

Ellie's Diary 1
The Future Tense

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You know what the great thing about teaching is? You meet so many interesting people. Just last week I met a lady called Lucretia. She's really old and wears a long black dress and a pointed black hat. And she lives in a cave.

A cave can get quite cold, especially in the evening, so Lucretia keeps a fire burning all the time. The fire is also useful for heating up a big metal pot called a cauldron.

When I arrived Lucretia was chopping up frogs and toads and tossing them into the cauldron. At first she didn't notice me. Then I trod on the cat. I felt awful. The poor thing only has one eye and one of its legs is missing.

Anyway, the cat screeched and Lucretia looked up and saw me. She was so embarrassed. She tried to hide the blood-stained knife but I told her, "don't worry. I'm an English teacher. I'm not easily shocked."

Lucretia took a small, glass ball from her pocket. "You are Ellie, and you are here to teach me the future tense," she said. "Yes," I said, "you sent me an email."

Lucretia stared into her crystal ball, "I see a tall man with a long throat. He picks up a fish. The fish is alive. It's struggling, fighting. The man opens his mouth. He drops the fish into his mouth and swallows it whole." Lucretia paused and then said, "You must not teach this man English."

I was stunned. Shocked. Lucretia was talking about my student Rafael. How did she know he swallowed fish for a living? And why would she tell me not to teach him English?

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Worksheet

Questions:

1. Ellie is an English teacher and Lucretia is a ... ?
2. How did Lucretia know Ellie had arrived?
3. Why do you think Lucretia was chopping up toads and frogs?
4. Why was Lucretia embarrassed?
5. What is a crystal ball?
6. When Lucretia looks into the crystal ball she sees a man swallowing fish. What does "swallows it whole" mean?
7. Do you think Lucretia has a computer in her cave?

Explain the meaning of the following phrasal verbs:

- look up
- chop up
- pick up

Discussion:

- Do you believe it's possible to foretell the future?