

# The Last Photograph

*A Fleydo English School Story*

A2 Level | Teens (11–16) | Reading | Story | 14 Pages

Mia is a curious fourteen-year-old who loves old things. One Saturday, she finds a mysterious photograph inside a second-hand book. The photo shows a teenage girl standing next to a hidden mural that nobody in town remembers. Mia follows a trail of clues through a vintage record shop, an abandoned greenhouse, and a secret rooftop. Along the way she meets Leo, a street artist, and together they uncover a beautiful forgotten story about art, friendship, and being remembered.

## Learning Objectives

- Read and understand an A2-level mystery story (14 pages)
- Learn 15 new vocabulary words in context
- Practise vocabulary with matching and fill-in-the-blank exercises
- Test reading comprehension with 10 multiple-choice questions
- Discuss themes: curiosity, friendship, art, and discovery

# 1 Read the Story

## Chapter 1: The Bookshop Find

*Mia discovers something unexpected inside an old book*

Mia loved old things. While her friends spent their Saturdays at the shopping centre, Mia spent hers at "Pages & Dust," a tiny second-hand bookshop on Bridge Street. She was fourteen, with dark curly hair and paint-stained fingers from her art classes. She was always looking for something interesting — an old map, a strange drawing, a book with a story nobody remembered.

The shop owner, Mr Karim, was a kind old man with round glasses and a long grey beard. He knew Mia well. "The new box arrived this morning," he said with a smile. "From a house clearance. Nobody has looked through it yet. Do you want to be first?"

"Yes, please!" Mia said. She put her bag down and started carefully taking books out of the dusty cardboard box. There were travel guides from the 1990s, old cookbooks, and novels with yellow pages.

Then she found something. Inside a book about city architecture, a photograph fell out and landed on the floor. Mia picked it up. It was old and **faded**, with soft edges. In the picture, a teenage girl — maybe fifteen or sixteen — stood next to a large, colourful **mural** on a brick wall. The girl was smiling and holding a paintbrush.

Mia turned the photograph over. On the back, someone had written in pencil: "*For anyone who finds this — follow the colours. Start where the music sleeps. — R.*"

Mia felt a shiver run down her back. This was a **clue**. Someone wanted this photograph to be found.

## Chapter 2: The First Clue

*A message on the back of the photograph*

Mia sat on the floor of the bookshop and studied the photograph carefully. The mural behind the girl was beautiful — bright blues, reds, and yellows, with shapes that looked like birds flying over a city. The style was bold and confident. Whoever painted it was very talented.

But Mia did not **recognise** the wall. She knew her city well — every street, every alley — but she had never seen this mural before. Where was it? And who was "R"?

"Mr Karim, do you know where this is?" Mia showed him the photograph.

Mr Karim looked at it for a long time. "I don't know the wall," he said slowly. "But the handwriting on the back... I think I've seen it before. In another book, maybe. Years ago." He shook his head. "I can't remember. I'm sorry."

Mia read the message again: "*Follow the colours. Start where the music sleeps.*"

"Where the music sleeps," Mia repeated to herself. Music doesn't sleep. But if music "sleeps," maybe it means a place where music used to be, but isn't anymore.

Then it hit her. Morley's! The old **vintage** record shop on Park Lane. It closed two years ago. The sign was still there, but the shop was empty. Music used to live there. Now it "slept."

"I think I know where to go," Mia said.

Mia thanked Mr Karim and walked quickly to Park Lane. She was **curious** and excited. Her heart was beating fast.

Park Lane was a quiet street with old brick buildings, a bakery, and a launderette. At the end of the street stood Morley's. The windows were dark and dusty. The old sign — "MORLEY'S MUSIC — Vinyl & CDs Since 1985" — still hung above the door.

Mia walked around the building, looking carefully. On the side wall, behind a large green rubbish bin, she saw something. A small arrow, painted in bright blue, pointing downwards. Beneath the arrow, behind a loose brick, there was a rolled-up piece of paper.

Mia unrolled it with shaking hands. It was another message: "*Good — you found it! Now go where glass grows but flowers don't need water. Look for the blue door. — R.*"

Another clue. Another riddle. "Glass grows but flowers don't need water," she whispered. A greenhouse! And if the flowers don't need water, the greenhouse must be **abandoned**. There was only one old greenhouse she knew of — in Whitmore Park, behind the lake.

### Chapter 3: The Record Shop

*Mia investigates and finds unexpected help*

Before going to the greenhouse, Mia wanted to **investigate** Morley's a little more. She walked back to the front and looked through the dusty window. Inside, she could see empty shelves and old music posters still on the walls.

"Looking for something?" a voice said behind her.

Mia turned around. A boy about her age was sitting on the pavement across the street. He had a large sketchbook on his knees and pencils sticking out of his jacket pockets. His hands were covered in coloured chalk dust.

