

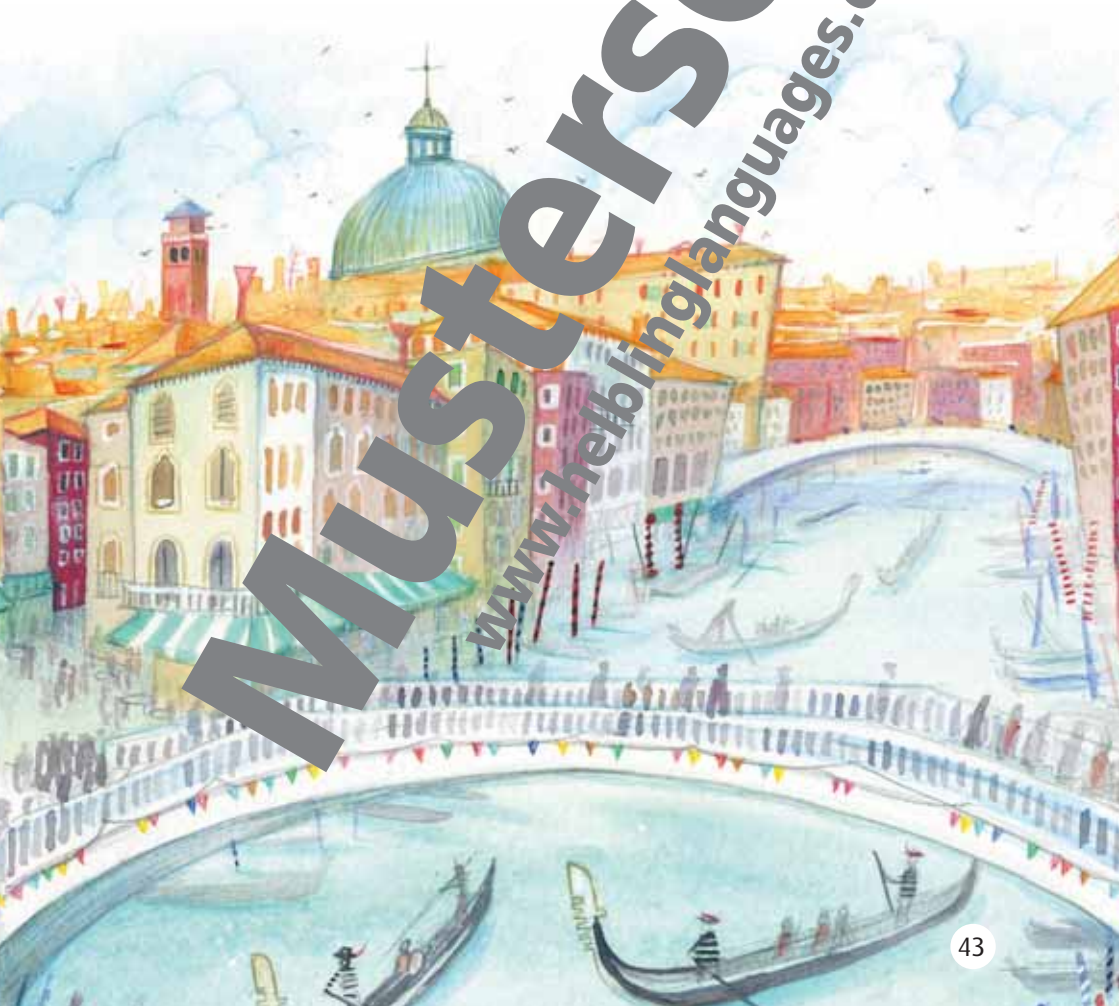
## 7 Canals and gondolas

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At 9:35 am, right on time, the train pulled into Santa Lucia Station in Venice. Nothing could have prepared Sibel for the scene as they walked out of the station. There weren't adjectives to describe it. It was beautiful. The façades of the buildings in pastel colours, the pretty stone bridges crossing the canal, the striped poles of the gondolas and boats, the gondolas themselves, the blue water moving against the canal bank, it was all wonderful.

'I told you,' said Aunt Sofia. 'There's nothing like arriving in Venice by train.'

'But you didn't prepare me for this,' said Sibel.



'All the books and paintings in the world can't prepare you for this! So how was I, a simple private detective, to do it?' replied Aunt Sofia. Now, we need to take a waterbus to the hotel,' said Aunt Sofia, putting on her sunglasses. Her headscarf caught in the breeze\* as she walked off in the direction of Vaporetto\* 2. Glamorous\* as ever, you would never believe she had spent the night on a simple train. Sibel almost skipped\* after her, she was so happy. 'Thank you, Great-Uncle Ismail,' she whispered as she stepped onto the boat. 'Thank you for this moment, this wonderful moment.'

The boat moved slowly up the busy Grand Canal. Sibel was looking at the buildings, each one more beautiful than the last. She took photo after photo to draw sketches\* from memory. For the moment, her great-uncle's riddle was forgotten.

Finally, they stopped at San Marco (St. Mark's) near their hotel. They stood on the waterfront for several minutes just enjoying the view.


'Look, there it is. The island of San Marco, St. Mark's Basilica and the church,' said Aunt Sofia pointing to the white facade – the beautiful dome of the basilica behind, and the tall bell tower to the left.

'Now I know why Morz told me to look at it,' said Sibel.

'And Turner and Canaletto before him,' added Aunt Sofia, as she turned and walked off in the direction of the hotel.

Sibel stayed where she was. 'The second clue's there. I'm sure it is. Great-Uncle Ismail would have fallen in love with the basilica the moment he saw it. It reminds me of Istanbul. I'm sure it reminded him too!' she thought. 'The bell tower looks just like a minaret\*.' She turned just as Aunt Sofia walked out of sight, and she ran to catch up with her.

- **breeze:** light wind
- **glamorous:** attractive
- **minaret:** tall thin tower on a mosque
- **sketches:** rough drawings
- **skipped:** jumped from one foot to another
- **vaporetto:** waterbus in Italian



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The hotel was like a palace. 'Only Aunt Sofia could choose a place like this,' thought Sibel, staring at the marble floors and columns in the reception area. A porter\* showed them to their room. The room had a spectacular\* view over the canal towards a domed cathedral on the far bank. Sibel stood on the balcony and looked across at the sparkling\* white dome framed by a blue sky.

'Your great-uncle always stayed here,' said Aunt Sofia. 'The place, the views, the canal, the architecture all reminded him of his beloved\* Istanbul.'

'I thought so,' said Sibel. 'But why did he never go back to Istanbul? He loved the city so much.'

'That's for you to find out, isn't it, my dear? Aunt Sofia hanging a very glamorous evening dress in the wardrobe. I think this evening we should go up to the rooftop terrace to watch the sunset from there. But first let's go for a walk around the city. Tomorrow we've got work to do, but today we can just enjoy ourselves.'

Sibel texted her friends:

In Venice, amazing place. So excited.  
You were all here! X

## Cities

What's your favourite city?

How do you like to explore a new place?

Walk / guide / book?

Discuss in pairs.

- **beloved:** much loved
- **porter:** person employed to carry luggage
- **sparkling:** shining like stars or a diamond
- **spectacular:** wonderful