very beautiful, and an excellent example of Chinese porcelain from the 14th century. It was one of their finest pieces, admired by everyone who came to visit the museum. Sylvia's friend, Gloria Robbins, had asked to borrow the piece. Gloria was bringing together pieces of Chinese porcelain borrowed from museums all around the United Kingdom for a special exhibition, that she was having at her own small museum in London that month. Sylvia had arranged for it to be taken down there personally by her assistant curator, Giovanni Marchetti. The vase was priceless, and she had wanted to make sure that it would arrive in London safely.

In the 14th century, Chinese blue and white porcelain was introduced to Europe, and was considered a rare and luxurious item.

Giovanni was a young man who had come from England to work at the museum a few years before. She trusted him completely and knew that he was the right person for the job. After two months of preparations and a lot of paperwork*, the day had finally arrived when Giovanni had to fly to London with the precious item. Sylvia thought back to early that morning when she had called him into her office before he left for London.

'Good morning, Giovanni! Are you ready for this important trip?'

'Absolutely,' replied Giovanni, sitting down in the chair in front of her desk. 'I have all my documents and instructions here' he

paperwork documents to be prepared

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said, pointing to the left inside pocket of his jacket. 'I'm just a little nervous, but I'll be fine,' he said with a laugh, and he pushed his long dark hair behind his right ear, a habit of his that showed he was, in fact, nervous.

Sylvia lifted the beautiful Chinese vase from her desk, placed it in a strong box, especially designed to carry the object, and locked it. She handed the key to Giovanni.

'Keep this in a safe place. And do not open the box until you arrive at the museum.'

'Of course. I'll put the key in a place that's a secret only to me. I won't even tell you,' he said, laughing.

'Okay, but make sure nothing happens to you, or we won't be able to get into the box without damaging the vase,' said Sylvia, crossing her fingers for luck, and laughing. 'Don't forget to tell Gloria that I've put a letter inside the vase with some extra information and some ideas for her exhibition. I've seen photographs of other exhibitions at her museum. I now think the perfect place for our vase would be at the entrance, and not at the back of the room near the window, as we had thought before. I'll call her this evening to talk about it more.'

'Okay, I'll tell her about the letter,' said Giovanni.

Then, he placed the box in a large holdall that he would carry with him on to the plane.

'Would you like a cup of coffee before we go to the airport?' asked Sylvia.

'No, thanks. I don't like coffee, remember?' answered Giovanni, with a smile.

'Of course! I forgot. You must be the only Italian I know who doesn't drink coffee!'

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'Well, I grew up in England,' he said, laughing. 'But I do like *Irn Bru*.'

'That's only because you live in Scotland now!'

'Don't remind me,' he groaned*, looking out of the window. 'By the way, has it stopped raining yet?'

Irn Bru (pronounced like iron brew) is an orange-coloured, fizzy drink, made in Scotland. First made in 1901, its recipe is still a secret.

'Not yet, but it will – eventually,' said Sylvia. 'The sun will probably come out about 7 this evening – a typical Scottish summer's day!'

Scotland is well-known for its rainy weather, even in summer, and quite often gets brighter and sunnier in the evening. In summer, it doesn't get dark until 10 p.m.

'I think the weather forecast for London is dry and sunny, but I'll take an umbrella with me anyway, just in case. The weather can be unpredictable there too.'

Sylvia had driven Giovanni to Glasgow Airport and watched him go into the terminal building to check in.

'Call me when you get to the museum!' she'd shouted from the car window.

So far so good, she had thought, as she drove away. *Lending our vase to this important London exhibition will give our own museum more publicity.*

But now, this theft was going to get the wrong type of publicity for the museum. She could not believe the vase had been stolen.

'How did this happen? What about Giovanni?' she asked Annabel. 'I told him to always keep the box with him. Is he okay?'

'Yes, he's fine. But shocked, of course. He doesn't know how this could have happened. He's at Scotland Yard now. That's where he called me from.'

Scotland Yard is the headquarters of the London Metropolitan Police.

'I must go to London immediately! Book me a seat on the first flight from Glasgow, Annabel. I'm going home now to pack a case.'

groan to make a noise showing pain or disappointment

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Sylvia arrived at Heathrow Airport three hours later and took a taxi straight to Scotland Yard. She was welcomed by Inspector Andrew Wilson, who told her what they knew so far.

Giovanni had told them that he had flown to London from Glasgow and had taken a taxi straight to Gloria's small museum in Kensington. When they opened the box together, it was empty. The vase had disappeared. He had no idea how it could have happened. The Inspector said that, for the moment, they had no reason to suspect that Giovanni was involved in the theft. Inspector Wilson offered to take Sylvia to Giovanni, who was in the interrogation room*.

One of London's wealthiest areas, Kensington, has beautiful buildings and several museums, as well as Kensington Palace and Gardens.

'Giovanni!' she cried, when she saw him. 'Thank goodness you're ok. But what happened? How could the vase have disappeared from the box?'

Giovanni was obviously upset and kept pushing his hair behind his left ear.

