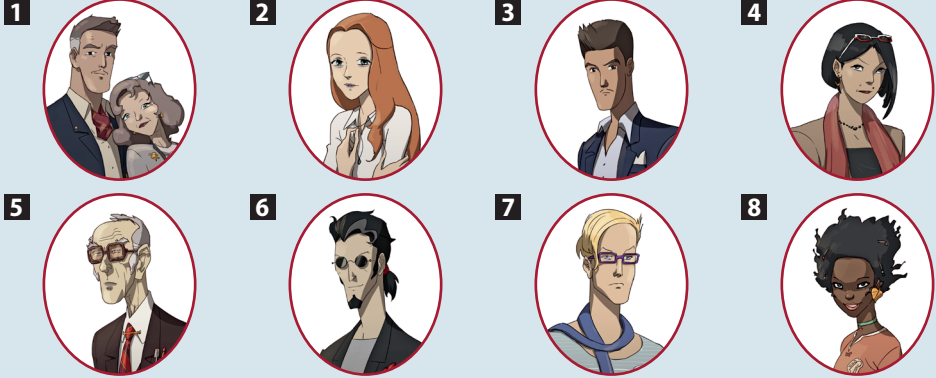


ACTIVITIES

BEFORE READING

1 Match the pictures with the descriptions of the people. Use a dictionary to help you.



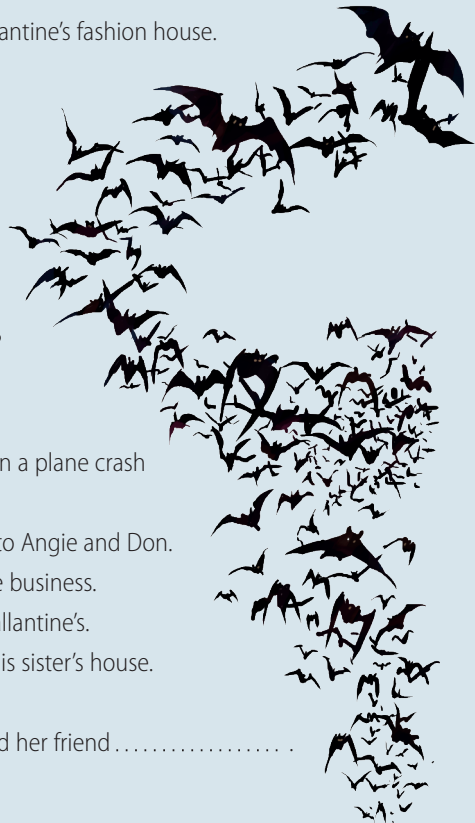
- a Ed Valdemar, an old lawyer.
- b George and Anne Ballantine, past owners of Ballantine's fashion house.
- c Angie Ballantine, George and Anne's daughter.
- d Don Ballantine, Angie's brother.
- e Vera Donato, a friend of the Ballantine family.
- f Viktor Sarav, a new worker at Ballantine's.
- g Mylene Lavine, a young woman from Canada.
- h Sasha Demidov, a Russian fashion designer.

2 What do you think happens in *V is for Vampire*?

Complete the sentences with the names from Activity 1.

- a and his wife die in a plane crash not long before the story begins.
- b explains that Ballantine's belongs to Angie and Don.
- c helps her friends' children with the business.
- d comes from Bulgaria to work at Ballantine's.
- e has a car accident on the way to his sister's house.
- f falls in love with Viktor.
- g Something terrible happens to and her friend

Compare your ideas with a partner.



Chapter 1 – A famous business

Ed Valdemar looked down at the papers in front of him and then at the other people round the long table. Angie Ballantine, a quiet woman of twenty-five, sat across the table from him. She had a beautiful face, but just then she was tired, and her eyes were red. Her brother Don, who was two years older than her, sat next to her. He was worried, and he was watching his sister carefully. Vera Donato – a woman of forty-five with dark hair and a strong, **confident** face – sat on Valdemar's left.