"I'm Leo," the boy said. "I draw around here. I noticed you looking at the side wall."

Mia hesitated. Should she tell a stranger about the photograph? But Leo looked friendly, and he was clearly an artist — like her.

"I found this in a bookshop," Mia said, showing him the photograph. "Someone left clues. I'm trying to find out who 'R' is, and where this mural is."

Leo took the photograph and studied the mural carefully. His eyes went wide. "I know this style," he said. "These shapes, the way the birds are painted... I've seen **graffiti** like this around the old parts of town. Small pieces, half-**hidden**. Whoever painted this was really good."

### Chapter 4: The Street Artist

*Leo shares what he knows about the mystery artist*

"Do you know who it was?" Mia asked.

"No. But I've photographed some of their work. There's one piece under the railway bridge on Elm Road, and another one inside the old bus station. Always birds. Always flying over the city." Leo looked excited.

"I always wondered who the artist was. Nobody seems to know. It's like they just **vanished**."

Mia showed Leo the message and the note from behind the brick. "I think the next clue is at the old greenhouse in Whitmore Park. Do you want to come?"

Leo grinned. "Are you serious? Of course I want to come. This is like a real-life treasure hunt!"

They walked together through the city. But Mia and Leo were not interested in the shops or the people. They were thinking about "R" — the **mysterious** artist who had left a trail of clues across the city.

"Why would someone hide clues like this?" Leo asked as they crossed the bridge towards the park.

"Maybe they wanted someone to find their story," Mia said. "Maybe they didn't want to be forgotten."

## Chapter 5: The Abandoned Greenhouse

*More secrets come to light*

They reached the lake and walked to the far side of the park. Behind a wall of tall bushes stood the old greenhouse. The glass panels were dirty and cracked. Weeds grew through the broken floor. The metal frame was orange with rust.

"There!" Mia pointed. On the side of the greenhouse, almost covered by ivy, was a blue door. They pushed it open with a loud creak.

Inside, the greenhouse was like a forgotten world. Old plant pots lay on their sides. Sunlight came through the glass roof in dusty beams. And on the back wall — a mural. It showed a flock of birds rising from a garden, their wings made of flowers and leaves. The colours were still bright.

Mia found a small tin box on the table. Inside was another note and a key. The note said: "*Almost there. The last place is where the whole city becomes small. Go up. The key opens the green gate. Find my wall. — R.*"

"Where the whole city becomes small," Mia read aloud. "That means somewhere high."

"The **rooftop!**" Leo said. "The old Wellington Building on Market Street has a rooftop terrace. People used to go there for the view, but it's been locked for years. I bet this key opens the gate to the roof!"

Before leaving, Mia noticed a tiny signature in the bottom corner of the mural — a small bird inside a circle. "Every artist has a signature," she said. "This is R's."

## Chapter 6: The Rooftop

*The photograph's location is finally revealed*

They arrived at the Wellington Building. Next to the café entrance, there was a narrow door with a sign: "ROOF ACCESS — PRIVATE." And on the door, a green metal gate with a padlock. Mia took out the key. It turned.

They climbed five floors up a narrow staircase. Mia pushed the door open at the top, and bright sunlight hit her face.

The view was amazing. The whole city spread out below them. And there, covering the entire back wall of the rooftop, was the mural from the photograph. The same birds, the same colours. But it was even more **incredible** in real life. The birds seemed to fly off the wall and into the sky.

Mia held the old photograph next to the wall. A perfect match. In the bottom right corner, she found the bird-in-a-circle symbol again. And next to it, a small metal plate: *"Rosa Morley. 1977–2015. Artist, dreamer, friend. She painted the world she wanted to see."*

"Rosa Morley," Mia said softly. "R is Rosa. And Morley... like Morley's Music Shop? Maybe her family owned it."

Everything made sense now. Rosa was an artist who had painted **hidden** murals all over the city. She had left a trail of clues inside a book, hoping that one day someone **curious** would find the photograph and **discover** her secret world.

## Chapter 7: The Story Behind the Photo

*The mystery is finally solved*

The next week, Mia and Leo went back to Mr Karim's bookshop. They told him everything. Mr Karim listened carefully, and when they finished, his eyes were wet.

"Rosa Morley," he said. "I remember her now. She came to this shop as a teenager, just like you. She bought art books. She was quiet and curious, always drawing in a sketchbook. I had no idea she had become such an artist."

"She left the photograph in the book on purpose," Mia said. "She wanted someone to find it."

"And you did," Mr Karim said, smiling.

Mia and Leo **discovered** something important that summer. They learned that art can connect people across time. Rosa was gone, but her paintings were still there. And now, someone knew her story.

Together, Mia and Leo photographed every mural, every bird, every hidden symbol. They created a map and shared it online. People in the city started visiting the murals. Rosa Morley was no longer forgotten.