'I'm so sorry, Sylvia. I don't know how it could have happened. I kept the holdall with me at all times. I didn't even open it. Even when I went through security at the airport, they didn't ask me to open the bag. I was so glad, because I noticed someone looking at me suspiciously in the queue. I didn't want anyone to know there was something valuable in it. I had my eyes on it all the time, except when I had to put it in the tray to go through the X-ray machine, of course. The airport was busy, but I managed to pick it up quite quickly at the other side. I followed all your instructions,' he said nervously, pulling some papers out of his inside right pocket. 'Look, I still have them here! I'm so sorry!'

interrogation room a room where the police ask suspects questions

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'Don't worry, Giovanni. I believe you. And I'm sure Inspector Wilson doesn't think you had anything to do with this. You are not a suspect.'

She turned towards the Inspector for confirmation, and he nodded.

'However, you must stay in London while we are investigating,' he said. 'I'd like you to stay too, Miss Mackenzie, if possible. Please give your addresses to one of my officers so that I can contact you.'

'Of course, Inspector,' she replied. 'I'd like to help in any way I can.'

'Well, perhaps you'd like to come with me to speak to your friend who is organising the exhibition here in London?'

'Certainly, Inspector. Shall we go now?' said Sylvia.

She turned to Giovanni and said, 'Giovanni, before leaving Glasgow, I booked rooms for us at this hotel.' She handed him a piece of paper. 'Here is the name of the hotel and the room numbers. Why don't you take a taxi there now and get some rest?' I'll speak to you later.'

Before they left, the Inspector said, 'One other thing I'd like to ask you first, Mr Marchetti. If, at any time during the journey, the vase was somehow no longer in the box, why didn't you notice that the holdall felt lighter than before?'

'I could never have guessed that the vase wasn't in the box. The box is quite heavy even without the vase in it, and the vase itself doesn't weigh very much.'

Giovanni shook his head and said, desperately, 'You must believe me. I honestly don't know what happened to the vase!'

Inspector Wilson interrogates Giovanni.

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Reading

B2 FIRST

1 Read Chapter 1 again and choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.

1 Annabel was Sylvia's ....
☐ **A** boss. ☐ **B** secretary. ☐ **C** assistant. ☐ **D** friend.

2 When Annabel entered the office, Sylvia was ....
☐ **A** listening to music. ☐ **B** falling asleep.
☐ **C** putting a vase in a box. ☐ **D** looking out of the window.

3 The stolen vase was made of ...
☐ **A** terracotta. ☐ **B** crystal. ☐ **C** porcelain. ☐ **D** glass.

4 Sylvia had agreed to lend the vase to a museum in ...
☐ **A** China. ☐ **B** Glasgow. ☐ **C** London. ☐ **D** Italy.

5 Giovanni put the key for the box in ...
☐ **A** his secret place. ☐ **B** the holdall.
☐ **C** the vase. ☐ **D** his jacket pocket.

6 Giovanni grew up in ...
☐ **A** Scotland. ☐ **B** England. ☐ **C** Italy. ☐ **D** China.

7 After the theft, Sylvia met Giovanni at ...
☐ **A** the hotel. ☐ **B** Heathrow Airport.
☐ **C** Gloria's museum. ☐ **D** Scotland Yard.

8 When Sylvia left Scotland Yard, she and Inspector Wilson went to ...
☐ **A** the hotel. ☐ **B** the airport.
☐ **C** Kensington. ☐ **D** the train station.

Vocabulary

2 Find the words or expressions in the chapter that mean the same as the following:

1 tired .....
2 to give permission .....
3 exhibited, on show .....
4 to say no .....
5 something you do all the time .....
6 advertisement .....

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Crossword

3 **Solve the clues and complete the crossword.**

Clues

1 

2 Too valuable to have a price.

3 The manager of a museum.

4 Unexpected.

5 Type of pottery made in China.

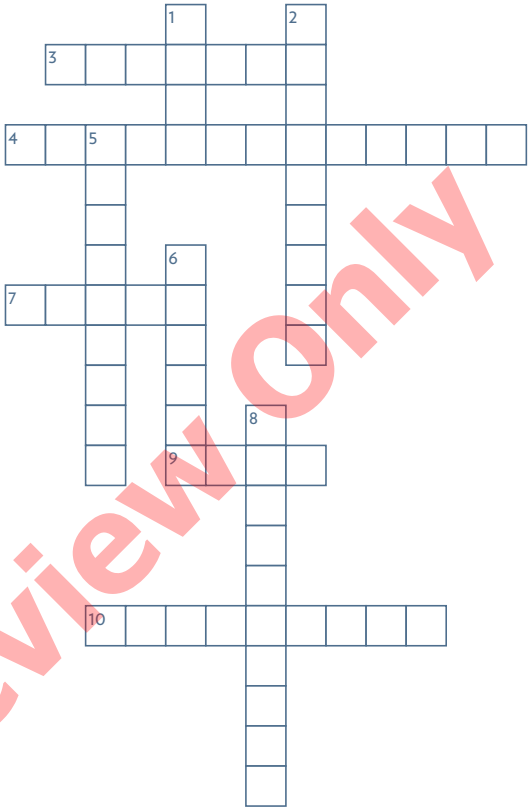
6 A journey on a plane.

7 Take something you don't own.

8 Art display in a museum.

9 

10 Advertisement.



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Pre-Reading Activity • Chapter 2

Speaking – Roleplay

4 **In Chapter 2, inspector Wilson asks Gloria questions about Giovanni and the theft of the vase. If you were the Inspector, what would you ask her? Work with a partner and play the roles of Inspector Wilson and Gloria.**