'This is a difficult day for all of us,' Valdemar began in his deep voice. 'Don and Angie have lost their mother and father in a terrible accident. Vera has lost her friends and business **partners**. As an old friend also, and the Ballantine family's **lawyer** for many years, I want to make this as easy as possible for all of you. So let's begin. You are here to listen to the reading of George and Anne Ballantine's **will**.'

confident sure of yourself

partner someone who owns a business with other people

lawyer someone who works to help people with the law

will the paper that says which people you want to have your money when you die



become

(*past become, became*) to begin to be

future the time that will come

fashion house

a business that makes and sells clothes

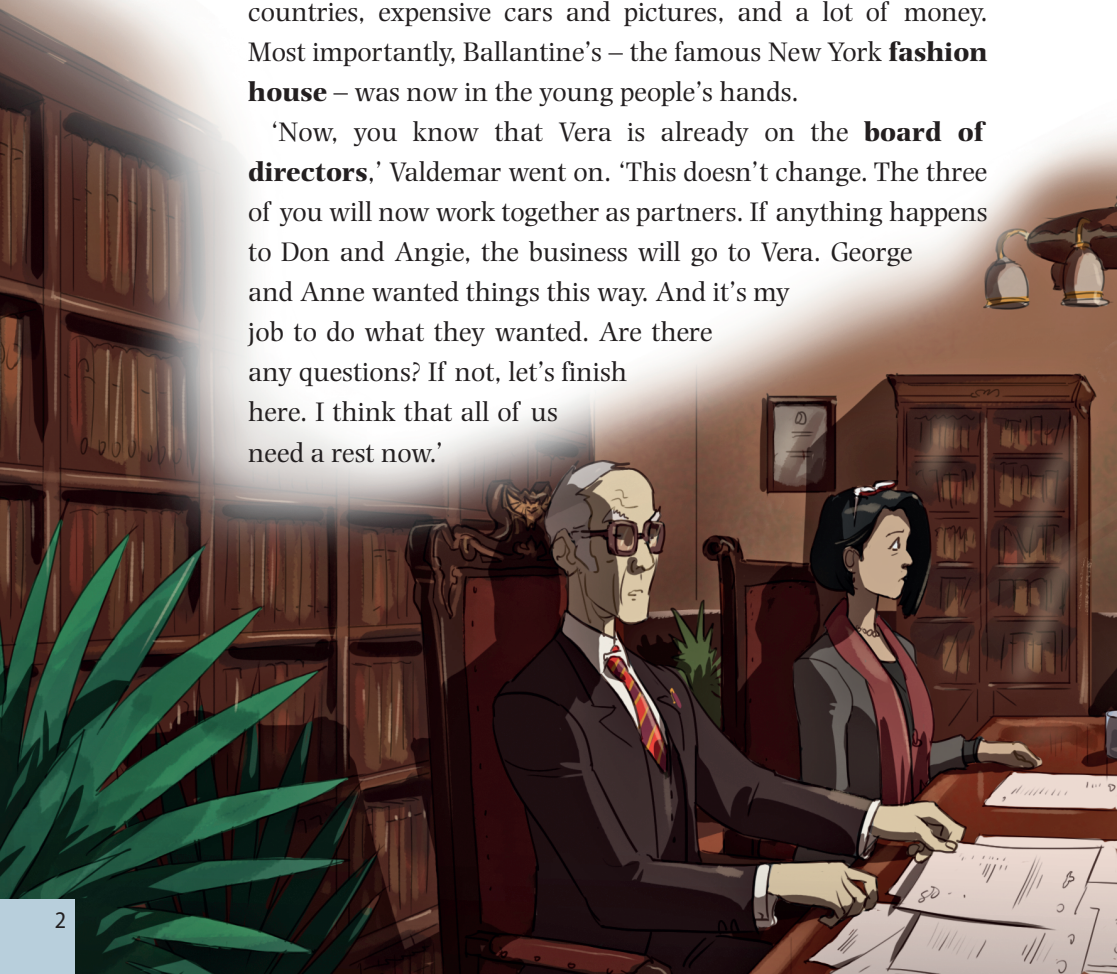
board of

directors a group of people who look after a business

The old lawyer was silent for a minute. Then he began to read aloud from the papers in front of him. His voice, at first quiet and shaking, **became** louder and stronger. Angie began to cry softly while she listened to Valdemar reading the words of the will. Don held her hand. Vera listened sadly, and looked at the large photograph on the wall of Anne and George in happier days. George – a tall man with brown hair – had his arm round his wife, and they were smiling.

