

Loose Change

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Pre-Reading Activities

1. A Sense of Place

a) The following is a list of all the places in London which are mentioned in the story “Loose Change”. Can you find them on a London map?

- the National Portrait Gallery
- Tower Bridge
- Russell Square (where the Russell Hotel is)

b) The girl in the story comes from Tashkent in Uzbekistan. Locate the city on the map below.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Uzbekistan_map.jpg

c) Now listen to her talking. Answer the following questions:

Tick the right answer.

1. Laylor has been in London for
 - a) a month.
 - b) a year.
 - c) a week.

2. She comes from
 - a) Taskent.
 - b) Kent.
 - c) Clarkent.

3. She ____ her hometown.
 - a) loves
 - b) hates
 - c) despises

4. What she likes most about her hometown are
 - a) the parks.
 - b) the fountains.
 - c) the people.

5. Her hometown original name was
 - a) Kent.
 - b) Sashkent.
 - c) Newkent.

6. Her city's name derives from being made of
 - a) marble.
 - b) stone.
 - c) concrete.

7. The older part of the city
 - a) was completely destroyed.
 - b) was built anew.
 - c) was maintained.

8. At the market it is possible to buy
 - a) food.
 - b) drinks.
 - c) craftwork.

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2. Meeting the Characters

1. *You will meet three main characters in the story. The first is the narrator.*

The narrator tells us she is not in the habit of making friends of strangers because, she says, she is a Londoner.

How would you describe a person who is “not in the habit of making friends of strangers”. Choose from the following list of adjectives:

- insensitive
- unfriendly
- unsympathetic
- reserved
- self-confident
- selfish

Can you think of more adjectives to describe this person?

2. *The second character is a young woman, aged about 18, who the narrator meets in the toilets of the National Portrait Gallery and who helps the narrator with some change for the tampon machine.*

The narrator describes the young woman as having amazing eyebrows that are thick and nearly join, over round, black eyes set in a round, flat face and a solid jaw line. She had an accent and the narrator thought she might be Spanish.

3. *The third character is the young woman’s brother, who joins them briefly while the narrator and the young woman are having a cup of coffee.*

The narrator describes the brother as younger than his sister, with curly black hair stuck to his sweaty forehead, even though the day is icy cold, and with a strangely flat looking face.

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3. Creating a story

Using the information above and, most importantly, your imagination, work in small groups to try and answer these questions. As you answer the questions, being inventive and creative as you do so, you will find a narrative forming. Use this basic narrative to tell the story to class colleagues. Do not write the story down, though you may wish to make some notes.

1. Where did the narrator go to get some change?
2. Who did the narrator get change from?
3. What did the narrator offer the young woman?
4. The young woman, though educated, appeared unwashed and untidy. Why?
5. Why did the young woman only have a lot of small coins in her pocket?
6. What did her brother want when he came into the café?
7. Where did the narrator discover that the young woman and her brother were sleeping?
8. Where did the young woman and her brother come from?
9. Why did they come to London?
10. What did the narrator think she should do to help the young woman?
11. What did she actually do in the end?

