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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 1

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters, a 15-episode murder mystery novel by Sarah Gatchitie. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Deadly Letters is a 15-chapter mystery novel written especially for ESLPod.com's English Through Stories.

Each episode has three parts: first, we give a short preview of the chapter, giving you a general idea of what will happen in this episode; second, we read the chapter; and third, we give a summary of the chapter so you can check your comprehension. The definitions of the vocabulary words and a complete transcript can be found in the Learning Guide for each episode.

PREVIEW:

Our first episode introduces us to the main characters of the novel: Derrick Cruz, a college student, and his uncle, Jeff McQueen, a former college professor. We'll learn about Derrick's Aunt April, and we'll meet a beautiful but mysterious woman. Let's get started.

Chapter 1

"This is a strange, strange email," my uncle said. He looked up from a piece of paper he was reading.

"What is so **weird**?" I asked.

It was 8:00 a.m. and we were eating breakfast in the kitchen.

"My old friend, Clara Dunn, is now a professor at California University," Uncle Jeff said. "She wants to meet with me this week. And she says she wants to talk to me about something very important."

"I haven't seen her in over twenty years," he explained. "We were both teaching at the University of New York and we were good friends. But when I took a job at California University and moved to Los Angeles, we **lost touch**. We haven't seen or talked to each other for a long, long time. I didn't know she had moved to California, too."

"Did she say anything in the email about what she wanted to talk to you about or why it was so important?" I asked.

"No...no, not really. She just said that she is afraid about something and she wants my help. That is why I think it is so strange. Clara Dunn is a very



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smart and strong woman. She isn't scared of anything. If she is afraid of something, it must be something serious," he said.

Uncle Jeff looked at the email again. He looked worried.

"I better go or I'll be late for my history class," I said.

I picked up my backpack and put my books, notebook, and a big sandwich inside. It takes about 20 minutes to drive to California University where I was a junior. As a third-year college student, I spent a lot of time in the library studying and there was no time to come home for lunch.

I walked toward the front door.

"Don't worry," I said. "If anyone can help her, you can."

Uncle Jeff looked at me with a smile on his face and said, "I'm not so sure."

"I am," I said.

Uncle Jeff was an English professor before he decided to quit his job at the university to write full-time. Since he stopped teaching, though, he has helped the police **solve** several crimes. He found the criminal—the bad guy—when the police couldn't. He even solved a murder last month. He found out who killed a famous rock singer. The police had no **leads** and had no idea who the killer was, but my uncle figured it out.

I opened the front door to go.

"And Derrick, don't forget about dinner tonight. Your Aunt April will be here at 7:00 p.m.," Uncle Jeff said.

Oh no, not Aunt April! I had a bad feeling about it, but I just smiled and said, "Sure, I'll be here."

It was going to be a long night.

I got into my car and thought, "I hope Aunt April won't make any trouble at dinner tonight."

I have been living with my Uncle Jeff for five years. When I was 14 years old, my parents were in a car accident. They both died. Aunt April was my mother's older sister. She wanted me to go live with her and her husband. But my parents' **lawyer** told us that my mother and father wanted me to go live with Uncle Jeff if anything bad ever happened to them.

Aunt April was not happy. But I was. I have always liked Uncle Jeff. His wife died before I was born. Since he was single and he didn't like to cook, when



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my parents were still alive, he would come over to our house for dinner a lot. He was like a second father to me.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with Aunt April. She has been an actress for almost 30 years. She was very famous for a long time and she still acts from time to time. She's also very rich. She lives in a big house in Malibu next to the beach and Uncle Jeff and I live in a small house in the middle of town.

Don't get me wrong. My uncle isn't poor. He makes pretty good money from the books he writes. But he has **simple needs** and we live simple lives.

My mother was the youngest child in her family and was a teacher, so she and Uncle Jeff had more in common. They had a lot to talk about and were good friends. Aunt April lived in another world.

Aunt April thought that my parents didn't trust her to **raise** me. But I think my mother just knew that I loved Uncle Jeff and he loved me. And we got along very well. We think alike, even though we look nothing alike. I'm tall and have thick, black hair and brown eyes like my father, and Uncle Jeff has wavy, light brown hair and green eyes like my mother.

And even though I'm 19 years old, Aunt April thinks I'm still 14. She likes to tell Uncle Jeff and me what to do. That's why I wasn't looking forward to the dinner.

"Hey, look where you're going! You almost hit me!"

I was parking my car in the parking lot at the university. I was thinking so much about Aunt April that I didn't see the girl walking in front of me.

I put my head out of the window and said, "I'm sorry, I didn't see you. Are you okay?"

She was clearly a student, too. She had long, shiny black hair, big brown eyes, and a gorgeous smile. I could see her long legs under her short skirt. She was one of the most beautiful girls I had ever seen.

"I only have one leg now, but I'm okay," she joked.

I got out of the car. I was so happy that she wasn't angry. She looked even more beautiful close up.

"If you only have one leg, I better help you get to class," I said. "At least let me carry your books as **punishment** for my bad driving."

"No, thanks. I'm late," she said with a smile. "I better hurry," she said as she started to walk away.

I looked at my watch. I was going to be late, too. But I didn't want to stop talking to her. I tried to think of something to say that would keep her there. But nothing smart or **clever** came into my mind.



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“Maybe I’ll see you around campus,” I yelled.

She turned her head. She was still smiling.

“Maybe,” she said. She turned back around and walked quickly toward one of the **campus** buildings.

I wanted to run after her, but I wanted to be cool, too. Don’t be too **eager**. Girls don’t like guys who are too eager, I reminded myself. She is the kind of girl that I could **lose my head over**. What a beautiful girl. I wondered what her name was. Maybe I’ll see her tomorrow. I really hope so.

SUMMARY:

In Episode 1, we learned that Derrick Cruz, a 19-year-old college student at California University, lives with his Uncle Jeff, who used to be a professor at California University, but is now a writer who helps the police solve crimes. Uncle Jeff gets an email from an old friend of his, Clara Dunn. Clara is a professor at this same university, and wants to talk to Jeff about some serious problem she has. We don’t know what that problem is, however.

Derrick began living with his uncle after his parents died in a car accident a few years ago. His Aunt April wanted him to move to her house, but Derrick wants to stay with his uncle. Derrick leaves his uncle’s house to drive to the university. He isn’t paying attention to where he’s driving and almost hits another student with his car. This student is a beautiful girl who Derrick wants to meet.

In the second episode, Derrick is going to have dinner with his Aunt April, and he’s not going to like what happens.

If you had difficulty understanding this episode, be sure to read the Learning Guide for definitions of some of the difficult vocabulary and a complete transcript of the story.

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GLOSSARY

weird – strange; unusual; not normal; not ordinary

* The ending to that movie was really weird. I didn't understand it at all.

to lose touch – to no longer have contact with someone

* Jenny had lost touch with her college roommate years ago, so it was a surprise when her roommate called her last week.

to solve – to find the correct explanation for something; to find the answer to a problem

* Can you help me solve this math problem? I keep getting the wrong answer.

lead – a clue; an idea or information that may be helpful in solving a crime

* The police have asked the people in this city to call if they have any leads about who set the fire.

lawyer – attorney; a person who is trained and certified to help people with legal matters and represent them in court

* They need to have a lawyer review the contract before they sign it.

simple needs – a need for only the most basic things in life; nothing fancy, expensive, or luxurious

* Normally, he has only simple needs but lately he has dreamed of owning his own boat.

to raise (someone) – to care for a child until he or she becomes an adult

* Her parents raised her to always tell the truth and to respect her teachers.

punishment – a way to make someone suffer for having done something wrong; a penalty for doing something wrong

* When I was a teenager, the worst punishment my parents gave me was to not allow me to go to the spring dance at school.

clever – quick to understand or learn; intelligent; smart and funny

* She's so clever! In an uncomfortable situation, she always knows exactly what to say to make everyone laugh.



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campus – the physical location of a university or college; the buildings, paths, and garden areas of a university

* This university has a beautiful campus with nice architecture, lots of trees, and flowers in the summertime.

eager – very interested and excited; wanting to do something very much

* So young was so eager to buy tickets for the concert that she slept in front of the ticket booth the night before tickets went on sale!

to lose (one's) head over (something) – to be unable to act calmly or normally

* She's his favorite actress. When he met her at the party, I knew he would lost his head over her.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 2

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 2. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In Episode 1 of Deadly Letters, we met Derrick Cruz, a 19-year-old college student at California University, who lives with his uncle Jeff, a former university professor who is now a writer. We learned that Clara Dunn, an old friend of Uncle Jeff, has a serious problem and wants to meet with him. Derrick goes to the university, where he meets a beautiful woman.

In Episode 2, Derrick and Uncle Jeff have dinner with Derrick's Aunt April. Aunt April was a Hollywood movie actress, and she wants Derrick to live with her instead of his uncle. But will Derrick move to Aunt April's house? Let's find out.

Chapter 2

I **rushed** home after my last class ended at 6:30. There was a lot of traffic and I didn't get home until 7:10. I was late.

As I opened the front door of the house, I heard a woman's voice. Aunt April was already there.

Poor Uncle Jeff. It's hard to **face** Aunt April alone. She is a **force of nature**, a **tornado** or a tidal wave. If you're not careful, she'll **sweep** you **up** and leave you **dizzy**.

She had her back to me and she was saying, "Jeff, darling, you can't go around pretending to be a policeman. It's dangerous. It's not safe for you, and it's not safe for Derrick. How did you get yourself involved in that rock star's murder? Rock stars are not nice people. I should know. I know a lot of them. They are even worse than actors. I read in the newspaper that you found the killer. What if one of these crazy killers tries to kill you, or tries to kill Derrick? What would you do? How would you feel then?"

Aunt April stopped for a minute to take a breath. I decided this was a good time to go in, before she started up again.

"Hi, Aunt April. Sorry I'm late," I said loudly and cheerfully as I walked into the living room. "I was **stuck** in traffic. The freeway was like a parking lot," I said.



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Aunt April was sitting on the couch. Uncle Jeff was sitting in a chair across from the sofa. He looked miserable, tired, and uncomfortable.

Aunt April got up from the sofa and walked toward me. She put her heavy arms around me and gave me a big kiss on the cheek.

“Your hair is too long,” she said. She always talked to me as though I were five years old. “Jeff, this boy needs a haircut. You should take him to cut his hair.”

Aunt April likes to start her sentences with “You should...” She likes to give advice.

“And his clothes! A tall, good-looking boy like Derrick shouldn’t wear such old and dull clothes. He has this dark hair, those brown eyes, that million-dollar smile—with the right clothes, he would look like a young movie star. He needs new clothes, the latest fashions. You *should* take him shopping for better clothes.”

I looked over at Uncle Jeff and he looked like he was about to lose his patience. He and Aunt April are exact opposites. Aunt April loves to talk and Uncle Jeff doesn’t. The more she talks, the more miserable he looks.

I knew the only thing to do was to **distract** her, to get her talking about something else. And there is only one topic she likes to talk about more than me. Herself.

“Aunt April, tell me about your latest movie. I hear you are the star.”

“Oh, I’m not the star, Derrick,” she said. She was clearly happy that I had asked her about it. Her eyes were big and shining. She **grinned**, smiling from ear to ear.

“It has been a long time since I agreed to be in a movie. I have been asked so many times, but I wanted just the right film. This one is fabulous! I’m not actually the star, I only have a small part, actually only a few lines, but it’s an important part...”

I looked across the room at Uncle Jeff. He caught my eye. I smiled at him and he smiled back. I could tell that he was happy to see me.

After dinner, Uncle Jeff walked Aunt April to the front door. He helped her put on her expensive white fur coat. I was in the kitchen cleaning up, but the kitchen door was open and I heard a little of their conversation.

“Darling, I want you to be careful. I don’t like you running around trying to stop murderers, just like a policeman. It’s not right. It’s too dangerous. You *should*...”



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“April, I know you’re worried,” Uncle Jeff said. “I’m not trying to be a policeman. I was just helping a friend. I got lucky and found out some useful information that helped the police catch the killer. I wasn’t in any danger. That’s all it was. Don’t believe everything you read in the newspaper.”

“Still, Jeff **darling**, I worry about the boy. Maybe you should think about him moving in with me. I know we’ve talked about it before, but now that you’re **mixed up in** crime...,” Aunt April said.

“Thank you, April. I know you love Derrick and want the best for him. I do, too. Let’s talk about it later, okay?”

“Okay, Jeff, but if anything bad happens to that boy...”

“I know, April, I know.”

“Your aunt is right, you know,” Uncle Jeff said as he came back into the kitchen. I was washing the dishes. He sat down at the kitchen table. “She has a big, beautiful house and she has the money to give you what you need,” he said. “She can give you so much more than I can.”

“We’ve talked about this a hundred times before,” I said. “I want to live here. And **plus**, what would you do without me?” I asked. I gave him a funny smile.