The reading of the will did not take long. The Ballantines often talked to their children and Vera about their plans for the **future**, so there were no big surprises. They were leaving everything to Angie and Don. There were houses in different countries, expensive cars and pictures, and a lot of money. Most importantly, Ballantine's – the famous New York **fashion house** – was now in the young people's hands.

'Now, you know that Vera is already on the **board of directors**,' Valdemar went on. 'This doesn't change. The three of you will now work together as partners. If anything happens to Don and Angie, the business will go to Vera. George and Anne wanted things this way. And it's my job to do what they wanted. Are there any questions? If not, let's finish here. I think that all of us need a rest now.'



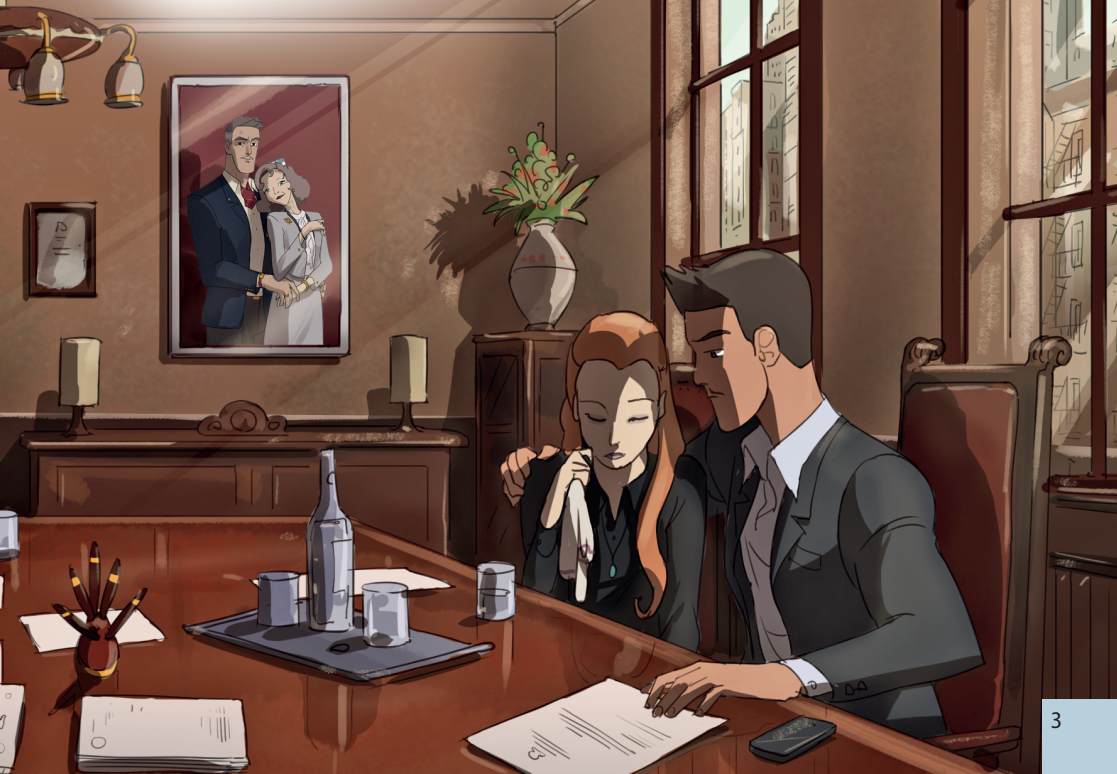
Without another word, Valdemar put the papers into his bag and stood up. While he and the others were slowly leaving the room, he thought for the hundredth time about the strange accident that killed his friends. Was it only a month ago? George and Anne were flying to Boston in their small plane. George was the **pilot**. They were flying over open country when things went terribly wrong, and the plane suddenly fell to the ground and crashed. The police said that something was caught in the plane's **engines**, but it was difficult to see **exactly** what it was. Large numbers of birds – or **bats** – were not usual in that place, and nobody could explain it. George and Anne often flew to Boston, and they knew the journey well. It was dark, but the weather was fine. So why exactly did they crash? Valdemar shook his head. Was it just bad luck?

pilot this person flies a plane

engine the machine in a plane that makes it move

exactly really

bat a small animal that flies at night



Later that day, Angie and Don met Vera in her office to talk about the future of Ballantine's. Angie walked worriedly around the room, a coffee cup in her hand.

