

Silvana Sardi**The Boy with the Red Balloon**

It's the summer holidays and Lizzie is excited about going to the beach with her friends. But her parents have other plans for her and she has to spend the summer in the countryside with a woman she doesn't even know. Lizzie is very angry and sad but then she meets a strange boy called Jack. Who's this mysterious boy and how does he change Lizzie?

In this reader you'll find:

- Focus on Blackpool and Strange Stories
- Glossary of difficult words
- Comprehension and grammar activities including A2 Key style exercises and 21st century skills activities
- Final test

Tags

Friendship | Family | Emotions | Mystery

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STAGE 1	600 headwords	Elementary	A1	Movers
● STAGE 2	800 headwords	Pre-intermediate	A2	Flyers/Key
STAGE 3	1000 headwords	Intermediate	B1	Preliminary

Original

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ISBN 978-88-536-3204-3



9 788853 632043

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A2

Silvana Sardi

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Stage 2 A2

Teen  Readers

Original

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THE BOY

WITH THE

RED BALLOON



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Book brief

- 1** Set in modern times, it tells the story of Lizzie's very different summer in the countryside of Yorkshire, England.
- 2** Lizzie, almost 15 years old, is furious when she finds out she can't spend the summer with her friends in Blackpool.
- 3** Lizzie's first meeting with Hannah confirms all Lizzie's fears that this is going to be the worst summer of her life.
- 4** Then Lizzie meets Jack, a strange boy with a red balloon and things start to change.
- 5** Main themes include growing up, friendship, love and mystery.

Silvana Sardi

The Boy with the Red Balloon

Illustrated by

Maria Girón

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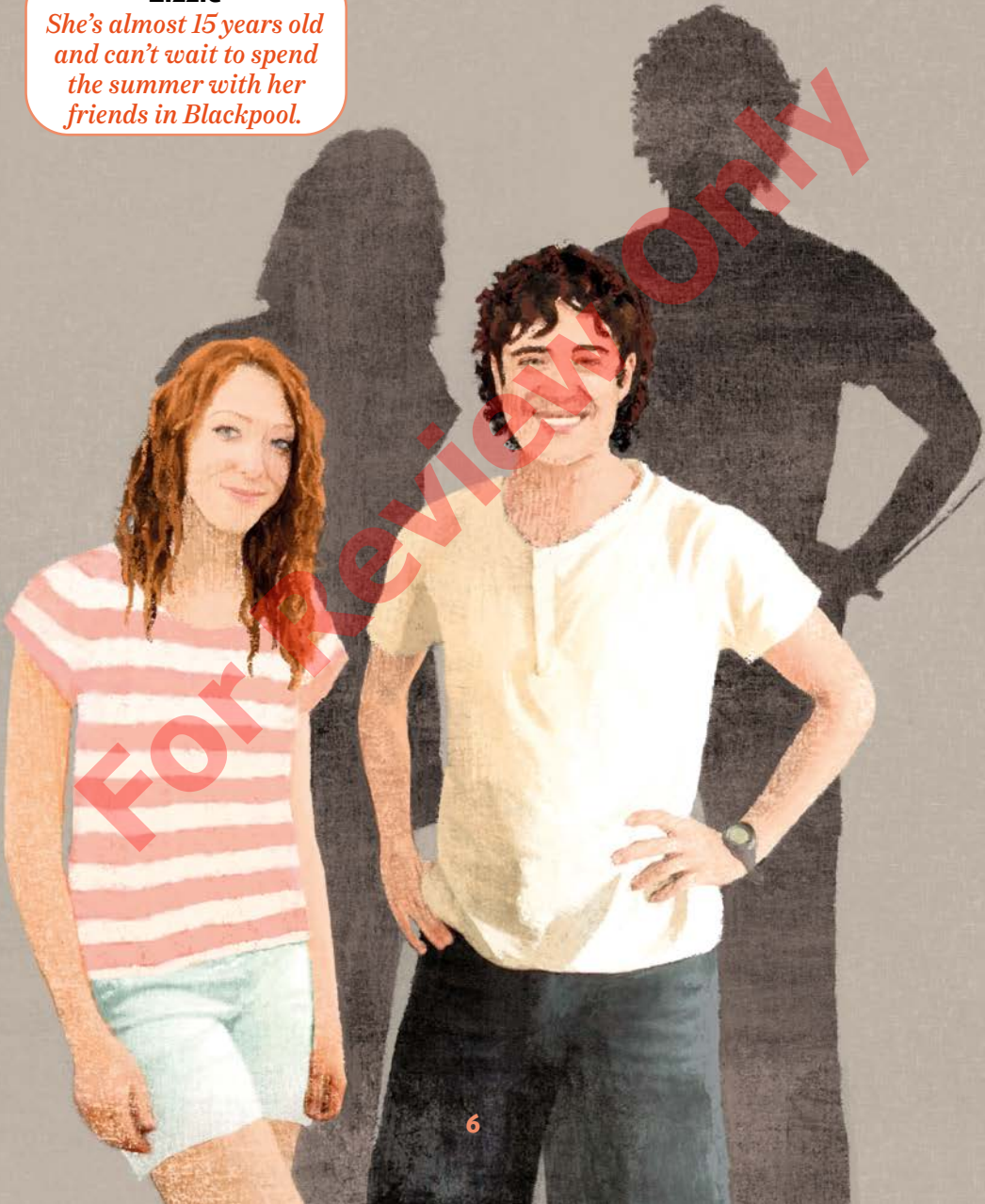
Main Characters

