

Ellie's Diary 3
Wellington Boots

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Rafael keeps his fish in a big tank in his bedroom. The tank is so big that there's no room for a bed so he sleeps on the sofa in the living room. When I arrived, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, Rafael was still wearing his pajamas, his favorite pajamas, the ones with blue and white stripes and pictures of grinning dolphins.

He said he'd had a late night. He'd been performing in a club until 3am. "It was a good night," he said, "the audience loved me."

Apparently, when he swallowed the cod some people in the audience were so excited they took out their guns and fired shots into the air. When the cod leapt back out of his mouth and into his hand they became even more excited. So excited they began shooting each other.

At the end of Rafael's act four dead bodies were put into plastic bags and carried out. Ten people were taken to hospital.

"Who are these people?" I asked Rafael, "and why do they have guns?"

"They're gangsters," Rafael told me, "mafia. They shoot people for a living."

As Rafael told me this I remembered Lucretia's warning, "if you must teach the fish swallower, do not wear sandals." I looked down at my feet. Sandals. Blue leather. Really rather pretty. I have nice toes, I think.

I felt Rafael's arm around my shoulder. "Come and look at my fish," he said, "the cod is really enormous."

Rafael lead me into the bedroom. "Do you want to see me swallow the cod?" he asked.

Before I could answer he picked up the fish and dropped it into his mouth. I knew something was wrong straight away. He smiled for just a moment. Then his throat became much wider than usual. And his face turned blue. He waved his arms around wildly. Finally he fell over, onto the fish tank. The glass smashed, water went everywhere, fish flapped frantically.

Lucretia had been right. I shouldn't have worn sandals. I should have worn Wellington boots.

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Worksheet

Questions:

1. Describe Rafael's pajamas.
2. Describe your pajamas.
3. Why did the people in Rafael's audience shoot each other?
4. Does Ellie like her toes?
5. Why did Rafael fall onto the fish tank?
6. Why does Rafael sleep in the living room?

Explain the meaning of the following phrasal verbs:

- take out
- leap out
- carry out
- look down

Discussion

- Talk about a time you got really excited, maybe at a football match, or a party, or on New Year's eve or whatever. Did you shoot anybody?