

In episode 16, Robert tells Mei about his childhood. What do you think is different about it?

Before listening

Do the preparation task first. Then listen to the audio and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. to recommend
2. to be nominated
3. subtitles
4. to take someone's advice
5. depressed
6. drinking too much
7. to take care of someone
8. a foster family

Definition

- a. words at the bottom of a film or television picture, that show what is being said
- b. a family that looks after a child for a limited time
- c. unhappy and without hope
- d. having too much alcohol
- e. to say that something is good and someone should try it
- f. to look after and protect someone
- g. to be officially suggested for a prize, job, etc.
- h. to do what someone tells you that you should do

Tasks

Task 1

Write a number (1–6) to put the events in the order they are mentioned.

- _____ Robert tells Mei about Chico.
- _____ Robert tells Jessie that he wants to find Chico.
- _____ Robert tells Jessie that he has sent the boys a present.
- _____ Mei and Robert talk about the film.
- _____ Robert tells Mei about his childhood.
- _____ Robert tells Jessie that he went to see a Brazilian film.

Task 2

Are the sentences true or false?

| | Answer | |
|--|---------------|-------|
| 1. Jessie is older than Robert. | True | False |
| 2. Milton recommended the Brazilian film to Robert. | True | False |
| 3. Robert asks for the cinema tickets in Portuguese. | True | False |
| 4. Robert liked the film, but Mei didn't. | True | False |
| 5. The film reminded Robert of his childhood. | True | False |
| 6. Robert and Jessie last saw their parents when they were very young. | True | False |
| 7. Robert and Jessie lived with lots of different foster families. | True | False |
| 8. Chico still lives in Scotland. | True | False |

Discussion

Are you still in touch with your childhood friends?

Transcript

Robert: Hi, Jessie. I hope everything's fine with you and the boys. I sent them a parcel – nothing special, just some toy cars I bought on eBay. I remember playing with them when I was a kid. Mrs Arthur bought them for me when we were living with her. Do you remember? We were with her for two years, I think, but you were a lot younger than me, just a wee baby really. Ah, she was a very kind woman. You know, I've been thinking a lot about our childhood – how we moved around from family to family every couple of years. And we never knew our parents. It wasn't easy, was it, Jessie? I saw a Brazilian film at the weekend that reminded me of a lot of things. Mei came with me to the cinema ...

Mei: So the film is called *Central do Brasil*. Directed by Walter Salles. I've never heard of the film or the director.

Robert: It's a Brazilian film – it's called 'Central Station' in English. It's quite old – 1998 – but the old man in the Brazilian shop recommended it. It was nominated for two Oscars, you know.

Mei: Well, OK. I hope it is good, Robert. It's hard work for me to read all those English subtitles.

Robert: Good for your English, Mei.

Mei: And good for your Portuguese, Robert. I'm happy that you took my advice about working on your Portuguese.

Robert: Oh yes.

Mei: So, go on – go and ask for the tickets in Portuguese. Go on, there are lots of people here speaking Portuguese, aren't they? People will think you're Brazilian.

Robert: Oh, do I have to?

Mei: Yes. Be brave. Off you go. Get seats near the front.

Mei: So, what did you think, Robert? Did you like it?

Robert: Very much. Did you?

Mei: Yes, I did. The acting was fantastic – the little boy and the older woman were both great. Don't you think? You're being very quiet.

Robert: I thought it was beautiful. It made me cry. It reminded me of a lot of things, Mei. Things when I was a child.

Mei: What things?

Robert: Oh, a lot of things – me and Jessie not having parents, living with lots of different families when we were growing up ... Chico ... lots of things.

Mei: Who's Chico?

Robert: Ah, it's a long story, Mei.

Mei: I want you to tell me about it.

Robert: OK. Let's go somewhere for a coffee then.

Mei: So, tell me the story. What happened to your parents?

Robert: It was a bit like the film really – the one we've just seen. Our father left us when Jessie, my sister, was a tiny baby. And our mother had a lot of problems. She got very depressed and started drinking too much. It wasn't a good situation, Mei. I was only small and I had to try and take care of myself and Jessie – and my mother too. And then one night she went out – I don't know where – and she never came back. The next day the police came and took us away.

Mei: Oh, Robert! That's terrible.

Robert: Yes, it was. Terrible. So we didn't know where our father or our mother was – so we had no parents. And we went to foster families.

Mei: Foster?

Robert: Families that look after children. They don't adopt them, they look after them for a while.

Mei: Oh, OK.

Robert: There was Mrs Arthur – she was nice. And then Mick and Ellen Marshall – they were OK, but he used to shout a lot. And Mrs and Mr Renshaw. Oh, a lot of them.

Mei: But you and Jessie always stayed together?

Robert: Yes, we were lucky. I've always had Jessie. We've looked after each other.

Mei: And Chico? You talked about Chico.

Robert: Chico was another foster kid. He lived with us for two years when we were with the Renshaws. Chico was from Brazil. I never really knew why he was in Scotland – I think his mother was working there or something. But he was from São Paulo, in Brazil, originally. He was the same age as me and he was my best friend in all the world. We spent all our time together. Then suddenly his mother arrived – from nowhere! – and took him away. Back to Brazil. Suddenly. And I never saw him again.

Mei: Robert! What a story ...

Robert: So there you are, Jessie. I told Mei our story. It was that Brazilian film – it made me remember things. And now I know for sure that I want to go to Brazil. Oh, Jessie. I know you don't want me to go so far away, but I still think about Chico every single day. I have to try and find him. It won't be easy, but I know his name and his mother's name and some things he told me about his family and home in São Paulo. Everything is possible.

Answers

Preparation task

1. e
2. g
3. a
4. h
5. c
6. d
7. f
8. b

Task 1

- 5 Robert tells Mei about Chico.
- 6 Robert tells Jessie that he wants to find Chico.
- 1 Robert tells Jessie that he has sent the boys a present.
- 3 Mei and Robert talk about the film.
- 4 Robert tells Mei about his childhood.
- 2 Robert tells Jessie that he went to see a Brazilian film.

Task 2

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. True
7. True
8. False