Lizzie

She's almost 15 years old and can't wait to spend the summer with her friends in Blackpool.

Jack

The boy with the red balloon.





Hannah

She likes living in the countryside by herself and isn't very friendly.

Reading A2 Key

- 1 Complete the text about the book with one word in each space.

This story is about a girl called Lizzie who comes from Blackpool, a town near the sea in northwest England. Lizzie is happy (1) _____ the summer holidays have arrived and she can go to the beach and have fun (2) _____ her friends. She doesn't know that this summer (3) _____ be different. She has to go and stay with (4) _____ mum's friend in the Yorkshire countryside, far from everyone and everything she knows. Lizzie is (5) _____ angry with her parents because she's going to miss all the summer fun. Then she meets a strange boy with a red balloon and (6) _____ countryside suddenly becomes more interesting.

Speaking and Writing

21st
Century
Skills

- 2 At the start of the story, Lizzie is excited because school has just finished for the summer.

Discuss these questions with a partner and write your answers.

- 1 When does your school finish for the summer holidays?
- 2 How long is the summer break from school where you live?
- 3 Do you usually see your classmates during the summer holidays? Why? / Why not?
- 4 What do you usually do during the summer break?
- 5 Do you prefer going to the mountains or the beach when you go on holiday with your family?
- 6 Which famous city would you like to visit?



Listening A2 Key

-  2  3 Listen to the start of Chapter 1 and choose the correct answer (A, B or C).

Lizzie and her friends

A ☐ ran to the beach.

B ☐ ran to school.

C ☒ ran out of the classroom.

- 1 It was the start of the

A ☐ summer holidays.

B ☐ Easter holidays.

C ☐ Christmas holidays.

- 2 Lizzie is

A ☐ the same age as Greg.

B ☐ two years older than Greg.

C ☐ two years younger than Greg.

- 3 Lizzie has

A ☐ long, red hair.

B ☐ short, fair hair.

C ☐ long, dark hair.

- 4 Lizzie went home

A ☐ by car.

B ☐ on foot.

C ☐ by bus.

- 5 It took Lizzie

A ☐ twelve minutes to get home.

B ☐ two minutes to get home.

C ☐ twenty minutes to get home.

- 6 That day it was

A ☐ cloudy.

B ☐ quite hot.

C ☐ quite cold.

- 7 Lizzie won't be at school in

A ☐ August.

B ☐ September.

C ☐ June.

A Different Summer

- 2 DRRRING! The school bell rang. ‘Hooray!’ Lizzie and her friends ran out of the classroom shouting and laughing. It was the last day of school! Summer was here! It was time for the beach! Time for fun!

Lizzie and her friends are all happy that school has finished for the summer holidays. Lizzie really likes Greg, a boy at school, and she hopes they can maybe go for a ride on their bikes together during the summer holidays.

‘Bye Lizzie! See you later!’

Lizzie turned when she heard her name. It was Greg! Greg was seventeen, two years older than she was. She really liked him. He was tall, with short, fair hair and brown eyes. He was really cool. All the girls liked him.

‘Hi, I mean, bye Greg!’ she said.

Her heart went boom, boom, boom! It happened every time she spoke to him. And her face ... it was as red as her long, red hair! Greg smiled, then got on his bike and rode away. Lizzie watched until he turned the corner. *Maybe we can go for a ride together during the summer holidays*, she thought.

Lizzie started to walk home. It took her twenty minutes but she didn’t mind. It was warm and



Lizzie is walking home from school and thinking about all the nice things she’s going to do during the summer holidays.



sunny and she had time to think. No more school uniform ... no more exams ... it was the end of July and school didn't start again until the beginning of September! Then there was Greg.