Uncle Jeff looked serious for a minute. Then, his face relaxed and he smiled back.

“Well, you don’t cook,” he said. “That’s for sure.”

“No, I don’t. And you don’t cook either. Which restaurant did you go to to buy our dinner?” I asked.

Uncle Jeff laughed. “From Delucci’s Italian Restaurant. Don’t tell your aunt.”

SUMMARY:

In this episode we met Aunt April, Derrick’s mother’s sister, who was a famous movie star. When Derrick comes back home from the university, Aunt April is telling Uncle Jeff that Derrick should not live with him, because Uncle Jeff’s hobby of helping the police solve crimes is very dangerous. Derrick comes in the room, and Aunt April tells him that he needs a haircut and some new clothes. Derrick changes the subject of the conversation by getting Aunt April to talk about her new movie. Aunt April then leaves, and Derrick tells Uncle Jeff that he



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wants to live with him, even though Aunt April has more money and a bigger house.

In our next episode, Episode 3, Uncle Jeff and Derrick are going to meet with Uncle Jeff's old friend, Clara Dunn. And we're going to find out what is so important. What is going on with Clara Dunn? Why does she need Uncle Jeff's help?

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GLOSSARY

to rush – to hurry; to be in a hurry

* I had to rush to my class this morning because my train was late.

to face – to confront, to deal with, to be standing in front of someone

* She didn't know how she was going to face her parents and tell them that she had failed the course.

force of nature – the power of wind, rain, storms, and other natural things and events

* Of all the forces of nature, many people think earthquakes are the most frightening because they are completely unpredictable.

tornado – a strong storm with winds moving in a circular (round) column, able to destroy buildings and trees

* They hid underground when the tornado passed over their home, and when they came back up, they saw that their house had been destroyed.

to sweep (someone) up – to lift someone up with a sudden movement

* After their wedding, the young man swept his bride up and carried her through the doorway of their new home.

dizzy – a feeling of losing one's balance; a feeling that the world is spinning

* He never goes on rides at amusement parks because they make him feel dizzy.

stuck – unable to move; trapped

* He accidentally spilled glue on his hand, and now his fingers are stuck together.

to distract (someone) – to take someone's attention away from something

* When the little boy was getting a shot, his mother distracted him by singing a song.

to grin – to smile widely; to have a big smile on one's face

* She grinned at her brother and said, "I have a surprise for you."

darling – sweetie; honey; a term of affection; a name used with someone one cares for

* Alberto, darling, what time are the guests coming over for dinner tonight?



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to be mixed up in (something) – to be involved in something

* Please don't get mixed up in their argument. It's between the two of them and we shouldn't be involved.

plus – in addition; furthermore; also

* I like to run because it helps me control my weight and keeps me strong. And plus, I think it's fun.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 3

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 3. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode of our story, Aunt April had dinner with Derrick's Uncle Jeff and told him that his involvement with the police and crime was dangerous, and that it would be better for Derrick to live with her. But Derrick told Uncle Jeff that he doesn't want to move to Aunt April's house.

In Episode 3, we finally learn what Clara Dunn's problem is. Uncle Jeff and Derrick meet with Clara and she tells them about some letters her boss has received. Is someone going to die? Let's find out.

Chapter 3

Uncle Jeff spends most of his time these days writing books. Last year, I started helping him. He needed someone to do research for him, to go to the library and to use the computer to get information.

Uncle Jeff **insisted on** paying me some money for the work. Of course, I didn't want to take it. I lived in his house, I ate his food, and he paid for my college **tuition**. I do help around the house. I clean, do the grocery shopping, and other things like that. And I was happy to do his research. But he insisted that I get paid for my work. He said I was a good assistant, a good helper. He could trust me to do a good job.

I finally said okay. The money helped me to buy an old used car and some other things, too. At first, I only did research at the library and on the computer. But when he started to get involved in solving crimes, he let me help with some of the cases that he was working on. Uncle Jeff didn't solve crimes to make a living or to make money. They always started in the same way. Someone asked for his help.

The next day, I came home after school around 4:00. Uncle Jeff and I had planned to talk about some work he wanted me to do for his new book.



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But when I stepped through the front door, I could see that he was already busy. He had a visitor.

Uncle Jeff was in the living room with a woman. She was about 45 years old. She had short, blond hair and she was wearing a dark sweater and a long skirt. She was carrying an old briefcase. She looked **confident**, but worried.

Uncle Jeff stood up when I opened the door.

“Clara Dunn, I want you to meet my **nephew**, Derrick Cruz,” my uncle said.

The woman stood up and I shook her hand.

“It’s nice to meet you,” she said.

“It’s nice to meet you, too, Professor Dunn,” I said.

I turned to go to my room.

“Wait, Derrick. If you have some time, I would like you to hear what Professor Dunn has to say,” he said. “I already told her that you are my assistant.”

I looked at Uncle Jeff to make sure he was serious. Clara Dunn said in her email that this was an important matter. He gave me a quick **nod**.

“Sure,” I said quickly and sat down in a chair next to Uncle Jeff.

“Please **go on**, Clara,” Uncle Jeff said. “You were telling us about some letters.”

Clara Dunn looked at her hands and **sighed**. She looked tired.

“Yes, letters,” said Professor Dunn. “As you know, I now work at California University. I have worked in the psychology department for about three years. Last year, I was **promoted** and became the assistant dean of the College.”

She continued, “The **dean**—Alan Maurie—is in charge, of course. And he likes being the boss and doing things his way. But he isn’t good at the day-to-day details and I help him run the College. It’s a big job, but I’ve enjoyed it. Until recently.”

“About three weeks ago, Dean Maurie received an **anonymous** letter. Since there was no name on it, we don’t know who sent it.”

Uncle Jeff asked, “What did the letter say?”

“It just said: ‘You will die soon,’” Professor Dunn said.

“What did the dean say when he got the letter?” Uncle Jeff wanted to know.

“He thought it was a joke,” Professor Dunn answered. “He thought maybe an unhappy student had sent it to him as a joke or to scare him. He didn’t take it



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seriously. In fact, he threw the letter away. He told me about it only later, when he received his third letter.”

“What did the other two letters say?” I asked.

“The exact same thing,” she said. “‘You will die soon.’ The dean is still not too worried, but I am. That’s why I’m here. I want your help.”

“My help? Why me?” asked Uncle Jeff. “Why not go to the police?”

“The dean doesn’t want to call the police. He doesn’t want the university to have **bad publicity**,” Professor Dunn said. “If the newspapers find out, students may get scared and their parents might not want them to continue studying at California University. He doesn’t want that. To be honest, he still doesn’t want to do anything about the letters, but I convinced him to let me come to you.”

“Again, why me?” Uncle Jeff asked. “Why not get a professional investigator, someone who has a lot of experience with these kinds of things?”

“We both read in paper about how you helped solve the murder last month. And I have been learning about the other cases that you helped to solve in the past few years. Dean Maurie doesn’t want to do anything, but I told him that I knew you, Jeff. I told him that you would be **discreet** and very careful to keep things quiet. Also, you used to be a professor at California U. You understand the University. You know whom to talk to and whom *not* to talk to to keep this quiet.” Professor Dunn stopped and looked at Uncle Jeff.

“You are the only one who can help us,” she said. She looked at him hopefully.

Uncle Jeff didn’t answer right away. I could see he was thinking.

Finally, after a few minutes, he said, “Okay, Clara, I’ll look into it. I can’t promise I’ll find out who wrote those letters, but I’ll try.”

Professor Dunn smiled for the first time.

“Thank you, Jeff. This means a lot to me. You don’t know how worried I’ve been. I’m sure you’ll find out who is behind all of this.”

“I’ll do what I can, Clara. I’ll do what I can.”

I was glad that my uncle was going to help Professor Dunn. It seemed like a simple thing: Find the person who wrote the letters. But, based on past experience, many simple things have a way of turning into big things—big, dangerous things.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

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SUMMARY:

In this episode, Uncle Jeff's friend, Clara Dunn, tells him and Derrick that her boss at the university, Dean Maurie, has received three anonymous letters telling him that he is going to die. But the dean doesn't want to call the police, because he thinks it will scare students and parents. So Clara is asking Uncle Jeff to help them find out who wrote the letters.

In Episode 4, we meet Derrick's old friend, Sydney Morita, a girl he grew up with. Sydney wants to study for a chemistry test with Derrick. Derrick wants to tell Sydney about the mysterious letters, but can he trust her?

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GLOSSARY

to insist on (something) – to demand that something happens; to refuse to accept the opposite of what one wants

* Even though the child was tired, he insisted on staying up until midnight on New Year's Eve.

tuition – the money paid to attend a university, college, or private school

* Lynette received a scholarship for tuition, so she only has to pay for housing, food, and books.

confident – sure about someone's ability to do something; self-assured

* He was confident that he would get the job because he the manager making the decision was an old friend of his.

nephew – the son of one's brother or sister

* I have five nephews, but no nieces. I hope that one of my brothers or sisters has a girl soon!

nod – moving one's head up and down, usually to say "yes" or that one agrees

* The actress was nervous about her performance, but when she saw the nod from her director, she knew that she must be doing well.

to go on – to continue

* After the 19th mile, the runner was too tired and wasn't able to go on in the race.

to sigh – to take in a deep breath and push it out of one's body so that other people can hear it, usually to show that one is sad or disappointed

* He sighed before giving us the bad news.

to be promoted – to receive a new position that is at a higher rank than one's current position

* When she was promoted, she received more money and a company car.

dean – a university employee who is responsible for a department

* The dean of the science department wants to encourage more female students to major in chemistry and physics.

anonymous – without a name showing who the author is

* The author of the book chose to be anonymous because he didn't want people to know that he had written about such a controversial idea.



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bad publicity – negative attention in the media (newspapers, TV, radio)

* The politician was worried about getting bad publicity if people found out that he had taken money from the oil companies.

discreet – without drawing attention to something; unnoticed; without other people knowing

* They didn't want any of the other companies to know about their ideas, so they were very discreet when they met to discuss them.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 4

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 4. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, we learned that the boss of Uncle Jeff's friend, Clara Dunn, has received some anonymous letters saying that he will die. Uncle Jeff and Derrick agree to help Clara and her boss, Dean Maurie, find out who wrote the letters.

In Episode 4, Derrick's old friend, Sydney, comes over to his house to study. Derrick must now decide if he can tell his friend the secret about the mysterious letters. Let's begin.

Chapter 4

About 10 minutes after Professor Dunn left, there was a **knock** on the front door. Uncle Jeff opened it.

"Hi, Professor McQueen."

Uncle Jeff stepped back to let Sydney Morita, my best friend, into the house.

"Good to see you, Sydney," my uncle said. "Well, **I'd better** get to work." He walked into his office. I knew that he would **start on** the new case right away.

"I wanted to see if you wanted to study for the chemistry test on Friday," Sydney said to me.

Sydney and I have been friends since the third grade. Sydney's family lived down the street from me when I was growing up. My father is from Mexico and Sydney's dad is from Japan. We just seemed to have a lot of things **in common** and we have been friends **ever since**.

Now, Sydney is a student at California University, too.

"The chemistry test! Oh no! I forgot all about it," I said. "After the 'C' I got on the last test, I need to do a lot better on this one."

"That's why I'm here," Sydney said. "I'll help you study for it."

"I don't know why you bother," I said. "I'm terrible at chemistry. I'm just hoping to **pass** the class at this point."



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 4

“Don’t be **silly**. You’re smarter than most of the students in that class. You just have to study. Anyway, the truth is, I’m only helping you so you’ll help me with my history paper,” Sydney said.

“Yeah, right,” I said. “Okay, let’s study for an hour and then I have to help Uncle Jeff with a new case.”

“New case?” Sydney asked. “You mean another murder?”

“No, it’s nothing like that,” I said. “One of Uncle Jeff’s old friends works for the dean of the psychology department. He has been getting anonymous letters **threatening** his life. Uncle Jeff’s friend, Professor Dunn, was worried and wants him to find out who is sending the letters.”

I gave Sydney a serious look. “Of course, everything I’m telling you is a secret and **confidential**,” I said. “You can’t tell anyone what I just told you.”

“Derrick Cruz!” Sydney said, loudly. She looked at me with a tight mouth and big eyes. Even her curly brown hair seemed to get curlier with anger. “How long have we been friends?”

“I know, I know,” I said. “We’ve been friends for over 10 years. I’m just being careful, **that’s all**. It’s not my secret, so it’s very important that no one else finds out. But I know I can trust you.”

“Of course you can! I can’t believe you even thought you had to tell me to keep quiet. Haven’t I **kept your secrets** all these years? Don’t you remember the time you broke your brother’s...?” Sydney started to say.

“Don’t bring that up again!” I said. “You’ve made your point. You’re right. I won’t mention it again.”

Sydney seemed satisfied.

“So, what kind of work do you have to do on the case?” she asked.

