

The Hat

by John Escott

(Adapted book. Starter level)

Bernardo lives in Rome. He likes hats. One day he is at a street market near the Colosseum. Suddenly, he stops.

"I like that hat!" he says.

Bernardo buys the hat.

"I can put it in a bag for you," the woman says.

"No, it's OK," Bernardo says. "I can wear it. Put my old hat in the bag, please."

Bernardo arrives home.

"Hello, Natalie," he says to his wife. "Do you like my new hat?"

Natalie looks at him. She thinks, "No!" But she says, "Why do you want another hat, Bernardo? You have twenty!"

"I like hats," Bernardo says. "And I like this hat."

Natalie sees some people in the street. "They're laughing at Bernardo's hat," she thinks. "What can I do with it?"

Two days later, Natalie takes the hat to a store. The store buys and sells clothes. The man in the store buys Bernardo's hat.

That afternoon, Bernardo looks for his hat.

"I can't find my hat, Natalie," he says.

He looks in every room of the house.

"I can buy you a new hat, Bernardo," Natalie says. She smiles. "Let's go to the store!"

Three days later, Anna buys the hat.

Anna is a student from the United States. She is in Rome on vacation.

"I love this hat!" she thinks. She smiles. "I can get some flowers for it."

A week later, Anna gets an airplane home.

She lives in California, near the ocean.

That weekend, she goes down to the harbor. She goes to a cafe for a drink.

Mitch is sitting in the cafe, too. He sees Anna's hat.

"Who's under that hat?" Mitch thinks.

Anna looks up and sees him.

"Hi," Mitch says. "I love your hat."

"Thank you," Anna says. She smiles.

"I'm Mitch," Mitch says.

"I'm Anna," Anna says. She thinks, "I like him. Maybe this is a lucky hat!"

Mitch moves to Anna's table. They talk about books and movies.

Anna tells Mitch about Rome.

"It's a good place for hats!" she says.

Mitch laughs. "A beautiful hat for a beautiful girl," he says.

"Thank you," she says.

"Come to the movies with me tomorrow, Anna," Mitch says.

"OK," Anna says. "Why not?"

Suddenly, the wind takes Anna's hat away.

"My hat!" Anna says.

The wind blows the hat out across the water.

"It's OK," Mitch says. "Can I buy you a new hat? Do you know a store near here?"

"Yes, I do," Anna says. "Thank you."

She smiles at Mitch.

It is early morning on a beach near the cafe.

Cal sleeps on the beach with Sunny, his dog. Cal has no money and no home. Every day, he plays his guitar on the street.

"Look, Sunny," he says. "A hat. Go and get it!"

Cal plays his guitar on the street that morning.

Many people stop and listen. They put money in the hat.

"Look at this money, Sunny!" Cal says. "This is a lucky hat! We can eat at the cafe today. And tomorrow!"

That night, a man comes to the beach. His name is Rod. He sees Cal and Sunny.

He sees the hat, too, and smiles.

"That's a good hat," he thinks.

He walks quietly across the beach. He takes the hat, then he walks away quickly.

In the morning, Cal says to Sunny, "Where's my lucky hat?"

Later that night, Rod goes into town.

He goes to a store. He has a gun.

"What do you want?" the woman in the store asks.

"Give me the money!" Rod says. "Quickly!"

"OK, OK," the woman says.

Rod takes the money and runs from the store.

The woman calls the police. "He's tall and thin," she says. "And he's wearing a green and yellow hat."

Later, two policemen see Rod on the street.

"He's wearing a green and yellow hat!" one policeman says.

"And he's tall and thin!" his friend says. "It's him!"

Suddenly, Rod sees them. He runs.

"It's this hat," he thinks. "It isn't a lucky hat!"

He throws away the hat.

The hat falls into a taxi. A young woman, Gina, is in the taxi. She laughs. "That's lucky!" she thinks. "I can wear this hat." The taxi arrives at Los Angeles airport.

"Are you going on vacation?" the taxi driver asks Gina.

"No, I'm going home to Italy," Gina answers.

A day later, Gina is in Rome.

"It's a beautiful city," she thinks. "And it's my city."

A man stops and looks at her hat. Gina sees him.

"Do you like hats?" Gina asks him.

"I love hats!" Bernardo says.

- THE END -

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