



ESL Podcast 470 – Avoiding TV Show and Movie Spoilers

GLOSSARY

season – the period of time when a series of programs are shown on television each year, usually in the fall and winter

* When will the next season of Lost begin?

to premiere – to be broadcast or shown on television or in a theater for the first time

* We look forward to watching the new shows that will premiere next month.

spoiler – something that is said or written that lets other people know what happens at the end of a book, movie, or show

* If you want to enjoy the movie as much as possible, make sure you don't read any websites with spoilers that talk about how it ends.

guest star – an actor who appears in one or two shows in a series, but who is not a regular part of the program

* His favorite actor is going to be a guest star on a popular drama tonight.

to make an appearance – to be present; to come to an event or to be on a show for a short period of time

* The president of the company won't be able to stay at the party for very long, but she'll try to make an appearance for at least a few minutes.

plot twist – something unexpected that happens in a story, especially in a book or movie

* In an interesting plot twist, the main character found out that her best friend was actually her twin sister.

to come up – to be in the near future; to happen soon

* How many of you have a birthday coming up in the next month?

movie trailer – an advertisement for a movie, often shown in a movie theater before another movie begins playing

* That movie trailer was fantastic! I'm definitely going to see that movie when it comes to the theaters in December.

review – a written opinion about the quality of a book or movie, usually found in a newspaper or on a website

* Devon always reads the reviews to decide which movies he wants to see.



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to spoil – to ruin something; to make something less fun, useful, or helpful

* Their outdoor wedding was spoiled by bad weather.

suspense – a feeling of anticipation and excitement or worry, waiting to find out what will happen next

* The students felt a lot of suspense as they waited for their teacher to announce their grades on the final exam.

spoiler alert – a written comment on a website or in an article that lets people know that the text in a particular part of the website or article has information about what happens in a movie or show, so that people who want to be surprised by what happens in the movie or show can choose not to read that section

* I wish they had spoiler alerts in the newspaper! After reading that movie review this morning, I feel like I already know everything that happens in the movie.

to stay in the dark – to not know something; to not be told something; to be unaware or ignorant of something

* They've been planning Beryl's surprise birthday party for months, and somehow he has stayed in the dark about it.

Got it? – an informal phrase used to ask someone if he or she understands what one has just said

* This family has to stop spending so much money. Got it? No more new clothes, expensive dinners, or concerts.

to let the cat out of the bag – to accidentally tell a secret; to let someone know something that he or she was not supposed to know

* Pauline wanted to surprise Dmitry with a new mp3 player for his birthday, but her brother let the cat out of the bag, so he wasn't surprised at all.

in for a wild ride – going to have a period of time with a lot of excitement or surprises; being in a situation where there are many unexpected things happening

* The global economy is going through a lot of changes, and economists say that we're all in for a wild ride for the next few years.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these would you expect to find in a newspaper?
 - a) Movie trailers.
 - b) Reviews.
 - c) Guest star.

 2. What does Kira mean when she says that she wants “to stay in the dark”?
 - a) She doesn’t want Lee to turn on the lights.
 - b) She wants Lee to leave her alone.
 - c) She doesn’t want Lee to tell her about the show.
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

season

The word “season,” in this podcast, means the period of time when a series of programs are shown on television each year, usually in the fall and winter: “How many new shows does ABC offer each season?” A fruit or vegetable that is “in season” is one that grows locally at a particular time of year, so it can be bought inexpensively: “Pineapples are in season all year long in Hawaii.” Or, “I’d like to buy some mangoes, but they’re really expensive right now because they’re out of season.” As a verb, “to season” means to put herbs, pepper, or salt on something (especially meat) to make it taste better: “Season the pork with garlic and pepper, and then bake it in the oven for 45 minutes.”

to spoil

In this podcast, the verb “to spoil” means to ruin something or to make something less fun, useful, or helpful: “When she spilled hot coffee on her blouse, it spoiled her whole day.” The phrase “to spoil (one’s) appetite means to eat too much bad, unhealthy food before a meal, so that one is no longer hungry when the meal is ready: “The children spoiled their appetite by eating candy shortly before dinner.” When talking about fruits or vegetables, “to spoil” means to go bad because something was not eaten soon enough: “Please eat all of the apples this week, before they spoil.” Finally, “to spoil (someone)” means to always say “yes” to a person, or to give him or her everything he or she wants: “They spoil their nephew, giving him all of the toys he asks for.”