“Uncle Jeff wants me to find out everything I can about Dean Maurie,” I told Sydney. “He’s going to talk to the other professors in the department, but he wants a student’s opinion. Students may **talk more freely** than the professors who work for the dean. He wants to find out if the dean has any enemies.”

“But you’re not a psychology major,” Sydney said. “Do you know any students in that department?”

“Yeah, Ben. He’s a graduate student in the psychology department. You remember Ben? Well, he’s not only a student there, but he also works part-time in the psychology department office. He may be able to tell me something about the dean.”

“That seems like **a good way to go**. Let me know if I can help,” Sydney said.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 4

“I will,” I said. “Now, we better start studying if I’m going to pass that test on Friday.”

“Oh, you’ll pass,” Sydney said. “Aren’t I the best tutor you’ve ever had?”

SUMMARY:

In this episode, Derrick tells his best friend, Sydney, about the case of the mysterious letters. Derrick says he has a friend in the psychology department at California University who may be able to help him and Uncle Jeff.

In Episode 5, Derrick will ask his friend, Ben, to help him find out if Dean Maurie has any enemies that may have sent him the letters. Derrick will learn that the dean does have enemies, and that Derrick may have a new friend.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our website at ESLPod.com. This course was produced by Dr. Jeff McQuillan and Dr. Lucy Tse, Copyright 2006.



GLOSSARY

knock – the sound of one’s hand or another object hitting against a door or another piece of wood

* Since she couldn’t hear his knock at the door over the loud music, he started to shout her name from the street.

(one) had better – one should; it’s better if one does this

* You’d better start writing your paper soon or you won’t be able to finish it by Friday.

to start on (something) – to begin to work on something; to begin a project

* After hearing a presentation about the importance of going to college, he wanted to start on his application right away.

in common – shared; the same; similar; in the same way as someone else

* I don’t understand why they’re getting married. They don’t seem to have anything in common.

ever since – since that time until today; from that early time to now

* Ever since he heard that carrots are good for people’s eyesight, he has been eating two carrots a day.

pass – to receive a passing grade in a course or on an exam; to not fail

* The professor said that we need to earn 75 or more points to pass the test.

silly – not serious; foolish; showing a lack of understanding

* She wanted to walk home alone, but I said, “Don’t be silly! It’s the middle of the night and your house is too far away. I’ll drive you home.”

to threaten – to say that one will cause trouble or hurt someone unless something happens

* The criminal threatened to take the man’s car if he didn’t receive \$10,000 by the end of the week.

confidential – secret; something that should not be told to others

* When bank employees are hired, they have to sign a document saying that they won’t share confidential information with people outside of the bank.

that’s all – simply that and nothing more

* I just wanted to touch the vase, that’s all. I didn’t mean to break it. I’m sorry.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 4

to keep (someone's) secrets – to know someone's secrets and not share them with anyone else; to stay quiet about someone's secrets

* Can you keep a secret? Julia is turning 23 tomorrow and we're having a surprise party. Don't tell her!

to talk freely – to talk openly; to share information without hesitation

* When you called me earlier to talk about Julia's surprise birthday party, I couldn't talk freely because she was in the room.

a good way to go – a good plan; a good idea

* They thought that opening a restaurant was a good way to go, but it never made very much money.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 5

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 5. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, Derrick told his friend Sydney about the case of the mysterious letters to Clara Dunn's boss, Dean Maurie, at California University.

In Episode 5, Derrick will talk to his friend, Ben, who will tell him about some of the dark secrets of Dean Maurie and who may want to kill him. Derrick also gets to meet someone he's been wanting to talk to, someone he finds in a most surprising place. Let's find out.

Chapter 5

After an hour of studying with Sydney, I went to see Ben. Ben is a really good student. In fact, he's brilliant. He finished his bachelor's degree two years ago and is now finishing his master's. He already has a **full scholarship** to the University of California at Berkeley, one of the best universities in the country, to get his Ph.D. degree after he graduates from here.

I have known Ben for three years. When I was in high school, the school **matched** students interested in going to the university with students who were already studying there. That way, they could **mentor** us and help us do the right things to get into college. I was matched with Ben and we've stayed in touch ever since.

Since it was the middle of the afternoon, I decided to go to the psychology department to see if he was still at work.

I walked into the psychology department's main office. I walked into the lobby and could see that there were a lot of smaller offices down a hallway to the left. That must be where the professors and the dean have their offices, I thought.

I saw Ben right away through the glass window of one of the small offices. Ben is hard to miss. He has **bright** red hair and is over six feet tall. I walked to the door of the office and Ben looked up from his work.

"Hey, Derrick," he said when I walked into the office. "**Long time, no see.** What have you been up to?"



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 5

“Hi, Ben,” I said. “I’ve been keeping busy. And you?”

“Oh, I’m much better now that my master’s **thesis** is almost finished,” Ben said. “I never thought I would get it done. I’ve never written a 200-page paper before. I hope it’ll be a long time before I have to write another one! As soon as the dean signs it, it’s official. I’m done.”

“Well, it was worth it, wasn’t it?” I asked.

“Yeah, and it got me that scholarship to Berkeley,” Ben said. “It was worth it in the end, but while I was writing it, I thought I’d go crazy.”

“Congratulations on the scholarship. Let me know when you have some free time. We’ll go out and celebrate,” I said. “Listen, Ben, the reason I’m here is that I need some information.”

“Information? Sure. What do you need?”

I got up and closed the office door.

“I need some background information on Dean Maurie,” I said.

Ben looked uncomfortable and didn’t say anything for a minute.

“Why?” he said finally.

“I can’t tell you right now, but it’s important,” I told him. “I’m trying to find out if the dean has any **enemies**. Has he had problems with anyone lately?”

“Well...I feel strange talking about the dean,” Ben said. “He’s my boss and he’s helped me a lot.”

“Ben, all I can tell you is that I’m trying to help him, not hurt him. I promise you that.”

“Well, I guess I can tell you what I know,” he said. “Enemies? I don’t know if they are enemies, but there are at least two people who have had problems with him **lately**—personal problems.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Dean Maurie likes women, all kinds of women. He is known around here as a **womanizer**. He has been having an **affair** with Professor Marcelo.”

“Diana Marcelo?” I asked, surprised. “But isn’t she married?”

“Yes, she is, and two weeks ago, I overheard a big fight she had with the dean in his office. I didn’t hear what they said, but Professor Marcelo didn’t look happy when she left. In fact, I have never seen a woman so angry.”

“You said he liked women—plural,” I said. “Were there others?”

“I think so,” Ben said. “I heard that he was having a romantic relationship with a student, but I don’t know if it’s true.”

“Do you know her name?” I asked.

“No, I don’t. Sorry,” he said.



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 5

“Don’t be,” I said. “You’ve been really helpful.”

“Anytime,” Ben said. “Are you sure you can’t tell me what this is all about?”

“I wish I could,” I said. “I’m serious about celebrating your scholarship. Give me a call when you’re free.”

“Sure, thanks,” Ben said. “I’ll see you later.”

“Bye,” I said as I left his office. This was just the kind of information that might help the case. I couldn’t wait to tell Uncle Jeff what I’d learned.

I walked into the department lobby, heading for the main doors. I stopped for a minute to look at a picture on the wall. It was a framed picture of Dean Maurie shaking hands with the University president.

Alan Maurie is one of those men who could walk into any room and people would know that he was important. He has that **air about** him. He looks to be in his early 50s and is tall and **well built**. His brown hair has a little grey, but that just makes him look more distinguished, more important. Alan Maurie is a good-looking man.

I was walking out of the main doors when I saw *her*. I saw the girl from the parking lot, the girl I almost hit with my car.

The girl stopped and said, “Hello, you look familiar.”

I was so surprised that I couldn’t say anything. She was more beautiful than I remembered.

“Don’t you remember me?” she said.

“Yes...yes, of course I remember you,” I said. I tried to get control of myself and to be cool. My brain and my mouth weren’t working together very well.

“Where are you going?” I asked.

She gave me a funny look and pointed to the psychology office door in front of us.

“Oh, yeah, of course,” I said.

She smiled. “We haven’t been introduced. I’m Jennifer.”

“I’m Derrick, Derrick Cruz.”

“It’s nice to meet you, Derrick Cruz,” she said. “Are you a psychology major?”

“No, I was just here visiting a friend of mine,” I said. “He’s a graduate student here.”



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“Oh well. Too bad,” she said. “Maybe I’ll see you around.”

She started to walk away.

I had to think fast. I had missed my chance with her in the parking lot. I didn’t want to waste this second chance.

“Jennifer,” I said. She turned around and looked at me, waiting. “Do you want to get some coffee later, or lunch, or something?” I said. I sounded stupid, even to myself.

“Hmmm...Coffee, huh? I guess I could use a cup of coffee later. Why don’t you meet me in front of the bookstore at 8:30 tonight.”

“Tonight at 8:30,” I said. “Great. I’ll meet you there.” She smiled again and then, without saying another word, turned around and walked through the office door.

I did it! A date with my dream girl. I couldn’t wait.

SUMMARY:

In this episode, Derrick talks to Ben, a graduate student at California University in the psychology department. Ben tells Derrick that Dean Maurie likes women – too many women. He has been known to get involved with married women, including Professor Marcelo, who had a big fight with Dean Maurie a few weeks ago. After talking to Ben, Derrick sees the beautiful girl he almost hit with his car. He introduces himself and learns that her name is Jennifer. Derrick asks Jennifer if she wants to have coffee with him, and she says yes. Is there love in Derrick’s future?



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 5

GLOSSARY

full scholarship – money that a good student receives from a school or another organization to pay for the costs of attending a college, university, or school

* Robert was hoping to receive a full scholarship, but he only got a partial scholarship that covered 50% of the tuition.

to match – to put things together based on common characteristics; to put people in pairs (groups of two)

* I want to introduce Phillipe to Yoko. I think that they'll be a good match.

to mentor – to give someone guidance and advice, especially related to a career

* I was very sad when Mrs. Jackson died. She had mentored me for years and her advice really helped me succeed as a writer.

bright – vivid; full of light; shiny

* With the curtains open, this room is really bright and warm during the summer.

long time, no see – an expression meaning that two people have not seen each other in a very long time

* Yesterday I saw my cousin for the first time in six years. At first, I just said, "long time, no see," but soon we were talking as if we had never been apart.

thesis – a long school research paper that is required for many graduate degrees

* He finished his courses two years ago, but he's *still* working on his thesis. He knows that he won't receive his diploma until he finishes it.

enemy – not a friend; a person who hates someone else; a person who acts or works against someone else

* Please apologize to her. She's very powerful and you don't want to have her as your enemy. She'll make your life very difficult.

lately – recently; in recent days, weeks, or months

* I haven't been to that restaurant lately. Have you?

womanizer – a man who has romantic relationships with many different women

* He's such a womanizer! Last month, he was dating at least *four* women at the same time.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 5

affair – a romantic or sexual relationship

* I know why they're getting a divorce. It's because he was having an affair with his secretary.

to have an air about (someone) – to give an impression; to appear to be a certain way

* She doesn't have very much money, but she always has an air about her that makes her appear rich.

well built – physically attractive; physically strong; with good physical attributes

* It's true that Arnold is well built, but he doesn't have a very nice personality.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 6

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 6. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, Derrick's friend Ben tells him that Dean Maurie is having an affair with one of the other married professors. Derrick also makes a date to meet the girl of his dreams, the beautiful Jennifer.

In Episode 6, Uncle Jeff gets a very scary phone call from Clara Dunn. Something's wrong with Clara and she appears to be in trouble. When Uncle Jeff and Derrick go to see her at the university, they will discover more than just a few threatening letters. Let's find out what they've discovered.

Chapter 6

I wanted to go home right away to tell Uncle Jeff what Ben had told me, but I had to go to my English class first. It was 5:30 when I finally got home.

When I walked in, Uncle Jeff was on the phone.

"Clara, what's happening?" he said into the phone. "I can't understand you. Try to calm down and tell me what's happened. Clara? Clara?"

Uncle Jeff held the phone away from his ear and looked at it. Then he put it down. He looked very worried.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"I wish I knew," he said. "That was Clara Dunn. I couldn't make any sense of what she was saying."

Uncle Jeff didn't say anything for a minute. Then he looked at me. "I think I'd better go find her. I'm pretty sure she was calling from her office."

He put on his jacket and **reached for** the front door.

"Let me come with you," I said. I didn't like that phone call. Professor Dunn could be in serious trouble. I wanted to help.

Uncle Jeff turned to me and said, "I told your aunt that I'd try to **keep you out of any danger**. This sounds like trouble to me."

"But you called me your assistant when Professor Dunn was here, remember?" I said. "You can't promote me one day and then **demote** me the next."



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 6

“Okay, you can come, but you’ll do what I say, okay? Deal?”

“Deal.”

We drove to the university. We didn’t talk on the way. I think we were both trying to imagine what could have happened.

