

Lesson 43: Surprise!

Sarah is planning a surprise birthday party for her sister, Amy. She gets Amy's boyfriend Jake to help. Listen to their conversation and answer these questions:

Comprehension Questions

- 1. Sarah told everyone to arrive at...**
 - a. 5:30
 - b. 6:00
 - c. 7:00
- 2. Jake says that the guests...**
 - a. might ruin the surprise
 - b. will probably be late
 - c. won't remember to bring food
- 3. Jake's job is to...**
 - a. cook dinner
 - b. get Amy out of the house
 - c. make the party decorations
- 4. Jake describes Amy as...**
 - a. romantic
 - b. shy
 - c. stubborn
- 5. Sarah is not sure that...**
 - a. Jake and Amy can afford the expense of a puppy
 - b. Amy will be happy to get the puppy
 - c. the puppy will behave itself during the party
- 6. Sarah says the puppy has...**
 - a. been aggressive
 - b. destroyed some of her stuff
 - c. tried to run away
- 7. Jake doesn't want to kidnap Amy or fake a medical emergency because...**
 - a. It would be too complicated to organize
 - b. she might come back to the house too early
 - c. she would be angry about the deception

Conversation Text

Jake: Okay, **fill me in on** the plan.

Sarah: I told everyone to be here at 6 o'clock **sharp**.

Jake: Yeah... that's **wishful thinking**. Nobody's going to **show up** that soon after work. Especially with the traffic jams during **rush hour**.

Sarah: Oh, I know. I said six because we're really **shooting for** seven. I just need you to make sure Amy's outta here by 5:30 so that I can get everything set up.

Jake: And what if she doesn't want to go anywhere?

Sarah: Then don't *ask* her to go, just **whisk her away** to a romantic birthday dinner with you.

Jake: Come on, you know Amy. If I try to force her, she'll **dig her heels in**.

Sarah: Okay, then **guilt her** into it somehow.

Jake: *Guilt* her? How am I supposed to do that?

Vocabulary

fill me in on = inform me about the details I am missing

6 o'clock sharp = exactly at 6:00

wishful thinking = something you wish was true, but in reality is probably not going to happen

show up = arrive, appear

rush hour = the time when there's a lot of traffic because people are going to/from work

shooting for = aiming for, attempting

whisk her away = take her away quickly

dig her heels in = be stubborn and insist on doing what she wants

guilt her = manipulate her by making her feel guilty or obligated to do something

Sarah: Oh for crying out loud. I don't know. Getting her out of the house is your job. I've done everything else. All the invitations, the **catering**, watching the puppy . . .

Jake: Thanks for that, by the way. **I owe you one.**

Sarah: I still have my doubts about this puppy thing. Are you absolutely sure she wants a puppy?

Jake: Trust me. She wants the puppy. Who doesn't love a surprise puppy?

Sarah: I mean, that's a lot of responsibility to just **spring on** a person.

Jake: She's dying to get a dog. She's been **nagging me** about it for months, and I've been **giving her the runaround.**

Sarah: What if it's not the kind of dog she wants?

Jake: She doesn't care what kind of dog it is, she just wants something cute and **furry**. And this puppy is adorable.

Sarah: Well, your adorable puppy chewed on my shoes and **peed** on my rug.

Jake: Yeah, sorry about that. **I'll make it up to you**, I promise.

Vocabulary

catering = professional food preparation/serving at a party or event

I owe you one = I will do a favor for you in return for the favor you did for me

spring on = surprise someone with

nagging me = reminding me in a persistent, annoying way

giving her the runaround = giving her excuses and answers that avoid the main issue or avoid making a commitment

furry = full of fur (animal body hair)

peed = urinated

I'll make it up to you = I'll compensate for the problem/damage

Sarah: Just... make sure she's not here from five-thirty to seven. Whatever you have to do. **Kidnap** her. Fake a medical emergency. Get yourself arrested and call her to **bail you out**. Whatever.

Jake: Hmm, those ideas would probably **backfire**. She'd be mad if she found out I lied to her. How about I just take her to dinner?

Sarah: Yes! Exactly. Stop overthinking it; she'll be thrilled if you **wine and dine her**.

Jake: Okay. I'll text you when we're on our way home from dinner. Anything else?

Sarah: That's it. You distract Amy for a couple of hours, and I'll take care of the rest.

Jake: All right. She's going to **be blown away** by this surprise party – I can't wait!

Vocabulary

kidnap = forcefully take someone and hold them prisoner against their will

bail you out = pay a sum of money to get someone out of jail

backfire = fail with an unintended bad result

wine and dine her = take her to a very fancy restaurant and treat her very nicely

be blown away = very surprised and impressed

Vocabulary Quiz

Complete each sentence with a word from the box. Two words are not used.

backfiring

giving me the runaround

showed up

blown away

make it up to

sprung on

dug my heels in

nagging

whisked away

fill me in on

shooting for

wishful thinking

1. We've been babysitting my sister's kids for the past week; she says she'll _____ us by taking care of our kids when we go on vacation later this year.
2. I wasn't at the seminar this morning - could you _____ what was covered?
3. Peter owes me money and has been _____ for months. But now I really need it to pay my rent.
4. I'm working late today because of the last-minute changes my manager _____ me. The deadline is tomorrow morning.
5. Nobody in my family gets along with each other. It would be really nice to have a get-together without fighting, but I know that's just _____
6. Only three students _____ for the class right before the holiday break.
7. I feel like I'm _____ my husband when I ask him several times to take out the trash, but if I don't say anything, it doesn't get done!
8. The salesman tried to get me to pay more for the car, but I _____ and said that was my final offer.
9. I'm about halfway done with writing my book. I'm _____ a publication date in September.
10. I was _____ by the talent of the young artists in the exhibition - some of the pieces were amazing.

Speaking Task

Describe something that has surprised you. It could be an event, or something surprising you learned. Record your answer at

www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish or send the MP3 to homework@espressoenglish.net for feedback and correction!

Answers

Comprehension Questions

1. b
2. b
3. b
4. c
5. b
6. b
7. c

Vocabulary Quiz

1. make it up to
2. fill me in on
3. giving me the runaround
4. sprung on
5. wishful thinking
6. showed up
7. nagging
8. dug my heels in
9. shooting for
10. blown away