I've never had a real boyfriend, she thought. Maybe this summer will be different! ■



3 Lizzie loved Blackpool, especially¹ in summer.

There was so much to do. She wanted to go to the beach. She wanted to go up Blackpool Tower ... the view was great up there. She wanted to have a picnic with her friends in Stanley Park. Then there was the 'Lights Festival'. It was always fantastic!

'Hi, Mum! Hi, Dad!' shouted Lizzie as she came into the house.

'Elizabeth,' said her mum, 'come into the living room. Your dad and I need to talk to you.'

Uh-oh, what have I done now? thought Lizzie. Her mum only called her 'Elizabeth' when there was a problem. She walked slowly into the room. Her mum and dad were sitting on the sofa.

'What's the matter?' asked Lizzie.

'How was your last day of school?' asked her dad.

Lizzie thinks about all the nice things she can do that summer, but when she arrives home her mum and dad want to talk to her. She's worried because her mum calls her 'Elizabeth' and she only ever does that when she's not pleased with Elizabeth.

¹ especially above all

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‘Great!’ said Lizzie. ‘We’re all really excited about going to the beach and ...’

‘Listen,’ said her mum, ‘I know you’re not going to like this Lizzie, but there’s nothing we can do ...’

‘What won’t I like?’ asked Lizzie, now very worried.

‘Tomorrow you’re leaving for Yorkshire to stay with my old school friend, Hannah, for the summer,’ her mum said quickly.

‘What?’ shouted Lizzie. ‘Yorkshire! What do you mean? Is this some kind of bad joke¹?’

‘I’m afraid not,’ said her dad.

‘But what have I done? Why are you doing this to me?’ said Lizzie almost in tears².

‘I’m sorry Lizzie,’ said her dad. ‘Do you remember last winter when there was the terrible storm?’

‘Yes,’ said Lizzie, ‘and our house was flooded³ like everybody’s house in the street, but ...’

‘Well,’ said her dad, ‘this morning a man came to look at the house. He told us that the roof isn’t safe and we need a new one. It’s a big job Lizzie,

Lizzie can't believe it and almost cries when her mum says she has to go and stay in Yorkshire for the summer. She doesn't understand why they're doing this to her.

¹ **bad joke** a joke that isn't funny

² **in tears** crying

³ **flooded** full of water

and we can't stay here while they're working on it. We need to do it now before next winter.'

'But what about you and Mum?' asked Lizzie. 'What are you going to do?'

'Your mum and I need to stay near home so we can go to work. We're going to stay, in a caravan¹. A man from work has one. He says we can use it until the house is ready.'

'Well, I can stay in the caravan too!' said Lizzie.

'You can't, it's too small,' said her mum. 'There's only one bed.'

'I don't mind,' said Lizzie. 'I'll sleep on the floor! Please don't send me away! I want to stay here with my friends... and you!'

'Oh Lizzie, darling,' said her mum, 'it's not just the caravan. Your dad and I will be at work every night. After working at the supermarket, I'm going to work as a waitress in a restaurant to make some more money. And your dad has asked his boss at work for all the overtime² he can give him. This roof job is going to cost a lot of money.'

Lizzie looked at her mum and dad. She felt sorry for them, but she felt even sorrier for

The family can't stay in the house while the men are working on the roof. The caravan is only big enough for Lizzie's parents who have to stay near home for work. They also need to work longer hours to pay for the roof job.

¹ caravan 

² overtime extra hours you work

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herself. Then she had an idea.

‘Why can’t I stay with Rachel? She’s my best friend. I’ve stayed with her before. Her mum won’t mind.’

‘No, Lizzie,’ said her father. ‘It’s one thing staying the night, but you can’t stay with them for the whole summer.’

‘The WHOLE summer?’ shouted Lizzie. ‘Do you mean I need to stay with this Hannah woman for the WHOLE summer?’

‘Well, we don’t know yet,’ said her mum, ‘but it’s a big job. Anyway, Hannah is one of my oldest friends. She’s really nice. I’m sure you’ll like her. There’s nobody else. You’ve only got one uncle and he lives in Australia ... a bit too far, eh?’ said her mum trying to smile.

‘But I don’t even know this friend of yours. I don’t think I’ve ever met her,’ said Lizzie.

‘I’ve known Hannah since we were at school,’ said her mum. ‘The last time you saw her, you were just a baby. That’s why you don’t remember.’