By the time we got to the university, it was six o’clock. No one was in the **lobby** of the office where the department secretary usually sat. It was very quiet. Too quiet.

We walked down the hallway to the group of offices in the back. Clara Dunn’s office was at the end of the hall on the left and the dean’s office was on the right.

We stopped when we got to Professor Dunn’s office. Her door was open, but no one was there. There were papers on the desk and her briefcase was on the floor next to her chair. It didn’t look like she had gone home.

Then we heard the noise. It was a quiet, slow knocking sound, like someone was hitting their foot against a wall. The sound was coming from the dean’s office next door.

We went back into the hallway. The dean’s office door was closed. Uncle Jeff reached for the **doorknob**. He turned it and slowly he opened it.

What we saw was something out of a **nightmare**—the worst dream I could imagine.

Professor Dunn was sitting on the floor against the wall near the door. We could see right away what had caused the noise. She was sitting with her head down and she was **rocking** back and forth. Her shoulder kept hitting the wall, making a **soft** knocking noise.

It was clear what had upset her. Across the room, in front of a big desk, was a man lying on his back on the floor. There was blood all over the floor and there was a large **wound** on the left side of his head. Even I could see that the blood was fresh. That’s Dean Maurie, I thought. Then I corrected myself. That *was* Dean Maurie. He was dead, but he hadn’t been dead for long.

“Clara. Clara!” my uncle said to Professor Dunn.

She stopped rocking. She looked up at him, but didn’t seem to see him.

Then I saw what was in her hand. She was holding a **statue**. It was made of green stone in the shape of a Greek goddess. It was about 14 inches long. It was also covered with blood.

My uncle bent down and took the statue from her hands. Professor Dunn let it go easily. Uncle Jeff set it down on the desk and then went back to Clara Dunn. He took her hands and gently pulled her to her feet. She got up without



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 6

protest and my uncle led her to her office next door. He sat her down in her office chair. He **pulled up** a chair and sat down next to her.

“Clara, tell me what happened,” he said to her.

Her eyes were still unfocused and she looked at the **blank** wall across from her as she spoke.

“I didn’t mean to do it,” she said. “I didn’t mean to do it.”

SUMMARY:

In this episode, Clara Dunn calls Uncle Jeff, and something is wrong. Uncle Jeff and Derrick go to the university to help her, and when they get there, they find that Clara’s boss, Dean Maurie, has been killed. Clara is sitting in the room, with a small statue that has blood on it. It looks like Clara has killed Dean Maurie. Or did she?

In Episode 7, the police come to the university, and we learn more about Clara Dunn and her own secrets, and why she may have wanted to kill Dean Maurie.

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GLOSSARY

to reach for – to extend one's hand toward something; to try to get something with one's hand

* She reached for the phone, but before she could make a call she was interrupted by a knock at the door.

to keep (someone) out of danger – to protect someone; to keep someone safe; to prevent someone from getting into a dangerous situation

* They try to keep their daughter out of danger by holding her hand when she crosses the street and teaching her to never talk to strangers.

to demote (someone) – to move someone to a lower-ranking position, usually at work

* After the project failed, he was demoted from a top management position to a boring administrative job.

lobby – the entrance area of a building, usually an office building, apartment building, or hotel

* I was really surprised that the hospital lobby was so welcoming, with comfortable chairs, good magazines, and a lot of plants.

doorknob – the round piece of metal that one turns to open a door

* She tried to open the door quietly, but the doorknob made a squeaking noise and woke up her husband.

nightmare – a bad or frightening dream

* I had a horrible nightmare last night that I was being chased by a man with a gun. Thank goodness it was just a dream!

to rock – to move back and forth slowly, over and over again

* He spent most of the night rocking the baby in his arms, trying to get her to sleep.

soft – quiet, gentle

* Her voice is beautiful but sometimes it's so soft that I can't hear what she's saying.

wound – an injury; a cut in the skin

* You should put some medicine on that wound so it doesn't get infected.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 6

statue – a figure or shape of a person, usually made from stone or clay

* That room in the museum is filled with statues of old gods and goddesses from around the world.

to pull up a chair – to bring a chair closer to someone else

* Please pull up a chair so that we can edit your essay together.

blank – without anything; without decoration; plain; empty

* Like many writers, I don't like looking at a blank page and I always feel better after I've written something down.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 7

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 7. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, Uncle Jeff and Derrick find Clara Dunn sitting in the room where her boss, Dean Maurie, was killed. Clara Dunn seems to say that she killed the dean. But why?

In Episode 7, we learn why Clara Dunn may have killed Dean Maurie, and how Uncle Jeff will try to help her. Clara didn't like her boss. But would she kill him? Let's find out more.

Chapter 7

The police arrived a half-hour later.

While we were waiting for them to get there, I sat with Clara Dunn in her office. Uncle Jeff went into the dean's office to look around. He came out when he heard the police arrive.

Over the next three hours, we sat and waited. The police officer in charge, Detective Cluso, questioned each of us separately. My uncle went first, then Professor Dunn, then me.

When Professor Dunn was out of the room, I wanted to ask my uncle how much I should tell the police. Should I tell them what she said? Did she really **confess** to Dean Maurie's murder? But I couldn't ask him, because they had put a police officer in the room to watch us.

Finally, when I was called, I looked at my uncle. He looked at me, gave me a weak smile, and nodded. I knew what that meant. He wanted me to tell the truth, **the whole truth**. I followed the police officer and I told Detective Cluso what I knew. I told him about Clara Dunn's visit to us the day before and what had happened when we found her here.

At nearly nine o'clock, one of the police officers came in and told us we could go, all except Professor Dunn. She was being held for more questioning. I could see that she still wasn't **thinking straight**. She still had that lost look in her eyes. My uncle didn't like it, but he had no choice. When he tried to tell Detective Cluso that he wanted to go to the police station with Professor Dunn, the Detective told him to go home. There was nothing he could do at the station.



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 7

Uncle Jeff told Professor Dunn that he would get her a lawyer. He told her not to say anything more to the police until the lawyer arrived, but I couldn't tell if she understood.

On the drive home, we talked about what had happened. I told my uncle what I had said to the police and he did the same. He also told me that he had heard Professor Dunn repeating what she had said to us—"I didn't mean to do it."—when she was being taken into the room for questioning. That's part of the reason why the police wouldn't let her go.

"She found the body and she was holding the **murder weapon**," my uncle said. "That's a lot of evidence against her. It also doesn't help that she called me instead of calling the police immediately."

"But anybody could see that she was **in shock**," I said. "She wasn't thinking straight. They can't blame her for calling a friend instead of the police."

Uncle Jeff didn't say anything. I looked sideways at him. His eyes were on the road, but I could see that he was thinking.

Finally, he said, "Clara is my friend, but I need to see the facts. I can't let my friendship with her change how I see this case," he paused. "It's possible that she was in shock because she actually killed the dean."

In the back of my mind, I knew this was true, but it was a shock to hear my uncle say it out loud.

"You also don't know what I found out today," he continued. "I spoke with a couple of professors in the department. The dean was hired six months ago. Clara wanted that job. She thought she deserved it and she was expecting to get it. When she was **passed over**, she was very angry. She and Alan Maurie didn't get along. There was talk that he was going to replace her."

"But people don't kill for a job," I said, not wanting to believe what I was hearing.

"Clara might. For Clara, her job at California University is her life. The thought of losing it, after being passed over for the dean's position, might have been too much for her. Maybe she **snapped**."

"I don't get it," I said. "If she didn't get along with the dean, why was she worried about the threatening letters he received? If she wanted him dead, she should have been happy about the letters, not worried about them."

"That's a good question," he said. "I don't have a good answer. We need more information."

"There are also other people who might have wanted to harm him," I said. I told him what Ben had told me about the dean's womanizing. I told him about



English Through Stories:
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his affair with Professor Diana Marcelo and about the rumor that he was sleeping with one of his students.

“Maybe the dean and Diana Marcelo had a fight and she killed him,” I said. “Maybe Diana Marcelo’s husband found out about their relationship and he killed the dean. Maybe he tried **to break it off** with the student he was having an affair with and *she* killed him.”

“That’s a lot of ‘maybes’,” he said. “Let’s not keep guessing. We need some facts.”

We were back at the house and Uncle Jeff parked the car. I followed him into the house.

“I’m pretty tired,” he said. “Let’s start up again in the morning.”

I agreed. I *was* pretty tired, too.

Uncle Jeff stopped on his way down the hall to his bedroom and turned to me.

“Derrick, you know, when I saw that there was trouble, I should have told you to leave. I wasn’t thinking. The last thing I wanted was for you to see that **corpse**—especially a dead body in such a terrible condition. Are you okay?”

“Yeah, sure. It was pretty **nasty**, but I’m fine. Honestly.”

“I really hope so,” he said. Suddenly, he **made a face**. “I hope your aunt doesn’t find out about this.”

“Yeah. Me, too,” I said.

I went to my room and got ready for bed. I kept thinking about the case. I couldn’t sleep. Finally, just when I started **to nod off**, I remembered something important.

I had forgotten my date with Jennifer!

Even if I had remembered, I couldn’t have gone to meet her at 8:30. But now, she’ll think I stood her up and just left her there waiting for me.

And the worse part was I didn’t have any way to get in touch with her to explain—no phone number, no email address. I didn’t even know her last name. Would I ever see her again?

SUMMARY:

In this episode, the police arrive and take Clara Dunn in to be questioned. It looks like Clara could have killed her boss, Dean Maurie. Uncle Jeff finds out that Clara and the dean didn’t like each other, and that Clara wanted to be dean herself, but the university hired Alan Maurie instead. Uncle Jeff and Derrick



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 7

aren't sure what to believe. Derrick forgets about his date with Jennifer. Will he ever see her again now?

In Episode 8, Uncle Jeff talks with the police. Do they think she killed Dean Maurie?

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GLOSSARY

to confess – to admit something; to say that one committed a crime; to say that one did something bad

* Everyone was surprised when he confessed to stealing the computers because the police hadn't even considered him a suspect.

the whole truth – the entire truth, without leaving anything unsaid

* In U.S. courts, people must swear to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

to not think straight – to be confused; to be unable think normally; to be unable to think clearly

* Mark, you've been awake for 36 hours and you aren't thinking straight anymore. Please go to bed, and we'll finish the project without you.

murder weapon – the object used to kill someone

* Common murder weapons in street crimes include knives and guns.

to be in shock – to be stunned; to have an unpleasant feeling after something bad happens

* We were all in shock when Aunt Kelly died. Her death was so unexpected.

to be passed over – to not be considered for a promotion; to be ignored

* Gustavo was so angry when he was passed over for the vice-president position that he quit his job and went to work at another firm.

to snap – to suddenly lose control of one's feelings or actions; to go crazy

* She had a difficult day and when her husband called to say that he was bringing a friend home for dinner, she snapped and started yelling at him.

to break it off – to end a relationship

* I think you should break it off with Brad. He doesn't treat you very well and you never seem to be very happy with him.

corpse – a dead body; a dead person

* Medical students often feel sick the first time they see corpses in the laboratory.

nasty – gross; disgusting; ugly

* That was the nastiest dinner I've ever had, but I couldn't refuse to eat it knowing that Carol had spent hours cooking it.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 7

to make a face – to change the position of one's mouth and eyebrows (the hair above one's eyes) to indicate anger, sadness, happiness, or another emotion
* Please don't make that face at me. I know you don't want to go dancing tonight but I promised we'd meet Monica and Tristan there after dinner.

to nod off – to begin to sleep
* The teacher kept looking at me and giving me a dirty look because I was nodding off during class.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 8

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 8. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In our previous episode, the police take Clara Dunn, thinking she may have killed Dean Maurie. Uncle Jeff learns that Clara didn't like the dean, but he isn't sure if she killed him.

In Episode 8, Uncle Jeff returns home after going to the police station. Does he have good news or bad news about his friend Clara? Let's find out.

Chapter 8

The next day was Saturday. I had planned to get up early, but when I looked at the clock, it was already 9:30.

For a long time now, I'd been trying to get up early like Uncle Jeff. He normally gets up at 6:30 to **lift weights** and to go running. For a man in his mid-40s, he was in great shape, certainly better than I was. I was a little taller, just over six feet, but he was built like a football player. In a one-on-one fight, I'd bet on him to win.

I went into the kitchen after brushing my teeth. I was really hungry. I was glad to see Uncle Jeff at the kitchen table eating breakfast. Maybe I hadn't missed anything by getting up late.

"I'm glad I'm not the only one who **slept in**," I said to him.

"Actually, I've been up since 6:00. I went to the **police station** to check on Clara."

I should have known. "How is she?" I asked.

"They wouldn't let me see her, but I ran into Sergeant Montoya. Do you remember her?" he asked me.

"Sure. She was the detective who investigated the case last month. What did she tell you?"