*"Follow the colours. Every wall has a story. You just have to look."*

— Rosa Morley's trail

## 2 Key Vocabulary

These words from the story will help you improve your English.

Word	Type	Definition	Example
curious	adj	wanting very much to know or learn about something	Mia was a curious girl who loved mysteries.
mysterious	adj	strange and difficult to explain or understand	The photograph had a mysterious message on the back.
investigate	verb	try to find out the truth about something	Mia decided to investigate the old record shop.
clue	noun	a piece of information that helps solve a mystery	The message was the first clue in the trail.
faded	adj	lost colour or brightness over time	The old photograph was faded and soft around the edges.
mural	noun	a large painting done directly on a wall	The mural showed birds flying over a city.
abandoned	adj	left empty, no longer used or cared for	The greenhouse had been abandoned for many years.
recognise	verb	know something because you have seen it before	Leo recognised the painting style immediately.
vintage	adj	from an earlier time, often old and valuable	The vintage record shop sold music from the 1970s.
hidden	adj	not easy to see or find; kept secret	Rosa's art was hidden in unexpected places around the city.
rooftop	noun	the outside surface on top of a building	They found the mural on the rooftop of the old building.
discovered	verb	found something for the first time	Mia discovered the photograph inside an old book.
graffiti	noun	words or pictures drawn on walls in public places	Leo photographed graffiti and street art around the city.
vanished	verb	disappeared suddenly and completely	The artist had vanished and nobody knew who she was.
incredible	adj	extremely good or amazing; hard to believe	The rooftop mural was incredible and full of colour.

### 3 Fill in the Blanks

Choose the correct word to complete each sentence.

1. Mia was very \_\_\_\_\_ — she always wanted to learn new things and explore.
2. The old photograph was \_\_\_\_\_ and the colours were no longer bright.
3. There was a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ painted on the brick wall of the building.
4. Mia found a \_\_\_\_\_ written on the back of the photograph.
5. The greenhouse was \_\_\_\_\_ — nobody had visited it for years.
6. Leo did not \_\_\_\_\_ the wall, but he knew the painting style.
7. The record shop sold \_\_\_\_\_ records from the 1960s and 1970s.
8. Rosa's art was \_\_\_\_\_ behind walls and inside old buildings.
9. From the \_\_\_\_\_, Mia could see the whole city below.
10. The mural on the rooftop was \_\_\_\_\_ — the most beautiful thing Mia had ever seen.

#### Answer Key:

1. **curious**
2. **faded**
3. **mural**
4. **clue**
5. **abandoned**
6. **recognise**
7. **vintage**
8. **hidden**
9. **rooftop**
10. **incredible**

## 4 Comprehension Quiz

Choose the correct answer for each question.

### Question 1. Where did Mia find the photograph?

- A. In her school bag
- B. Inside an old book at a second-hand bookshop
- C. On the street
- D. In a museum

### Question 2. What was on the back of the photograph?

- A. A phone number
- B. A date and address
- C. A message with a clue from "R"
- D. Nothing

### Question 3. What did "where the music sleeps" mean?

- A. A concert hall
- B. A closed record shop
- C. A music school
- D. A church

### Question 4. Who is Leo?

- A. Mia's brother
- B. A boy who draws and photographs street art
- C. A shop owner
- D. A police officer

### Question 5. What did Leo recognise about the mural in the photo?

- A. The colours
- B. The painting style — he had seen similar work around the city
- C. The wall
- D. The girl in the photo

### Question 6. Where was the second clue hidden?

- A. In the bookshop
- B. Behind a loose brick at the old record shop
- C. Under a bridge
- D. At school

### Question 7. What did Mia and Leo find inside the greenhouse?

- A. An old bicycle
- B. A mural, a tin box with a note and a key
- C. Nothing important
- D. A lost cat

### Question 8. What was on the rooftop of the Wellington Building?

- A. A garden
- B. A café
- C. The large mural from the photograph
- D. A swimming pool

### Question 9. Who was "R"?

- A. Mia's grandmother
- B. Rosa Morley, a street artist

- C. A famous painter
- D. A teacher

**Question 10. What is the main message of the story?**

- A. Old buildings should be knocked down
- B. Art connects people and stories deserve to be found
- C. Teenagers should not explore alone
- D. Second-hand bookshops are boring

## 5 Quiz Answer Key

Q	Correct Answer
1	B. Inside an old book at a second-hand bookshop
2	C. A message with a clue from "R"
3	B. A closed record shop
4	B. A boy who draws and photographs street art
5	B. The painting style — he had seen similar work around the city
6	B. Behind a loose brick at the old record shop
7	B. A mural, a tin box with a note and a key
8	C. The large mural from the photograph
9	B. Rosa Morley, a street artist
10	B. Art connects people and stories deserve to be found