Death in the Freezer

Before Reading

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES (PAGE 44)

ACTIVITY 1 BEFORE READING
1 Yes  2 No  3 No  4 Yes  5 Yes  6 No  7 Yes  8 No

ACTIVITY 2 BEFORE READING
Open answers. Encourage students to speculate and to make guesses about the story.

While Reading

CHAPTERS 1 AND 2 WHILE READING
1 Ellen, and she is in prison.
2 Because her parents were interested in him, not her.
3 Because in her game all the dolls were boys, like Al, and she wanted Al to die.
4 Eighteen.
5 Because John had two other girlfriends, and because he didn’t have a real job.
6 He made some good records with his group, the Wild Boys.
7 Because he took drugs.
8 She told him to stop the drugs, eat good food, and go swimming.

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 3
Encourage students to speculate and to make guesses but do not tell them the answers. They will find out as they read that the ‘yes’ answers are numbers 2 and 4.

CHAPTER 3 WHILE READING
1 He asked her to steal some drugs from the hospital for him.
2 Because she hoped he would die from taking drugs, and then she would get his house and his money.

CHAPTERS 4 AND 5 WHILE READING
1+17 When Al came back from his tour, he looked thin and white and sick.
2+15 He had some new friends, the Futures, and at first Ellen thought they were boring.
3+12 Dan Future wore a dark suit and looked like a businessman.
4+19 But Ellen didn’t understand why a businessman wanted to talk about death.
5+21 Two weeks later Ellen went to Al’s house because she wanted to say Happy Birthday to Al.
6+13 She couldn’t find Al but she found the Futures in the garden.
7+20 The Futures took her down to the music room and showed her Al’s body in the freezer.

8+16 They told her that Al’s body was frozen, but he was not dead.
9+14 The Futures would look after Al’s house and money while he was sleeping in the freezer.
10+22 And when there was a cure for AIDS, the doctors would wake Al up and cure him.
11+18 Ellen was very angry about this because now she could not get Al’s house and money.

CHAPTER 6 WHILE READING
1 F Ellen paid for half an hour of a lawyer’s time.
2 T
3 F Ellen had a key to Al’s house.
4 F She smiled when she switched the freezer off.
5 T
6 T
7 F The two policemen thought that Ellen was a car thief.

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 7
Encourage students to speculate. The most accurate answers are 3 and 4, but don’t tell the students now. Number 7 is possible too, but the story doesn’t really tell us if the Futures get the house.

CHAPTER 7 WHILE READING
Open answer. Students might argue that giving a sick person a sleeping drug and freezing his body is certainly attempted murder, but Ellen was also trying to kill Al. Who or what actually caused Al’s death is hard to say.

After Reading

ACTIVITY 1 AFTER READING
Ellen was angry with the Futures because they were going to look after Al’s money. At first Ellen did not know what to do, but then she had an idea. She went to Al’s house and switched the freezer off. She left the house quietly, but the police caught her when they heard the car alarm. They took her to the police station and while they were all talking, Al’s body was getting warmer and warmer.

ACTIVITY 2 AFTER READING
Open answers.

ACTIVITY 3 AFTER READING
5 DAN: Hi, I’m Dan Future. I work with cryonics.
7 Al: Cryonics? What’s that?
3 DAN: Well, it’s the science of freezing people.
6 Al: Freezing people? Why do you do that?
10 DAN: We freeze people to save their lives, Al.
People who are very ill, and who are going to die because doctors can't help them.

1. **Al:** But . . . does freezing make these people healthy again?

9. **Dan:** No, it can't make them healthy. It just keeps their bodies alive for hundreds of years.

4. **Al:** But why do you keep these people alive? They'll still be ill when they wake up, won't they?

12. **Dan:** Yes, they'll still be ill in a hundred years' time. But there'll be new medicines by then, you see — better medicines!

8. **Al:** You mean, medicines to cure illnesses which kill people today?

11. **Dan:** That's right, Al. For example, doctors can't cure AIDS today, but in a hundred years' time maybe they can. Do you know anybody with AIDS?

2. **Al:** Well, yes, I think maybe I do. Tell me, Mr Future, how much does this freezing cost . . .?

**ACTIVITY 4 AFTER READING**

**STORY 1**

Ellen Shore didn't kill her brother Al. She switched off the electricity to the freezer, that's true, but Al was already dead when she did that. The people who killed Al Shore were the Futures. They gave a dangerous sleeping drug to a sick man, and froze his body to -196°C. That's what killed him. Poor Al Shore trusted the Futures, but they are criminals who wanted to steal a rich man's money. They must go to prison, and Ellen must be free!

**STORY 2**

Ellen Shore is guilty of murder. First she tried to kill her brother with dangerous bacteria in syringes — and her fingerprints were on those syringes. Poor Al Shore knew he was dying and he left a letter for us. ‘In a hundred years’ time,’ he wrote, ‘there will be a medicine that can cure AIDS. Then I can wake up and live a long, healthy life.’ The Futures wanted to save Al's life, not to kill him. But Ellen wanted Al to die, so she turned off the freezer. She is a murderer!

**ACTIVITY 5 AFTER READING**

**Headlines which suit Story 1 best:**

- **BE CAREFUL — THE FUTURES ARE COMING!**
- **CRAZY CRYONICS!**
- **HOW TO STEAL A RICH MAN’S HOUSE**

**Headlines which suit Story 2 best:**

- **ELLEN SHORE — GUILTY!**
- **SISTER MURDERS BROTHER**

**Headlines which can go with either story:**

- **ROCK STAR DIES IN FREEZER**
- **WHO KILLED AL SHORE?**
- **NO FUTURE FOR AL**

**ACTIVITY 6 AFTER READING**

**Possible answers might be:**

1. The Futures’ lawyer: ‘The Futures must get Al's house and money, because they tried to help him, and he asked them to look after it for him. Ellen can’t have it, because she killed him.’

2. Ellen’s lawyer: ‘Ellen Shore must get Al’s house and money, because she is his sister, and her husband and children are very poor. Perhaps Al asked the Futures to look after his house and money when he was alive, but he’s dead now, so they can’t have it. And they don’t need it, because they aren’t poor like Ellen and her children.’

There are no right answers to this argument. Morally, Ellen is in the wrong because she has tried to kill her brother, but the Futures may be in the wrong too — unless you believe in cryonics — because they have tried to get hold of Al's house and money by a trick. Legally, it probably depends on the contract that Al signed with the Futures. If it said that they kept control of his house and money so long as his body remained frozen but alive, then they have no right to it now that he is dead. If Al made no will, then probably his house and money would go to his nearest relative, who is Ellen. (Although since she is guilty of attempting to murder him, it might not go to her, but to her children.) But if he did make a will, then he could have left his money to Ellen, or her children, or the Futures, or anyone he liked!

**ACTIVITY 7 AFTER READING**

Encourage the students to have a debate. Cryonics is not fiction — there really are people like the Futures in the USA, and there are already quite a few people whose bodies have been frozen. Ask the students questions like these:

Imagine there is a big freezer in your country, with hundreds or thousands of bodies frozen in it.

- Who will look after it and protect it?
- Who will choose the people to go in it?
- What will happen to these people’s houses and money?
- How much will it cost?
- Who will pay for it?
- Will you want to go in it when you are old or ill?
- What will it be like for people to wake up after a hundred years in a freezer?