"She told me some things **off the record**," he said. "The good news is that Clara is behaving normally now and is no longer walking around like she's in a dream. The bad news is that she says she can't remember anything that happened yesterday afternoon. She remembers hearing noises in the dean's



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 8

office. She remembers going into the office to see if there was a problem, but she doesn't remember anything after that."

"Do they believe her?" I asked.

"I don't know," he said. "Sergeant Montoya wouldn't say, but she thinks they will probably **release** Clara soon. All of the evidence right now is **circumstantial**: She was there, she had the statue that killed him in her hands, and she has a **motive**. But I don't think they are ready to arrest her yet. The evidence is strong, but not **conclusive**—they're not absolutely sure."

"Well, that's good news," I said.

"I also found out that the killing must have happened after 3:00," he said. "That's when the secretary said she saw him go into his office. No one saw him come out again after that."

"That must have been just after I talked to Ben," I said. "So, where do we start?"

"Well, I want to have a look around the dean's office, but that's not possible. The police are investigating and they won't let anyone in. I think that the best thing to do is to look at who else had a motive to kill the dean. We can't forget about those threatening letters. Based on the information you got from Ben, I think I should talk to Diana Marcelo."

"Yeah, if anybody can find out the truth about what was going on between her and the dean, you can," I said.

"I appreciate your confidence in me. I would be very happy to let the police handle it all," he said, "but they are so **focused** on Clara right now, I'm not sure if they plan to talk to any other **suspects**. We have to assume that Clara is innocent, that she had nothing to do with the murder, and see **where that takes us**."

"I see what you mean," I said. "When do we leave?"

"You can come with me in the car," he said, giving me a hard look, "but I may want to talk to her alone."

"Sure, I understand," I said. "You're the boss."

Uncle Jeff smiled. "**You bet** I am."

SUMMARY:

In this episode, we learn that Uncle Jeff has talked to the police. The police tell him that Clara Dunn says she can't remember anything about what happened last night. She doesn't remember killing Dean Maurie, but she can't be sure.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 8

Uncle Jeff decides that he and Derrick should go talk to Professor Diana Marcelo, the married woman that the dean was romantically involved with.

In Episode 9, Professor Marcelo will tell her story about what happened to Dean Maurie. But will anyone believe her?

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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 8

GLOSSARY

to lift weights – to lift heavy objects as part of exercising to build muscles

* His arm muscles are huge! He must lift weights everyday.

to sleep in – to sleep late; to sleep later than one expected

* On Saturdays, Terry likes to sleep in until 11:00.

police station – the office where police officers work

* I have to go to the police station to report that my bicycle was stolen.

off the record – unofficially; in a way that shouldn't be repeated publicly

* Off the record, the senator thinks that the new law is a bad idea, but he would never say that in public.

to release (someone) – to let someone out of custody; to let someone who has been arrested walk away from a police station or a prison

* Charles was released from prison last week, but he's having difficulty readjusting to normal life.

circumstantial – a situation or information showing that something is likely to be true, but without any real proof

* Yes, he was at the scene of the murder and we know that he never liked Ms. Johnson, but since no one saw the murder, all of the evidence is only circumstantial and we can't prove anything.

motive – a reason for doing something, usually something bad

* What was his motive for telling her boss that she wanted to quit? Does he want her job?

conclusive – definitive; without doubt

* The medical research is conclusive: The best way to lose weight is to eat healthily and to exercise regularly.

to be focused on (something) – to be concentrated on something; to be thinking about something all the time

* Her parents wish that she were more focused on her schoolwork instead of sports and parties.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 8

suspect – a person who others believe committed a crime; a person the police think may have committed a crime

* They showed Karen photographs of all the suspects and asked her if any of them looked familiar, since she had seen the thief running down the street.

to see where (something) takes (someone) – to follow an idea to learn what the consequences or outcomes are

* Laura thinks we should call the mayor's office for more information. Since no one else has a better idea, let's do it and see where it takes us.

you bet – an expression used to show that someone agrees with what that another person has said

* "I don't understand why I didn't get the job," she said. "I'm smart and I have great experience, don't I?" Her husband replied: "You bet! They're fools not to hire you."

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 9

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 9. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, we learned that Clara Dunn can't remember what happened the night that Dean Maurie was murdered.

In Episode 9, Uncle Jeff and Derrick go to talk to the other woman who they think might have killed the dean: his ex-lover, Professor Diana Marcelo. Marcelo is a beautiful woman. But is she also a killer? Let's find out.

Chapter 9

With the help of an old friend at the university, Uncle Jeff got Professor Marcelo's home address.

She and her husband lived in a neighborhood called the Hollywood Hills, a part of the city with some very expensive homes.

We drove up the hill on a narrow, **winding** road.

"There it is. That's 9808 Sandoval Street," I said, pointing to one of the houses. It was much smaller than the ones around it. It looked like an old house, too. When we got out of the car, we saw a woman in jeans and a t-shirt kneeling on the ground. She wore gardening gloves and a big hat. When she saw us getting out of the car, she stood up.

I had heard of Diana Marcelo. She was one of the most well known **economists** in the country. But I had never seen her face, so I wasn't prepared when she took off her hat and smiled at us.

She was one of the most beautiful women I had ever seen. She was about five feet, five inches tall and thin, but with the right **curves**. She had shoulder-length, dark brown hair, blue eyes, and a **delicate** face. She looked like an angel that Michaelangelo might have painted.

"Hi, can I help you?" she said to Uncle Jeff. I could tell that he was just as surprised by her beauty as I was.

"I'm looking for Diana Marcelo," he said.

"That's me. What can I do for you?" she asked.

Uncle Jeff introduced himself.



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 9

“You’re Jeff McQueen, *the* Jeff McQueen?” she asked. “I’m very happy to meet you. I read your last novel and I loved it. I’m honored to meet you.”

Uncle Jeff was always embarrassed when people praised him about his books. He didn’t like to talk about them.

He said quietly, “Thank you. Could we go inside and talk?”

Professor Marcelo looked confused, but she led us through the front door of her house. We stepped into the living room and she sat down on a chair. She **waved** for us to do the same.

“I am very happy to meet you, but what is this all about?” she asked, looking first at Uncle Jeff and then at me.

“The reason we’re here is that we need your help,” Uncle Jeff began. “Yesterday afternoon, Alan Maurie was found murdered.”

“What?” Professor Marcelo said, surprised.

She **blinked** her eyes a few times. She opened her mouth to speak, but then closed it again. She sat in silence for a full minute and then she started **shaking her head**.

“I can’t believe it,” she said. “You said this happened yesterday afternoon? How?”

“He was murdered. I don’t know too much about it,” Uncle Jeff said, “but one of my friends, Clara Dunn, is at the police station right now because they think she may have killed him.”

“But why are you here?” she said, suddenly looking **alarmed**.

“I need your help,” he said. “I don’t think Clara did it and I’m trying to find out more about Alan Maurie. I want to find out who may have hated him enough to kill him.”

“So you’ve heard the rumors,” she said, sighing. “That’s why you’re talking to me. Yes, we had a relationship, but **that’s over**. It’s been over for six months.”

I watched her closely, but I couldn’t tell if she was lying.

“Then what did you argue about two weeks ago?” he asked. “Someone heard you argue with the dean.”

I could tell that Professor Marcelo didn’t like the question.

“I said that the affair was over. I meant that it was over for me. It wasn’t over for Alan. He was still calling me, writing me emails, and trying to see me.”

“Was he threatening to tell your husband?” Uncle Jeff asked.

To my surprise, she laughed.



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 9

“You’ve got it all wrong,” she said. “My husband already knows about the affair. I told him myself when I ended it three months ago. At the time, he was angry, but we’ve **worked it out**. We’re over it now.”

“But Alan Maurie wasn’t over it. He was still bothering you,” Uncle Jeff said. “Maybe your husband didn’t like that.”

“Emil didn’t know that Alan was bothering me,” she said. “And even if he did, he isn’t the type of man to hurt anyone. Plus, he was out of town yesterday. He’s been in Denver for a meeting since Friday and he’s not supposed to be back until this afternoon.”

“And where were you?” Uncle Jeff asked.

“Right here,” she said, “working in my garden.”

“Can anyone **confirm** that?” he asked. “Were you with anyone or did anyone call you here?”

“No,” she said, smiling. “I guess I have no **alibi**, but I’m not your murderer.”

We left then. As our car pulled away, I looked back. Diana Marcelo was standing in her doorway and looking at us. She had an angry look on her face.

I didn’t know what to think. Was she telling the truth? Was she lying? I didn’t want to believe that such a beautiful face could tell so many lies, but I had a feeling that she was hiding something.

SUMMARY:

In this episode, Uncle Jeff and Derrick talk to Dean Maurie’s ex-lover, Diana Marcelo. Marcelo says that she and the dean ended their romantic relationship three months ago. The dean wanted it to continue, but Marcelo said no. She says that she was at home when the murder took place, but she doesn’t have anyone else who can verify that. Uncle Jeff and Derrick are still not sure if she is guilty or not.

In Episode 10, Uncle Jeff decides to see if Marcelo’s husband may have been the killer. He and Derrick also visit the dean’s office, and they again find a very unusual surprise waiting for them, a very troubling surprise for Derrick.

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GLOSSARY

winding – with many bends and turns; not straight

* Sherri always gets carsick when they drive through the mountains on winding roads.

economist – a person who studies economics (the science of money, industry, and trade)

* A famous economist is giving a lecture tonight about the importance of agriculture in developing countries. Do you want to go with me to hear him?

curves – a woman's breasts, waist, and hips

* She wishes she had better curves instead of looking like a boy.

delicate – small and beautiful

* She has delicate hands but they're also very strong.

to wave – to move one's arm and hand in the air to greet someone or to send a message to them

* When we got off the plane, we saw Uncle Ted waving to us, trying to get our attention.

to blink – to quickly close and open one's eyes

* The wind was blowing hard and they began to blink a lot to keep the dust out of their eyes.

to shake one's head – to move one's head from left to right to say "no" or show disbelief

* I asked a man on the street if he knew what time it was, but even though he wore a watch, he just shook his head. Maybe he didn't understand me.

to be alarmed – to be concerned, worried or shocked; to be surprised in a negative way

* Quincy was alarmed to learn that his mother had fallen down the stairs.

to be over – to be finished; to be done; to be in the past

* I used to work for my brother but that's over. Now I have my own business and I am much happier.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 9

to work (something) out – to come to a satisfactory conclusion or solution

* You need to work things out with your roommate. It's horrible to see you two fighting all the time.

to confirm – to show, say, or prove that something is true or correct

* She thought her husband was smoking again, and her suspicions were confirmed when she found a pack of cigarettes in his briefcase.

alibi – proof or evidence that someone was somewhere else when a crime was committed and for that reason, did not commit that crime

* The police thought that Elian had stolen the money, but he had a strong alibi: he was giving a presentation in front of 20 employees at his company.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 10

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 10. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, we learned that the dean's former lover, Diana Marcelo, had ended her affair with the dean and that she says that she wasn't at the university when he was killed.

In Episode 10, Uncle Jeff investigates Diana Marcelo's husband, and he and Derrick decide to return to the university to look again at the dean's office. When they get there, Derrick discovers someone he didn't want to find there. Let's get started.

Chapter 10

Uncle Jeff and I **talked over** the interview in the car. We agreed that we only had Diana Marcelo's word that the affair was over. And she didn't have an alibi. There was no one who could say whether or not she was at home yesterday afternoon. We also needed to find out if her husband was really **out of town**.

Uncle Jeff dropped me at my friend Eddie's apartment. I had promised a long time ago that I would help him move. I would have much rather stayed with Uncle Jeff to keep working on the case, but a promise is a promise. I couldn't let him down.

After moving furniture and boxes for four hours, I got home at 4:30, **exhausted** and too tired to move. But I managed to take a quick shower. Then I laid down on the **couch**. I only meant to rest for a few minutes, but when I opened my eyes, it was already 7:15. Uncle Jeff still wasn't home.

I decided not to wait for him to eat dinner. I heated up some **leftovers** that were in the refrigerator and when I sat down to eat, I heard Uncle Jeff's car in the driveway.

"So, how was the move?" he asked when he walked through the front door.

"I never knew that one person could have so much stuff. He had more furniture and clothes than a family of five," I said. "What have you been doing?"



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 10

“I did some checking on Emil Marcelo,” he said. “He works as a real estate agent and sells high-priced office buildings. According to his secretary, he was supposed to be in Denver. His wife was telling the truth.”

“He could have come back without telling anyone,” I said.

“Yes, but that’s something the police can check on easily, but that we’ll have a hard time doing,” he said.

By this time, Uncle Jeff was heating up some food to eat, too. We didn’t talk for about 10 minutes while we both **concentrated** on eating.

When he was done, Uncle Jeff said, “I made another stop this afternoon. I went to see Clara. The police have released her and she’s back home. She seems to be doing okay, not great, but better than yesterday.”

“Does she remember any more about what happened?” I asked.