'Oh, what are we going to do? You must help us, Vera,' said Angie. 'Don and I are new to the business, and we have a lot to learn. Mom and Dad worked all their lives to make Ballantine's into a famous fashion house. I don't want to lose it all now.'

'That won't happen,' said Vera confidently. 'I worked hard for your father and mother, and I'll work hard for you, too. Ballantine's is strong and it can be stronger. I'm already thinking about our next big **fashion show** in Milan. I'm thinking about wonderful suits, little dresses, big hats, and great bags and shoes. I see unusual colours for Ballantine's this summer, bright red, dark grey – and black! I can see it now! It's going to be the biggest and best fashion show of all time!'

'Mmm, that sounds exciting, Vera. But how exactly are we going to do it?' asked Don. 'Ballantine's wasn't doing so well when Mom and Dad died. It was starting to lose some of its best people. I know that my mother and father were talking about changing some things. What can you tell us about all that?'

'I know about it, of course,' answered Vera. 'Things weren't going too well, and we've lost a few good people in the last months. **Maybe** our **image** has become boring over the last few years. You can't rest in this business. We need new faces and new **ideas** around the place. We must look for people to bring new life to the business. New blood. There are hundreds of bright young people in New York who would really like to work for Ballantine's so I'm not worried. We just have to find them.' Vera spoke confidently, and her words gave Angie new hope. Her brother was not so sure.

'Maybe you're right,' said Don. 'You know all the important people in the world of **fashion**. But I have friends in the business, too. If you don't mind, I'm going to start right now and make a few phone calls.' Don looked lovingly at his sister.

fashion show

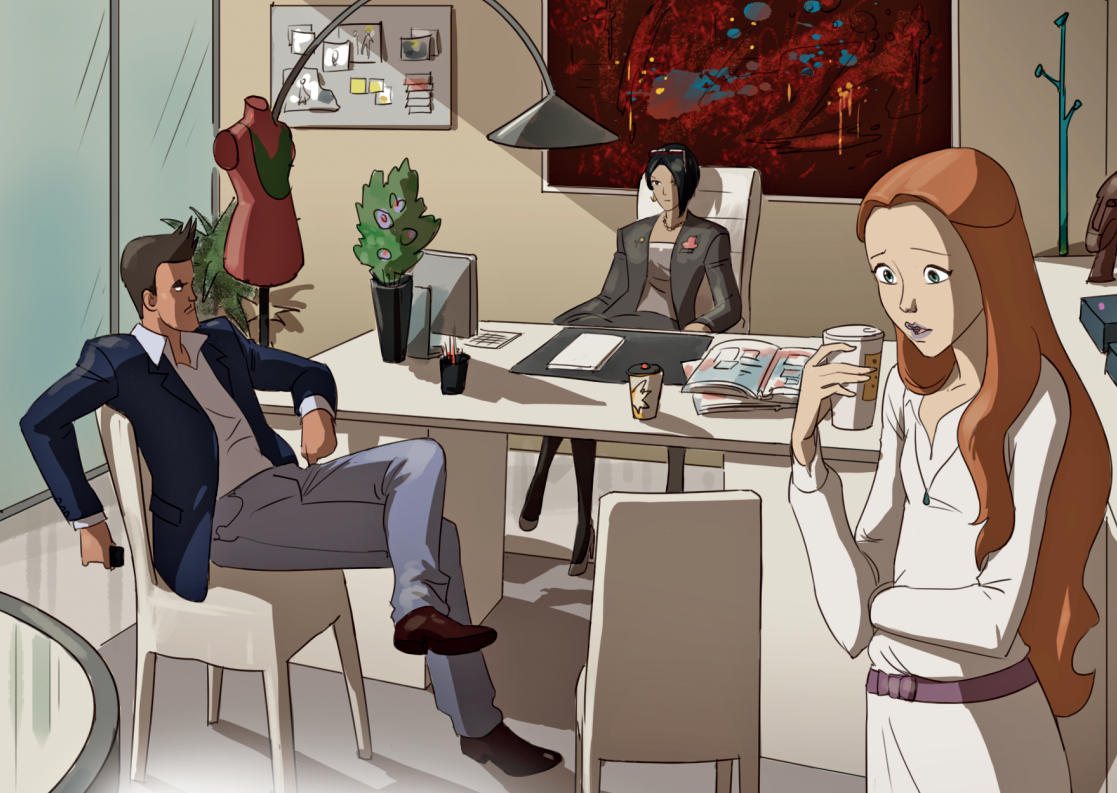
people can see the newest clothes at this

