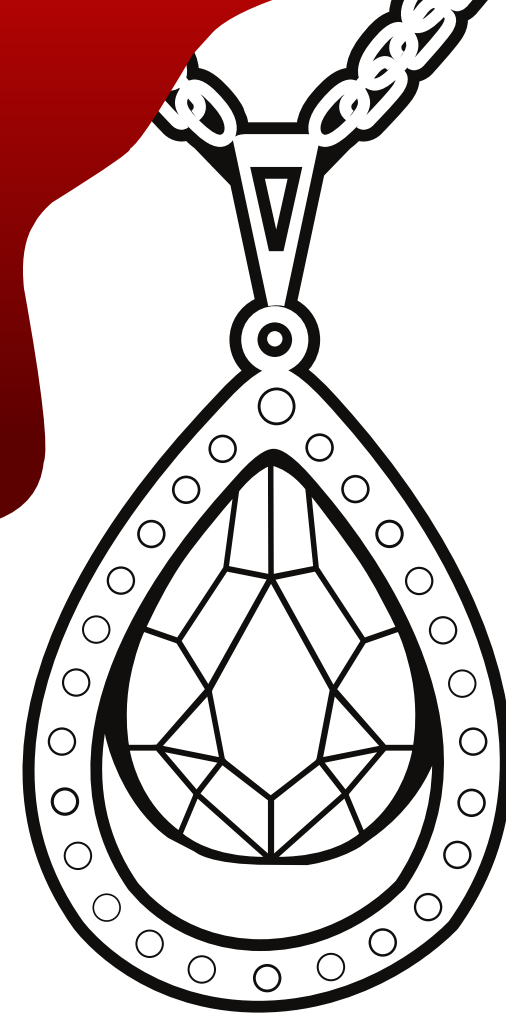


The Vanishing NECKLACE



Detective Laura Miles had seen her fair share of strange cases, but nothing quite like what happened at the Grand Metropolitan Hotel last Friday night. The city's elite had gathered for a charity gala, and everything was going perfectly—until the lights flickered and went out for exactly forty-seven seconds.

When they came back on, chaos erupted. Lady Harcourt's diamond necklace—valued at over two million pounds—had vanished. Security footage revealed nothing: no one had entered or left the ballroom during the blackout. The police suspected an inside job.

Laura began questioning the guests. The pianist claimed he heard someone moving behind the stage curtain, but when she checked, there was only a tray of champagne glasses.

The waiter insisted he'd been serving drinks near the entrance the entire time, and the hostess swore she saw a "shadow" by the grand piano.

It wasn't until Laura noticed a smudge of lipstick on one of the champagne glasses that the pieces started to fit. The glass belonged to Lady Harcourt herself—yet the lipstick shade didn't match hers. Someone had clearly worn a disguise. Later that night, Laura tracked down a former stage magician who had been working as a "security consultant" for the event. The missing necklace was found hidden inside one of his hollowed-out violin cases.

The next morning, the headlines read: "Illusionist Arrested After Dazzling Jewelry Heist."

Laura smiled over her coffee—sometimes, the simplest tricks hide behind the most elaborate illusions.

Comprehension **QUESTIONS**

1. Where did the theft take place, and what was stolen?
2. What made the case particularly unusual for Detective Miles?
3. What clues led Laura to suspect the magician?
4. How was the necklace finally discovered?
5. What does the final line suggest about Laura's attitude toward the case?

Vocabulary **IN CONTEXT**

Match the words (1–5) with their meanings (a–e):

1. Vanished
 2. Blackout
 3. Disguise
 4. Smudge
 5. Heist
- a. A mark made by rubbing or smearing something
 - b. A temporary loss of power or light
 - c. Disappeared suddenly and completely
 - d. A clever or daring robbery
 - e. Clothes or appearance used to hide one's identity

Grammar Practice

PAST PERFECT VS PAST SIMPLE

- When the lights came back on, the necklace _____ (disappear).
- Laura _____ (already / question) the waiter when she noticed the lipstick.
- The magician _____ (pretend) to be a consultant for weeks before the gala.
- The guests _____ (panic) when they realized what had happened.
- The police arrested the suspect after they _____ (find) the necklace.



Answers



Comprehension Answers

1. The theft took place at the Grand Metropolitan Hotel, during a charity gala, and Lady Harcourt's diamond necklace was stolen.
2. It was unusual because the lights went out for less than a minute, and no one entered or left the ballroom, making it seem impossible.
3. Laura noticed a lipstick smudge on a glass that didn't match Lady Harcourt's, which suggested a disguise and led her to suspect the magician.
4. The necklace was found hidden inside one of the magician's hollowed-out violin cases.
5. The final line suggests that Laura was amused and admired the cleverness of the trick, recognizing the irony of the "illusionist" being caught by his own illusion.
- 6.



Vocabulary Answers

- 1 → c. Disappeared suddenly and completely
- 2 → b. A temporary loss of power or light
- 3 → e. Clothes or appearance used to hide one's identity
- 4 → a. A mark made by rubbing or smearing something
- 5 → d. A clever or daring robbery



Grammar Answers - Past Perfect vs Past Simple

1. When the lights came back on, the necklace had disappeared.
2. Laura had already questioned the waiter when she noticed the lipstick.
3. The magician had pretended to be a consultant for weeks before the gala.
4. The guests panicked when they realized what had happened.
5. The police arrested the suspect after they had found the necklace.