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CULTURE NOTE

When Americans sit down in a movie theater to watch a movie, they usually have to watch several movie trailers first. The trailers are usually for movies in a similar “genre” (type, such as drama, comedy, or horror) as the “full-length movie” (the movie that one has paid to see; not the trailer). Trailers are exciting and interesting, because they are designed to “capture” (catch) the audience’s attention and make people want to see the movie when it is “released” (made available to the public).

Movie trailers have many images and some dialogue from the movie itself. They contain “excerpts” (small pieces of something) of the actor’s voices, especially of funny or dramatic “lines” (things that actors say to each other). There is also a “voice-over,” where a voice “speaks over” (is louder than) the excerpts and presents a “plot summary” (a description of what the movie is about). But, of course, the voice-over doesn’t say what happens at the end of the movie, because spoilers would ruin the suspense.

Movie trailers have just a few minutes to convince people to see the movie, so they have to be “melodramatic” (extremely dramatic). Most movie trailers do this by using melodramatic music that is very exciting, scary, or suspenseful.

If the movie has any “big-name” (very famous) actors, they are usually “featured” (highlighted; shown as something important) in the movie trailer. Also, if the movie has won any “film festival” awards, or awards at competitions for new movies, those awards are usually listed in the trailer.

Movie trailers generally end with the phrase “coming to theaters near you...” to let people know when the movie will be released in the local area.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – b; 2 – c



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 470: Avoiding Show and Movie Spoilers.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast number 470. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there to download a Learning Guide for this episode. The Learning Guide contains all of the vocabulary, definitions, sample sentences, additional definitions, cultural notes, comprehension checks, and a complete transcript of everything we say on this episode.

This episode is a dialogue between Lee and Kira about something called a "spoiler," which is when you tell someone how a movie or a television show ends – what its conclusion is. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Lee: I'm reading this article about the new season of our favorite show. It's premiering next week.

Kira: Don't tell me anything about it, especially spoilers.

Lee: But don't you want to know which guest stars will be making appearances and the plot twists that are coming up?

Kira: No, I don't! I don't watch movie trailers and I don't read reviews. It spoils the fun when you already know what's going to happen. Where's the suspense?

Lee: The blogs and reviews I read all have "spoiler alerts" and I avoid reading those sections. Let me just tell you one thing I read...

Kira: Stop right there! I'm covering my ears. I want to stay in the dark, completely in the dark. Got it?

Lee: Okay, I won't let the cat out of the bag, but we're in for a wild ride this season.

Kira: I'm not listening! I'm not listening!



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[end of dialogue]

Lee begins our dialogue by saying, “I’m reading this article about the new season of our favorite show.” A “season” (season) here means a period of time when a series of television programs are being shown. There’s usually, in the United States, a fall and spring television season, when television programs begin. The word “season,” however, has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at the Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Lee says that the television show that he and Kira like is premiering next week. “To premiere” means to be shown for the very first time. If the television show premieres tomorrow, that means that it is the first time you have seen that show or that series of shows on television; it’s the first time. You can also have a movie that premieres; we have lots of movies that premiere here in Los Angeles. The noun is, simply, “premiere.”

Kira says, “Don’t tell me anything about it, especially the spoilers.” A “spoiler” is something that is said or written that lets other people know what happens at the end of a book, a movie, or a television show. Most of us don’t want to know how the show ends or the movie ends, and if you do that it’s called a “spoiler.” “Spoil” has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at the Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Lee says, “But don’t you want to know which guest stars will be making appearances and the plot twists that are coming up?” A “guest star” is an actor who appears on just one or two, maybe three shows, but is someone who is not a regular part of the television program. “To make an appearance” means to be present, to come to an event or to be on a show. “He made an appearance on the television show” means he was on the TV show, probably not for a very long time however. A “plot twist” (twist) is something unexpected that happens in the story, especially in a book or a movie. A boy falls in love with a girl, and then halfway through the book the boy sees the girl’s sister and falls in love with her sister. That would be a “plot twist.” That would also probably end his first relationship with the other sister, but that’s too complicated to talk about here! “Plot” is simply the story, so a “plot twist” is a change in the story. When we use the expression “coming up,” we mean it will happen in the near future, it will happen soon. This is an expression you often see on television: “Coming up next, we’ll learn if Rachel and Ross actually kiss!” That’s the next thing that we will see on the program. Often that happens right before a commercial or advertising break to get you to come back, to stay with the program to see what happens.