“No, not at all,” he said. “But she gave me her keys to the psychology department and to the dean’s office. I want to have a look around.”

“Tonight?” I asked.

“Tonight,” he said.

At 9:30, we arrived at the university. Both Uncle Jeff and I were dressed in dark clothes. Technically, we weren’t **breaking in**. We weren’t committing a crime. We had Clara Dunn’s **permission** and her keys to enter the building. But we didn’t have the police’s permission to go into the dean’s office. Uncle Jeff told me that he didn’t want me to go into the dean’s office. He didn’t want me to get into trouble.

We walked inside the building and toward the main doors of the psychology department. No one else was **around**. Uncle Jeff opened the main doors and we stepped into the lobby. We began to walk down the hallway toward the dean’s office.

Suddenly, Uncle Jeff put out his arm to stop me. He pointed to the dean’s office door. There was police tape across the door, but someone had **taken it down** on one side. The door was open a little. And the light was on.

Uncle Jeff started walking slowly toward the door. I followed behind him, trying not to make any noise. We got to the door. My uncle motioned for me to stand outside, next to the door. I stood there with my back to the wall.

He opened the door quickly with a loud sound—**bang!**—to surprise whomever was inside. There was someone there, dressed in a black jacket with a **hood** over his head. Uncle Jeff walked in and tried to grab him, but the man



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 10

pushed past him. Uncle Jeff lost his balance and fell to the ground. The man tried to run out of the office.

He didn't see me so I was able to grab him as he came through the doorway. He tried to get free, but I held on tight.

By this time, Uncle Jeff was back on his feet and he came out into the hallway. He grabbed the top of the hood and pulled it back.

"Jennifer!" I yelled.

She turned her head and looked at me. She looked as surprised as I was. She stopped trying to get free. This was Jennifer, my Jennifer, my dream girl. I had her in my arms, but this wasn't the way I had wanted to hold her.

SUMMARY:

In this episode, Uncle Jeff learns that Diana Marcelo's husband had an alibi for the day the dean was murdered. When he and Derrick go back to the dean's university office to see if they can find any more information about who might have killed him, they see someone already in the office. The person tries to escape, but Derrick catches her. To Derrick's surprise, the woman who was in the dean's office is Jennifer, the girl of his dreams.

What was Jennifer doing in the dean's office? Is she the real murderer?

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GLOSSARY

to talk over (something) – to talk about something; to discuss something

* I was really angry about what he had said, but after we talked it over I felt much better.

out of town – traveling in another city; not in the city

* Dr. Shomberg can't see with you next week because she'll be out of town. How about the following week?

to be exhausted – to be extremely tired

* Martha was exhausted after a long day at work and went to bed very early and without eating dinner.

couch – sofa; a soft piece of living-room furniture for more than one person to sit down on

* On Friday nights, the whole family sits on the couch to watch a movie together.

leftovers – food that is not eaten one day and is saved for another day

* Timothy brought a delicious lunch to work today – pasta, chicken, and vegetables. It must have been leftovers from dinner the night before.

to concentrate – to focus; to think hard about one thing and nothing else

* With all the noise outside, it's hard to concentrate on doing our homework.

to break in – to secretly and illegally enter a room or building that does not belong to oneself

* I know how did the thieves got into the house. They broke in through a back window.

permission – an agreement allowing someone to do something

* In many classrooms, students must ask for the teacher's permission to go to the bathroom.

around – in the area; nearby

* It's easier to work in the office late at night because no one is around to distract me.

to take (something) down – to remove something that is hanging

* They take the flag down every night and put it back up early in the morning.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 10

bang – a sudden loud noise, usually when a gun goes off or when two hard things hit each other

* When the hunter shot his gun, the loud bang made all the birds fly away.

hood – the piece of fabric attached to the neck of a jacket or coat that is worn over the top and back of one's head

* It's raining outside. Don't forget to use your hood so that your hair doesn't get wet.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 11

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 11. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, Derrick and his Uncle Jeff return to the university to see if they could find more information about who killed Dean Maurie. When they get to the dean's office, they find that an unknown woman is there already. The woman tries to run away, but Derrick catches her. Surprisingly, the woman is Jennifer, Derrick's "dream girl."

In this episode, we learn about Jennifer's secret past and why she was in Dean Maurie's office. Is Jennifer the real killer? Let's find out.

Chapter 11

"Let's go somewhere where we can talk," Uncle Jeff said, leading us out of the psychology department and locking the door. Jennifer walked behind him and I walked behind her. I didn't think she'd try **to get away**, but I didn't want to take any chances.

We walked outside and found two benches under some trees. Uncle Jeff sat down on one bench, and Jennifer and I sat on the other one facing him.

"You know each other?" Uncle Jeff said, looking at me.

"We met two days ago," I explained, "and we were supposed to meet for coffee last night."

"I see," he said. He turned to Jennifer. "Why don't you tell me what you were doing in Dean Maurie's office?"

I couldn't see Jennifer's face. She was looking in the other direction, but I could feel that she was trying **to make up her mind**.

Finally, she turned to Uncle Jeff and said, "If I tell you, can you keep it a secret? And will you help me?"

Uncle Jeff said, "I can't make any promises until you tell me your story."

"I was looking for some photographs," she said.

"What kind of photographs?" I asked.

"They were taken at a party last year," she said. "I don't know how he got them."



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 11

“What was in them?” my uncle asked.

“They were photographs of me...using drugs—**cocaine**,” she said. “I don’t use drugs anymore, but I don’t want anyone else to see those pictures.”

“You mean that Alan Maurie was **blackmailing** you?” Uncle Jeff said to her.

“Yes, he has been blackmailing me for money for over three months,” she said.

“Wait a minute,” I said. “I can understand why you don’t want other people to know you used drugs, but does it really matter? People **these days** would understand, especially if you don’t use them anymore.”

Jennifer didn’t say anything.

Uncle Jeff was looking at her closely. After a few minutes, he said, “You’re Jennifer Brody.”

I looked at Jennifer. She nodded.

“I don’t understand,” I said, confused. Then I had a thought. “Brody, as in Brody Library?” I asked.

“Jennifer’s father is Alan Brody, the famous **architect**,” Uncle Jeff explained to me. “I remember seeing your picture in the newspaper. Jennifer’s family is one of the oldest and richest families in the city.”

“If Dean Maurie gave those pictures to the newspapers...” Jennifer started to say, but she didn’t finish. “My father and I are **very close**. I don’t want to hurt him.”

“I see,” Uncle Jeff said. “I have to ask you this. What were you doing yesterday between 3:00 and 5:30?”

Jennifer thought for a moment and then said, “I ran into Derrick around 2:30. Then I **dropped off** the money in an envelope for Dean Maurie and went **straight back** to my apartment.”

“You dropped off the money at his office?” I asked, surprised.

“Yes, in his **mail slot**. That’s the way he wanted it,” she said. “I’m supposed to be working for him. The envelope is supposed to have my completed work in it. I have been making payments to him every week.”

“How much have you paid him?” Uncle Jeff asked.

“\$1,000 a week, so including yesterday, \$11,000,” she said.

“Did you see him when you were there?” he asked.

“No, I didn’t see anyone,” she said. “The secretary wasn’t at her desk and I just walked through to the back room and left the envelope there.”

“Was anyone at your apartment when you got back?” he asked her.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 11

“No, I live alone,” she said, “but I was there from about 3:30 to just after 8:00.”

“Where did you go then?” he asked.

“She went to meet me for coffee,” I said to Uncle Jeff, feeling **slightly** embarrassed.

“Right,” she replied.

Then she turned to Uncle Jeff. “You’ll help me find those photographs, won’t you?”

“I don’t know. I’ll do what I can,” he said.

Jennifer looked worried. I believed her and I didn’t want to see her like this—**desperate** and unhappy. I wished there were some way I could get those photos back for her. If there was only some way....

SUMMARY:

In this episode, we learn that Jennifer has a secret from her past – she used to use illegal drugs, such as cocaine. Worse, Dean Maurie had pictures of Jennifer using drugs, and told her that if she didn’t give him money, he would give the photographs to the newspapers. Jennifer comes from a rich, famous family, and she didn’t want to embarrass her family, so she paid Dean Maurie. Now that the dean was dead, she wanted to get the photographs from him before the police found them. Did she kill Dean Maurie? She says no, but she was alone in her apartment at the time he was killed, so we can’t be sure.

In Episode 12, Derrick and Uncle Jeff discuss who could have been the real killer, but they don’t realize that one of them could be the next person killed.

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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 11

GLOSSARY

to get away – to leave; to run away; to not be caught

* We tried to give our dog a bath this weekend, but he got away from us and ran down the street.

to make up (one's) mind – to decide; to make a decision

* I can't make up my mind. Which TV do you think I should buy?

cocaine – a type of illegal drug, usually a white powder

* He ruined his life by using cocaine, and now he travels to schools telling children about the dangers of drugs.

to blackmail – to force someone to do something (usually to give one money) by threatening to tell a secret about him or her

* He blackmailed his boss into giving him more money by threatening to tell the management about the money his boss had stolen.

these days – nowadays; recently; in modern times

* Women used to wear long skirts, but these days short skirts, pants, and shorts are acceptable.

architect – a person who designs buildings

* We hired an architect to design our home so that it would have everything we wanted.

very close – in a close relationship; knowing someone very well and liking him or her very much

* She and her mother are very close. They are more like best friends than like mother and daughter.

to drop off – to deliver; to leave something for someone

* He dropped off the car at the auto shop because it has been making a strange noise.

to go straight back – to go directly back; to return somewhere without stopping anywhere else

* After the chemistry test, most students went to a party to celebrate, but I had to go straight back home to study for the next day's history test.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 11

mail slot – a small rectangular hole that mail is pushed through

* The mail carrier couldn't fit the package through the mail slot in our door, so he left it on the ground in front of the door.

slightly – a little bit; a little

* I was feeling slightly sick after going on three rides at the amusement park and decided not to go on anymore.

desperate – feeling that one has no hope or options

* She was so desperate to pass the course that she was considering cheating on the final exam.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 12

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 12. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, we learned that Jennifer Brody, a beautiful student at California University, was being blackmailed by Dean Maurie, forced to pay him money because the dean had some photographs of Jennifer using illegal drugs. She went back to the dean's office after he was killed to find the photographs, but she was caught by Derrick and Uncle Jeff as she tried to leave.

In this episode, Uncle Jeff and Derrick talk about the four people who may have killed Dean Maurie: Professor Marcelo, Professor Marcelo's husband, Clara Dunn, and Derrick's dream girl, Jennifer Brody. Each one could have killed the dean. But who was it? And are Uncle Jeff and Derrick in danger of being killed themselves? Let's get started.

Chapter 12

After Jennifer went home, Uncle Jeff wanted to walk around a little to think. We walked in silence for about 10 minutes before he said, "There are a few things we know about this case so far. This looks like a crime of **opportunity**—that is, I don't think it was planned ahead of time."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, the murderer didn't bring the murder weapon with him to the dean's office. It was something convenient—the statue that was already there."

"We also know," he continued, "that the dean is a blackmailer. Blackmailers often have more than one victim. If Alan Maurie was blackmailing Jennifer, I wonder whom else he was blackmailing."

"I see what you mean," I said. "Who do you suspect so far?"

"There are four people who had motive and opportunity," he said. "First, there's Diana Marcelo. She wanted to **save** her marriage and Dean Maurie didn't want to end the affair. She may have gone to see him again, they fought, and she killed him. She also had opportunity. She says she was at home alone when the murder occurred. And as far as we know, no one can say whether or not she was there."



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 12

“Do you think the dean could have been blackmailing Professor Marcelo?” I asked.

“I was wondering the same thing,” he said. “If he was just bothering her, maybe she could **ignore** it. But if he was blackmailing her, that might explain why she went to his office two weeks ago and left so angrily. We’re just guessing, but it’s a possibility.”

“Do you think her husband may have had something to do with it?” I asked.

“It’s hard to say,” he said. “I don’t think we can **rule out** Emil Marcelo. We only **have** Diana Marcelo’s **word** that her husband wasn’t angry anymore about their affair. Even if he was, he may have had reason to kill Alan Maurie if he were blackmailing them. It’s possible that he traveled back from Denver without anyone knowing.”

“That’s two suspects so far,” I said.

“Right. Now we come to Clara Dunn and Jennifer Brody,” he said.

“Not Jennifer!” I said. “I can’t believe she could have done it.”

Uncle Jeff gave me a look of pity. “You just heard her motive,” he said. “Alan Maurie was blackmailing her with those photos. She was also **in the right place at the right time**. She was in the psychology office yesterday afternoon. We only have her word that she left at 2:30. She may have stayed and met up with the dean. That’s a motive and an opportunity.”

I shook my head, but I knew he was right. It was possible, just possible that Jennifer was the murderer, but I refused to believe it.

