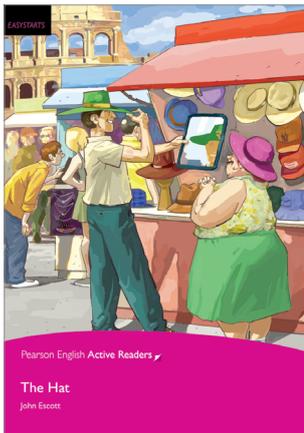# The Hat

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Summary

Bernardo, who lives in Rome, likes to wear hats. One day he buys one from a street market. His wife doesn't like the hat and takes it to a store and sells it. Three days later, Anna buys the same hat. Anna is in Rome on vacation and a week later returns home to California. She meets a man called Mitch in a café. He says he loves Anna's hat. She likes Mitch and she now thinks that her hat is a lucky hat. Suddenly, the wind blows Anna's hat away into the sea. On a beach near the café, Cal is sleeping. Cal is poor and homeless. Cal's dog, Sunny, runs into the sea and picks up Anna's hat. Then Cal plays his guitar on the street and people put a lot of money in the hat. Cal thinks the hat is lucky. That night, Rod steals the hat when Cal is sleeping. He then goes into a store in town with a gun. He tells the woman in the store to give him money. The woman gives him the money and he runs out of the store. She phones the police and tells them the robber is wearing a green and yellow hat. The police see Rod in the street and chase him. Rod thinks the hat is unlucky and throws it away. The hat lands in a taxi. Gina, a young Italian woman, is in the taxi. She thinks the hat is lucky and decides to wear it. A day later, Gina is back in Rome where a man, who is Bernardo, tells her that he loves hats!

Background and themes

Fashion: Every few years there is a new fashion. At one time hats were very popular and nearly everyone wore one. People also have a favorite item of clothing and in the book everyone likes the hat that Bernardo bought.

Superstition: The hat is lucky for the good people, Anna, Cal and Gina, but brings bad luck to Rod, who is a thief.

Coincidence: The hat travels from Rome to California and back to Rome. All the people in the book are coincidentally linked to the hat.

Discussion activities

Part 1
Before reading
1 **Write and discuss:** Put students in small groups and give them five minutes to write down all the clothes they know in English. The winners are the team with the longest list. Write all the words on the board, adding some of your own. Students then write the complete list in their books. Write *"I sometimes/never/often/always wear …"* on the board. Students make sentences in pairs to say how often they wear the different clothes.

After reading
2 **Pair work:** Write the following words on the board: *movies, airplane, café, market, bag*. In pairs, students make sentences including these words to reflect how they were important in Part 1, without looking back at the book.

Part 2
While reading (p. 11, after ''Cal has no money and no home.'')
3 **Discuss:** Ask students to discuss with a partner the possible problems that Cal might have. Get feedback from the whole class.

After reading
4 **Describe and draw:** Students work in pairs. Student A chooses one of the drawings in Part 2 and describes the scene to Student B. Student B tries to draw the picture from Student A's description. Then they reverse roles. How accurate are the pictures?

Part 3
While reading (p. 16, after ''Rod takes the money and runs from the store.'')
5 **Role play:** Put students into pairs. Student A is the woman in the shop and Student B is Rod. Write and act out the scene in the shop. Encourage the students to be imaginative. Student A can refuse to hand over the money. Student B can say why he needs the money.

After reading
6 **Write:** Put the students into small groups. Ask them to look at the drawings on pages 16–19 and to make a list of all the things they can see in the drawings. The team with the longest list wins.