Sara Hammond looked at her husband and

Lizzie may have to stay with Hannah for the whole summer and she can’t even remember meeting her.

for a moment, nobody spoke. They were both thinking about that particular day in August. Such a sad time for Hannah. But Lizzie didn't know anything about that and Sara wasn't going to tell her now.

Lizzie looked at them both. She could tell there was something wrong.

'So why haven't I seen her since then?' she asked.

'Hannah is a very quiet person and she likes to be by herself in the countryside,' said her mum.

'Oh, great!' shouted Lizzie. 'You're sending me to live with a hermit¹! The countryside! I hate the countryside! What am I going to do there? Play with the sheep and cows? Swim with the ducks?'

'That's enough, Elizabeth!' said her dad. He was starting to get angry now. 'You're not the only one who's going to have a 'different' summer!'

He stood up and walked out of the room. Lizzie looked at her mum.

'Lizzie, don't worry,' said her mum. 'Hannah isn't that bad. I'm sure she'll take you to York to do some shopping. It's a lovely city ...'

Lizzie thinks it's strange that she hasn't seen this woman since she was a baby if she's such a good friend of her mum. Her mum says Hannah is very quiet and lives in the countryside. When Lizzie hears that she feels even angrier than before.

¹ **hermit** a person who lives a simple life a long way from other people

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‘But I don’t want to go to York!’ shouted Lizzie. ‘I don’t know anyone in York! I want to be with my friends here in Blackpool!’

Lizzie ran out of the room and upstairs to her bedroom. She threw herself on the bed and cried and cried. She didn’t go down for dinner that evening. She texted all her friends and told them the bad news. They all felt sorry for her. Greg’s message said: ‘Hey! What a pity! Have fun anyway!! 😊’

Have fun? The second bad joke of the day, thought Lizzie. He was going to have fun for sure and she already knew who with ... Jenny! Jenny was a girl in her class at school and she really fancied¹ Greg. *She won’t waste time*, thought Lizzie. *She’ll have Greg all to herself and I can’t do anything about it!* Lizzie started to cry again. She was going to hate every minute of this summer, she thought as she fell asleep² that night. ■

Lizzie is so sad and angry that she cries herself to sleep, especially at the thought that another girl at her school called Jenny will try to become Greg’s girlfriend and Lizzie won’t be there to stop her.

Think

Lizzie is very angry with her parents. Do you ever feel like this?

¹ **fancy** when you want someone to be your girlfriend / boyfriend

² **fall asleep** go to sleep

Reading Comprehension

- 1 Read the sentences about Chapter 1 and decide if they are true (T) or false (F).

	T	F
Lizzie is sad because school has finished.	☐	☒
1 She goes home with a friend.	☐	☐
2 Her mum and dad are in the kitchen.	☐	☐
3 The roof of the house is dangerous.	☐	☐
4 Her mum and dad are going to stay with friends.	☐	☐
5 Hannah lives in the countryside.	☐	☐
6 Lizzie knows Hannah very well.	☐	☐

Grammar

- 2 Complete the questions with a word from the box, then match them with the right answer.

~~Who~~ Who Where When
Why What Whose

- ☒ Who does Lizzie like?
- 1 ☐ _____ is Lizzie's best friend?
- 2 ☐ _____ does Lizzie want to do in Stanley Park?
- 3 ☐ _____ does she need to leave for Yorkshire?
- 4 ☐ _____ must her parents work harder than usual?
- 5 ☐ _____ are her parents going to stay this summer?
- 6 ☐ _____ house is Lizzie going to stay in?

- a Hannah's. e To pay for the new roof.
- ☒ b Greg. f Rachel.
- c Have a picnic. g In a caravan.
- d The day after.

Speaking

21st
Century
Skills

3 Look at the picture again of Lizzie walking home from school and discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 Lizzie is wearing a school uniform.
What do you wear to school?
- 2 Do you think all students should wear a school uniform? Why? / Why not?
- 3 Lizzie is walking home from school. How do you usually get home from school?
- 4 How long does it take you to get to school in the morning? Why?
- 5 Do you ever ride your bike to school? Why? / Why not?
- 6 How important is it for people to use their cars less? Why?



Before-reading Activity

Listening A2 Key

4 Listen to the start of Chapter 2 and complete the sentences.

Next morning it was cloudy.

- 1 Lizzie found her _____ in a drawer.
- 2 Lizzie's mum wanted to help her with her _____.
- 3 That morning for breakfast, there was sausage, bacon and _____.
- 4 Lizzie had breakfast with her mum and _____.
- 5 Lizzie's train was at half past _____.
- 6 Lizzie is going to take some old _____ with her.
- 7 Lizzie went _____ to finish packing her bag.