“Then there’s Clara Dunn,” he said. “She had a strong motive. She hated Alan Maurie. He got the job she wanted very badly and he was trying to get her fired. She also had the perfect opportunity. Her office is next to his. She could simply wait until the office was empty, and then go in and kill him.”

“But she wouldn’t have called you, would she?” I asked. “She wouldn’t have stayed in the office.”

“I want to believe Clara, but she is a very smart and clever woman,” he said. “It’s just possible that she’s also a very good actor.”

“You mean you think she could have **faked** her shock, that she was just **pretending**?” I asked. “Do you think she’s acting now, pretending not to remember what happened?”

“That would be very convenient,” he said. “Don’t get me wrong. I don’t think she did it, but I have to keep an open mind. I can’t **dismiss** the facts just because she’s my friend.”



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 12

I thought of Jennifer. “I see what you mean,” I said.

Uncle Jeff looked at his watch and said, “It’s almost eleven o’clock. It’s time to get home.”

We had parked across the street from campus so we walked in that direction. The traffic light changed and we both took a step to cross the street when a car **came out of nowhere**.

It came toward us at full speed. I was sure it would hit me when I felt a hand grab the back of my shirt, pulling me back onto the sidewalk—just in time.

I turned and saw Uncle Jeff, still holding onto my shirt. He looked angry and he was looking at the car going down the street. I turned back to look, too, but it was too late. It was gone.

“Did you get the license plate number?” I asked him.

“No, it’s too dark,” he said. “But one thing I do know. That was no accident. That car was waiting for us and whoever was driving it meant **to get us**.”

“Who could it be?” I asked.

“I don’t know,” he said, “but this means that we’re **on the right track**. Someone is nervous about what we’ll find.”

SUMMARY:

In this episode, Uncle Jeff and Derrick discuss who the real killer of Dean Maurie could have been. They begin with Professor Marcelo, who was having a romantic affair with the dean. Then there is Professor Marcelo’s husband, who may have found out about the affair and tried to kill the dean out of anger. Another suspect is Uncle Jeff’s friend, Clara Dunn, who didn’t like Dean Maurie. Finally we have Jennifer Brody, who was being blackmailed by the dean over some photographs, but who Derrick thinks is innocent. At the end of the episode, someone tries to kill Derrick when he crosses the street. Who was the person in the car that almost killed Derrick? Are Derrick and Uncle Jeff the next to die?

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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 12

GLOSSARY

opportunity – a situation that makes it possible to do something

* She never had the opportunity to go to college, because her family was very poor and her grades weren't good enough to get a scholarship.

save – to prevent something or someone from being damaged, hurt, or lost

* They tried to save their park by asking politicians for help, but it was sold to a company that wants to build an office building there.

to ignore – to not pay attention to something or someone

* He ignored the “no parking” sign and parked his car in front of the building, even though he knew he would probably get a parking ticket.

to rule out – to eliminate; to stop considering something

* The doctors have ruled out cancer and heart trouble, but they still don't know what's causing his chest pains.

to have (someone's) word – to have a promise from someone

* We have Marty's word that he won't tell Shannon about the surprise party, but I don't think we should trust him.

in the right place, at the right time – able to take advantage of an opportunity

* Her acting career started because she was in the right place at the right time. The director needed a six-year-old girl with blond hair, and she was there with her mother, who worked at the theater. She was very lucky that day!

to fake – to pretend something; to behave in a way that makes people believe something that isn't true

* The little boy is faking a cold because he doesn't want to go to school today.

to pretend – to fake something; to behave in a way that makes people believe something that isn't true

* He was only pretending to be surprised by the news that they were going to get married. The truth is that he has known for months.

to dismiss – to stop thinking about something because one decides that it is no longer important

* Charlene dismissed her fear of heights and decided to climb the mountain.

to come out of nowhere – to suddenly appear without warning



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 12

* The rainstorm came out of nowhere, and we were completely unprepared, without jackets or umbrellas.

to get (someone) – to catch someone; to punish someone; to harm someone

* The police got him when he used a stolen credit card to pay for a hotel room.

on the right track – thinking correctly; working toward a solution

* The teacher gave us a difficult math problem. We haven't solved it yet, but we know we're on the right track.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 13

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 13. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, we learned that there were four people who may have killed Dean Maurie: Professor Marcelo, her husband, Clara Dunn, and Jennifer Brody. Someone tries to kill Derrick with a car as Derrick and Uncle Jeff leave the university.

In this episode, Uncle Jeff and Derrick return home. Aunt April has left a message on their answering machine, and she isn't happy. Ben also calls and asks Derrick for a favor. But will Derrick be able to help him? Let's get started.

Chapter 13

We finally got back home and Uncle Jeff decided not to call the police. First, we had no **proof** that it wasn't an accident. The police would probably say that it was just a **drunk driver**. And second, we didn't have any good information to help them find the car.

There were two messages on the answering machine. The first message was from Ben. He wanted me to call him. Maybe he had some time to get together for that celebration I had promised.

The second message was from Aunt April.

"My darlings," she said. "I read about the murder at California University in the paper today. I really hope you're not mixed up in it. Jeff, you're a **grown** man. You do what you want, but if anything happens to my baby, my Derrick, I'll never forgive you. **Do you hear me**, Jeff? I'm off to Paris for a week or so. I don't want to be reading about you two in the newspapers, do you hear me? Goodbye, my darlings. I'll see you when I get back."

I looked at Uncle Jeff and he had a **guilty** look on his face.

"She's right," he said. "I'm being a terrible uncle, **dragging you into** another case."

"You didn't drag me," I said. "You couldn't keep me out of it if you wanted to. I'm 19. I'm an adult. I can vote. I can make my own decisions." I was



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 13

getting angry. I wasn't Aunt April's "baby" and I was tired of being treated like a child.

"Still, if it weren't for me, you wouldn't have seen a dead body and almost been killed in one weekend," he said. He was getting ready to say more, but he must have seen the look on my face.

"Okay, okay," he said. "We won't argue about it. We'll both try to be more careful. We won't do anybody any good if we can't stay alive to try to solve this case."

We said goodnight and we went to bed. I wasn't angry with Uncle Jeff. In fact, he was right about everything he said. But I wasn't going to be **taken off the case**—not now.

The next morning, I returned Ben's call. He was **depressed**.

"You know my thesis?" he said. "I gave the official copy to the dean to sign. The university has to get that signed copy by Friday or I won't get my **diploma** this semester. If I don't graduate, I won't get that scholarship to Berkeley. My life will be ruined, over."

"Where is the thesis now?" I asked.

"It must still be in Dean Maurie's office," he said. "If I can get it, I can still have the acting dean, who is temporarily doing the dean's work, to sign it before Friday."

"Can't you tell that to the police?" I asked. "Maybe they'll find it and give it back to you."

"I tried," he said. "They said that nothing can be taken out of that office because it's evidence. I'm in big trouble." He **groaned**.

"Why are you telling me this?" I asked.

"Well, I know that your uncle is a friend of Clara Dunn's," he said. "I thought he could get her to talk to the police for me. Maybe she could **convince** them to let me have it."

"I don't know if that'll work," I said, "but I'll ask him."

"Thanks, Derrick. I **owe** you one."

I hung up the phone. I felt bad for Ben, but I had an idea how I could help him... and Jennifer.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 13

SUMMARY:

In this episode, Uncle Jeff and Derrick return home from the university to find a message from Aunt April. She warns Uncle Jeff not to get Derrick involved in anything dangerous. Uncle Jeff agrees that Derrick should be careful, but Derrick wants to keep working on the case. Derrick also gets a call from his friend, Ben, the graduate student in the psychology department. Ben says that Dean Maurie never gave him his thesis back, and that he needs it to graduate. Ben asks Derrick to help him find the thesis. Derrick agrees, but he may be getting himself into even more trouble trying to help an old friend.

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GLOSSARY

proof – something that shows that something is true beyond all doubt

* The hidden video camera gave the store owner proof that he was robbed by two teenagers.

drunk driver – a person who drives while he or she after drinking too much alcohol

* A drunk driver killed Manny's little sister years ago and now Manny never gets in a car after drinking alcohol.

grown – adult; grown-up; not a child

* I hadn't seen Belinda in more than ten years. I remembered her as a little girl, but now she's a grown woman.

Do you hear me? – Are you listening? Are you taking this seriously? Do you understand that this is very important?

* Do you hear me? I'm serious. You aren't allowed to have any parties in the house while we're gone this weekend.

guilty – feeling bad because one has done something that one shouldn't have done

* When Katrina gave Matthew a Christmas present, he felt guilty because he didn't have one for her.

to drag (someone) into (something) – to involve someone in something, usually when that person doesn't want to be involved or that person may be harmed

* Please don't drag Khalid into your new business deal. He doesn't have any extra money to invest.

to take (someone) off the case – to tell someone that he or she will no longer be working on a project (especially an investigation or a lawsuit)

* When they found out that the suspect was his cousin, they took him off the case.

to be depressed – to be sad, sometimes without an explanation

* I think Yasmine is depressed. She isn't going to class and she spends almost all her time in bed.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 13

diploma – the piece of paper that states that someone has received a school degree

* There are many diplomas hanging on the walls of the doctor's office showing where he went to school.

to groan – to make a low sound in the back of one's throat to show that one is frustrated, upset, or hurt

* He groaned loudly in pain when he broke his arm.

to convince – to make someone believe that something is true

* Even though it was sunny, they were convinced that it would rain that day, so they took an umbrella to go sightseeing.

to owe – to feel that one should do something for someone to repay that person for something that he or she has done; to feel the need to repay someone in return for something

* If Lydia hadn't helped me study for that test, I would have failed. I really owe her a lot.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 14

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 14. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, Uncle Jeff gets a phone call from Aunt April, warning him to keep Derrick safe from any danger. Derrick gets a call from his friend Ben, who wants him to help get his thesis back from Dean Maurie's office.

In this episode, Derrick tries to help Ben by going into the dean's office. When he returns home, another surprise is waiting for him, a surprise that could *kill* him and Uncle Jeff.

Chapter 14

It was Monday morning and I had class at 10:30 a.m. I wanted **to skip it**, but Uncle Jeff wouldn't let me. It was **just as well**. I had something important to do and I had to do it alone.

At noon, I went to the psychology department. I could see through the doorway that the secretary wasn't there. She was probably at lunch. That's what I had hoped.

I walked quickly and quietly down the hallway to the dean's office. I was nervous. My hands were sweating. I took Clara Dunn's keys out of my pocket. I had taken them from Uncle Jeff's room this morning before he woke up. I opened the door, **ducked under** the police tape, and closed the door behind me.

I was there to find Jennifer's photographs. I was convinced that she hadn't killed Dean Maurie and I wanted to help her. After the phone conversation with Ben that morning, I knew I had to do this to try to help both of them.

I went to the desk first. I had to step around the **outline** of Dean Maurie's body. I could still see the blood **stains** on the carpet. I tried not to look at them.

I opened each drawer as quietly as possible and searched through them. I went through the entire desk, but I didn't find anything. Next, I looked through the bookcases. I was looking for an envelope or anything that would hold pictures. Nothing. But then, suddenly, I saw something. There was a large, thick book behind one of the bookcases. I looked at the cover and knew that this was Ben's thesis. I **tucked** it under my arm and continued looking for the pictures.



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 14

Suddenly, I heard a noise. I looked at my watch. It was 12:53. The secretary would be back soon from her lunch hour. If I wanted to get out without being seen, I had to leave immediately. I had to leave without Jennifer's pictures. I had failed.

I **slipped out** of the office and locked the door again. As I had hoped, the secretary wasn't back yet and I walked out of the office without meeting anyone.

I headed home. I had to put the keys back into Uncle Jeff's room before he **missed** them.

When I walked through the front door of the house, I knew that I was too late. Uncle Jeff was sitting in a chair and looking as though he had been waiting for me. He had a hard look on his face.

"Give them to me," he said, quietly. I took the keys out of my pocket and handed them to him.

"What did you think you were doing?" he asked. I could tell that he was angry, but trying not to show it.

"I...I..." I started to explain, but then I stopped. All of sudden, I realized what I had done. How could I tell him? How could I tell him that I had wanted to be a hero: a hero to Ben and a hero to Jennifer? How could I tell him that that was the reason I had deceived him and **taken advantage of** his trust?

I looked at him, speechless. It was then that he noticed Ben's thesis under my arm.

"What's that?" he asked.

I didn't want to tell him. I didn't want to make things worse by telling him that I had taken evidence out of Dean Maurie's office. Even I knew that what I had done was a crime.

He took the thesis out of my hands. I was **miserable**. I was sweating. I didn't know how to answer his question.

He said in a quiet voice, "Go throw some water on your face. Then we'll sit down and talk." He turned and walked into his office.

I was happy for the chance to leave the room. I went into the bathroom and closed the door. I **splashed** some water on my face and looked at myself in the mirror. What I saw was a stupid, selfish kid. No wonder Aunt April treated me like I was 14 years old. I behaved like it.