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Kira answers Lee's question: "No, I don't!" meaning I don't want to know which guest stars will be making appearances and the plot twists that are coming up. She says, "I don't watch movie trailers and I don't read reviews." A "movie trailer" (trailer) is an advertisement for a movie, often shown in the movie theater before the movie you are going to see begins. So, you sit down to watch a movie, but first they show you advertisements for other movies. These are called "movie trailers." You can also see movie trailers on the Web now. A "review" means, in this case, a written opinion about a movie, a book, or a television show; really anything, someone's opinion about some product or some movie, something that is entertaining or interesting. It could be in a newspaper; it could be on a website. Many newspapers have "movie reviewers," who every week, give their opinion about a movie and whether you should go to see it.

Well, Kira doesn't read reviews. She says that they spoil the fun when you already know what's going to happen. "To spoil," as a verb, means to ruin something, to make something less fun or less useful, or perhaps even less helpful: "I went out to dinner with my wife last night, but the evening was spoiled because there was a crying child in the table next to me." My evening was spoiled – it was ruined. Kira says, "It spoils the fun when you already know what's going to happen. Where's the suspense?" "Suspense" is this feeling of anticipation or excitement before something happens. Alfred Hitchcock was a famous movie director who made a lot of movies with suspense; you didn't know what was going to happen next, or you were waiting for it with excitement.

Lee says, "The blogs and reviews I read all have "spoiler alerts" and I avoid reading those sections." A "spoiler alert" is when someone tells you, usually on a website or in a newspaper article, that they are going to give you information about the movie and how it ends, so if you don't want to know that, you can stop reading right now. So if a review says "spoiler alert," then don't read any more because you'll find out more about the movie, unless, of course, you don't care about reading a spoiler.

So Lee says that he doesn't read after he sees a spoiler alert, but he also wants to tell Kira something else. He says, "Let me just tell you one thing I read," and Kira says, "Stop right there!" meaning stop immediately. "I'm covering my ears," so she can't hear. "I want to stay in the dark, completely in the dark." "To stay in the dark" or "be in the dark" means not to know something, not to be told something, to be ignorant. "I was in the dark about why my girlfriend left me" – I didn't know why; it was a mystery to me. It's always a mystery to me! Well, Kira wants to stay in the dark, she doesn't want to know anything more about the television show, and then she says to Lee, "Got it?" "Got it?" here is an informal



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expression asking if the person understands you: “Do you understand? Am I clear?”

Lee says, “Okay, I won’t let the cat out of the bag.” “To let the cat out of the bag” means to accidentally tell someone a secret, to tell someone something that they’re not supposed to know. “He let the cat out of the bag when he told his son that he was going to get a new bicycle for his birthday.” He didn’t mean to tell him, but he accidentally did – he let the cat out of the bag. I’m not sure why the cat was in the bag; I would keep the cat in the bag if it were me, but that’s the expression. Lee says, “we’re in for a wild ride this season.” “To be in for a wild ride” means we’re going to have a lot of fun or excitement or surprises for a certain amount of time; many unexpected things are going to happen.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Lee: I’m reading this article about the new season of our favorite show. It’s premiering next week.

Kira: Don’t tell me anything about it, especially spoilers.

Lee: But don’t you want to know which guest stars will be making appearances and the plot twists that are coming up?

Kira: No, I don’t! I don’t watch movie trailers and I don’t read reviews. It spoils the fun when you already know what’s going to happen. Where’s the suspense?

Lee: The blogs and reviews I read all have “spoiler alerts” and I avoid reading those sections. Let me just tell you one thing I read...

Kira: Stop right there! I’m covering my ears. I want to stay in the dark, completely in the dark. Got it?

Lee: Okay, I won’t let the cat out of the bag, but we’re in for a wild ride this season.

Kira: I’m not listening! I’m not listening!

[end of dialogue]

Don’t stay in the dark about who wrote today’s script. It was Dr. Lucy Tse.



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From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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