I stayed in the bathroom for as long as I could. I wasn't looking forward to that talk with Uncle Jeff.



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 14

Suddenly, I heard a noise. It sounded like a crash, like glass breaking. As I came out of the bathroom, I also heard a loud thud, like something heavy falling to the ground.

I stepped out of the bathroom and walked toward my uncle's office. When I got there, the first thing I saw was a broken lamp lying on the floor. Then I saw him. It was Uncle Jeff lying on the floor. Blood was coming out of the side of his head, just like it had done with Alan Maurie. I couldn't believe my eyes.

My uncle was dead.

At that moment, I heard a noise behind me. Someone had been hiding behind the door and was trying **to make a run for it**.

I turned around and chased after him. I was angry, angrier than I had ever been before. I had to get him. I had to get my uncle's murderer.

He reached the kitchen and I was right behind him. He had a stocking mask over his face and that may be why he didn't see the leg of one of the kitchen chairs. He tripped and fell. I jumped on top of him. We both dropped to the ground.

I was trying to hold him, but he was doing a good job of fighting back. Finally, he pushed me off of him and hit me hard in the stomach. I couldn't breathe. The pain was so intense. I lost my hold on him and he got up quickly.

He ran to the kitchen door.

"Stop right there," I heard someone say. It sounded like Uncle Jeff. I turned my head as quickly as I could. He was standing there holding a gun. Blood was running down his face. He was hurt, but he was alive. He was alive!

The man stopped and stood near the door. Uncle Jeff walked up to him and unzipped his jacket. He pulled out a book.

"Why don't you take that mask off...Ben," my uncle said.

"Ben?!" I said.

The man pulled off his mask. There stood Ben, my friend.

SUMMARY:

In this episode, Derrick finds Ben's thesis in Dean Maurie's office, but when he comes home, he finds that Uncle Jeff is angry with him for going to the dean's office without telling him. After leaving Uncle Jeff alone, Derrick hears a strange sound. When he runs out to see what it is, he finds his Uncle Jeff on the floor, covered with blood. Derrick thinks that his uncle is dead, and runs to catch the killer. Luckily, Uncle Jeff isn't dead, and helps Derrick catch the person who tried



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 14

to kill him. That person is Ben, Derrick's friend. But why was he trying to kill Uncle Jeff, and did he kill Dean Maurie?

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GLOSSARY

to skip (something) – to not do something that was planned

* I'm really tired tonight. Can we skip the movie and stay at home instead?

just as well – a good thing; fine

* It was just as well that Kyle cancelled our date because I needed to stay late at work.

to duck under (something) – to bend at the knees and waist so that one can put one's head under something that is low to the ground

* The basketball player had to duck under the lamp that was hanging from the ceiling.

outline – tracing; a line that is drawn around the edge of something, showing its shape but not showing any details

* Mitch made an outline of his daughter's hand so that we would always remember how small she used to be.

stain – a dirty mark on something, such as from blood, grass, or dirt

* After a soccer game, Jacinda's clothes are covered in grass stains.

to tuck – to hold something tightly in a small space

* His hands were full, so when the mail carrier handed him a letter, he tucked it under his chin.

to slip out – to leave quietly without anyone noticing

* Becky slipped out a half-hour ago. I wonder why she left the party without saying goodbye.

to miss (something) – to notice that something is gone or not there anymore

* Can I borrow your car? I'll have it back in twenty minutes and you won't even miss it.

to take advantage of (something) – to make use of an opportunity

* They took advantage of the free buffet and ate as much as they could.

miserable – very unhappy or uncomfortable

* She has a horrible cold and she feels miserable.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

English Through Stories: Deadly Letters – Chapter 14

to splash – to make something (or someone) wet by throwing water or another liquid at it

* On a hot summer day, the children like to splash each other with water in the swimming pool.

to make a run for it – to escape; to leave quickly without being caught

* The boys tried to make a run for it after stealing candies from the store, but the security guard caught them before they could get out of the door.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 15

STORY AND TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents Deadly Letters by Sara Gatchitie, Episode 15. Hello, I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

PREVIEW:

In the previous episode, Derrick returns to Dean Maurie's office and finds Ben's master's thesis, but when he returns home, someone tries to kill his Uncle Jeff. Fortunately, Uncle Jeff is not dead, but Derrick is surprised to learn that the person who tried to kill his uncle was his friend, Ben.

In this fifteenth and final episode, we learn why Ben tried to kill Uncle Jeff, and who Dean Maurie's real killer was. Let's begin.

Chapter 15

"I don't understand it," Clara Dunn said. "Why did Ben kill Alan Maurie?"

We were at Clara Dunn's house the next day. The police had come to the house and **arrested** Ben. We went to see Professor Dunn to let her know that the murderer had been caught and that the police no longer suspected her.

Uncle Jeff explained, "Ben is a brilliant student, but he made a big mistake. He **plagiarized** his thesis. He wanted the scholarship to Berkeley very badly, so badly that he stole another student's work and called it his own. He took material from an old thesis, one written by a student who had graduated years ago. As soon as I looked at Ben's thesis, I knew what he had done."

"How did you know?" Professor Dunn asked.

"The student whose work he stole was one of my former students," he said. "I recognized the research right away. And, unfortunately, so did Dean Maurie. The dean threatened to expose Ben, to tell the university that he had **cheated**. Maybe he tried to blackmail Ben, too. If the dean had told the university about his cheating, that would have been the end of his scholarship. It also would have been the end of his **career**."

"I don't think he actually meant to kill the dean," he continued, "but he was very angry and he hit the dean with the statue. He must have **panicked** and ran. If he hadn't, he might have found his thesis in Dean Maurie's office and we might never have found out that he was the murderer."



English Through Stories:
Deadly Letters – Chapter 15

“I thought he was my friend, but **he used me**,” I said. “He used me to get the thesis back. He must have followed me, seen that I had his thesis, and followed me back home. He was desperate. He didn’t care whom he hurt to get it back. I don’t think he meant to kill you, Uncle Jeff, but I also don’t think he cared one way or another.”

“Yes, I think you’re right, Derrick,” he said. “And I don’t think Ben was trying to kill us with his car, either. Yes, I think that was Ben in the car that tried to run us down, but he was only trying **to scare us off**. Then he must have realized that he could also use Derrick to get his thesis back. That’s why he called you the next morning.”

“There’s one thing I still don’t understand,” Professor Dunn said. “Who wrote the threatening letters to Alan Maurie?”

“I think Diana Marcelo did,” Uncle Jeff said. “I think she was trying to scare Alan Maurie so that he would stop bothering her. Those letters had nothing to do with him getting killed.”

“One thing still **puzzles me**,” Uncle Jeff said to Professor Dunn. “You hated Alan Maurie. Why did you come to me in the beginning and ask me to find out who was sending the letters? I don’t think you were seriously worried about his safety.”

“I’m ashamed to say,” she said, “but I suspected that Alan Maurie was up to some **shady** things, maybe even some illegal things. But I didn’t exactly know what. I was hoping that your investigation would find out something that would get him into trouble, something that would make him lose his job. Please don’t be angry with me, Jeff. I had so much anger in me that I didn’t stop to think that I was using you by asking for your help.”

“I’m just glad it’s over,” he said. “What now?”

“This whole thing has made me think,” she said. “I just want to keep teaching and doing research. I had forgotten what really made me happy. It’s not power or the dean’s job but just being a professor.”

“Alan Maurie hurt a lot of people,” my uncle said. “I can’t say I’m glad he’s dead, but a lot of people will be happier now that he is.”

A week later, I was returning home from school when I saw Jennifer sitting outside my front door.

“Hi,” she said.



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“Hi,” I said. I was really surprised to see her. After everything that had happened, I honestly didn’t think I’d see her again.

I opened the front door and showed her into the living room.

“I wanted to come by to thank you and your uncle for finding the murderer,” she said. “Now that the case is closed, the police have returned the photographs to me. They were in Dean Maurie’s office and they didn’t see any reason why I shouldn’t have them back.”

“That’s great!” I said, and I meant it. I was really glad that she got her pictures back. And I was even more glad that she didn’t have to worry about someone like Alan Maurie.

“I also came by because **I was wondering....**” she began to say. She didn’t get a chance to finish. There was a knock on the door.

I opened the door. It was Sydney, my best friend.

“I wanted to see if you wanted to....” she began to say as she walked into the house. She stopped when she saw Jennifer. She stared at her and Jennifer stared back.

“Um...Jennifer Brody, this is Sydney Morita. Sydney, this is Jennifer,” I said.

“It’s nice to meet you,” Jennifer said.

“You, too,” Sandy said, coldly.

Jennifer got up as if to go. “I’m sorry. I should be leaving.”

“No, don’t go,” I said. I looked over at Sydney and she **gave me a dirty look**. I didn’t understand it. They didn’t even know each other, but they were behaving as if they didn’t like each other at all.

Just then, Uncle Jeff walked in the door. He must have sensed the **tense feeling in the air**.

“I hope I’m not interrupting anything,” he said, walking toward his office. He looked like he was trying to get out of the room as fast as he could.

I walked over quickly and grabbed his arm so he couldn’t leave. I didn’t want to be in the room alone with Sydney and Jennifer.

I didn’t think I could ever be in a more uncomfortable situation. But I was wrong.

Just then, there was another knock on the door. I walked over quickly to open it. It was Aunt April.

“I just got back from Paris last night,” she said. “What have you darlings been doing while I was gone?”



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Uncle Jeff and I looked at each other. This was going to be a very, very long afternoon.

SUMMARY:

In this final episode, we learn the truth about who killed Dean Maurie. The killer was Derrick's friend, Ben. Ben had cheated on his thesis, and Dean Maurie probably tried to blackmail him. That's why Ben killed him, because he didn't want the dean to ruin his career. Clara Dunn, Uncle Jeff's friend, is innocent, and wants to go back to being a regular professor at the university.

But what about the letters? Uncle Jeff thinks that Professor Marcelo wrote them, probably just to try to scare Dean Maurie. The dean was a bad man, and although he's now dead, most people probably won't miss him.

We also learn that police found the photographs of Jennifer using drugs, but they returned them to her, and now she is happy. Jennifer comes over to Derrick's house wanting to talk to him, clearly because she likes Derrick. But as soon as Derrick gets home and begins talking to Jennifer, his old friend Sydney arrives. Sydney is also romantically interested in Derrick, and now Derrick is in the difficult situation of having two girls who like him standing right next to each other. As the episode ends, Aunt April comes into the house and wants to know what Uncle Jeff and Derrick have been doing these past few weeks. Derrick ends by saying, "This was going to be a very, very long afternoon," meaning that both he and Uncle Jeff had a lot of things to explain to Jennifer, Sydney, and Aunt April.

That concludes our 15-episode murder mystery novel, *Deadly Letters* by Sara Gatchitie. We hoped you enjoyed this series. To find more great podcasts and audio files like this, go to our website at www.ESLPod.com.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks again for listening.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our website at ESLPod.com. This course was produced by Dr. Jeff McQuillan and Dr. Lucy Tse, Copyright 2006.



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GLOSSARY

to arrest (someone) – to take a person to a police station because he or she is a suspect for a crime

* The drug dealer was arrested for selling drugs to children.

to plagiarize – to pretend that someone else's writing is one's own

* Tom's essay is very good, but normally he isn't a good writer. I wonder if he plagiarized it.

to cheat – to act dishonestly, usually to win a game or to pass a test

* The student cheated on the exam by writing the answers on his hand.

career – the jobs that someone has in one field, usually with opportunities to advance (get better and better jobs)

* She wants to have a career in international business, so she's studying business and two foreign languages.

to panic – to suddenly feel frightened so that one loses control of one's thoughts and actions

* When she saw the thief, she panicked and couldn't move. A few minutes later, she calmed down and was able to call the police.

to use someone – to take advantage of someone; to deal with someone dishonestly for one's own benefit

* He said that he loved her, but really he was just using her. Her father is a manager, and he thought that he would get a promotion by dating his daughter.

to scare (someone) off – to frighten someone so that he or she goes away

* There were bears in the campground, but we scared them off by making loud noises.

to puzzle – to confuse; to make one wonder about something

* They were puzzled when Laura said she didn't want to go the beach with them. Usually it was one of her favorite activities.

shady – seeming to be illegal, dishonest, or wrong

* Even though the company offered her a great position and a lot of money, she decided not to accept the job because she thought their business was shady.



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I was wondering... – a polite expression for asking someone something, such as for their opinion or to go somewhere

* I was wondering if you'd like to go to the movies with me on Friday night.

to give (someone) a dirty look – to scowl; to look at someone and make one's eyes smaller to show anger

* Don't give me a dirty look! It's not my fault that the concert was cancelled.

a tense feeling in the air – a general feeling of tension and discomfort, such as when people in a room are arguing

* When they announced that they were getting married, there was a tense feeling in the air, and they instantly knew that their parents were not happy about it.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.