maybe perhaps

image a picture that people have in their head of a business

idea something that you think

fashion clothes that are new and interesting for many people



‘Take it easy, Angie, and stop worrying! I’ll see you later. OK?’

Without another word to Vera, Don hurried out of the room. Vera looked sadly after him. With his brown hair and blue eyes, the young man was very like his father.

Angie knew that Vera felt sad, and she tried to help the older woman. ‘You’re not alone, Vera,’ she said. ‘Don and I learn fast. I’m not very confident, I know, but I’m ready to work hard.’

Vera smiled, but said nothing. The girl was young and she didn’t know much about the fashion world. She needed all the help that Vera could give her.

In her head, Vera spoke silently to her dead friends. ‘Dear George and Anne, I’ll never forget you, and I’ll always be here for Angie and Don. You said that I was the best. And with my help and everyone’s hard work, Ballantine’s will soon be the best fashion house in the world. Nothing – and nobody – will stand in the way of that.’

READING CHECK

1 Are these sentences true or false? Tick the boxes.

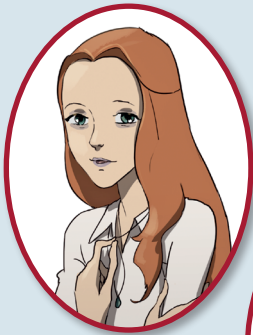
- a Angie's parents die before the story begins.
- b Ed Valdemar was a friend of George and Anne's.
- c George and Anne were poor when they died.
- d Vera wants to work hard for Ballantine's.
- e Angie and Don need Vera's help.
- f Ed Valdemar never thinks about the plane crash.
- g Vera thinks that they need to change things at Ballantine's.
- h Ballantine's next fashion show will be in Paris.

True False

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2 Match the first and second parts of the sentences.

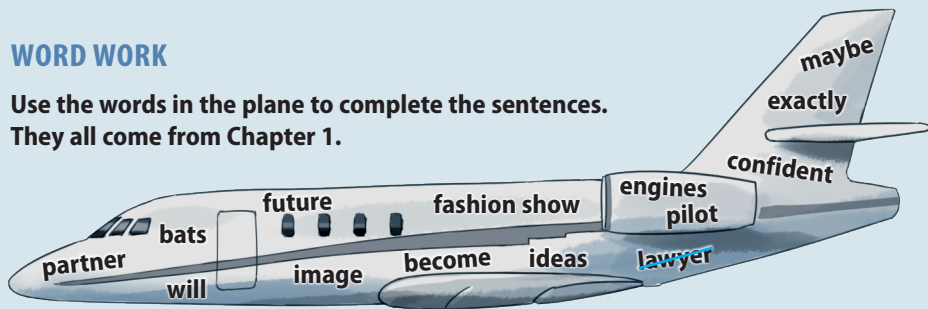
- | | |
|---|--|
| a 'This is a difficult day for all of us,' | 1 Vera says to her dead friends. |
| b 'So why exactly did they crash?' | 2 Don asks Vera. |
| c 'Don and I are new to the business,' | 3 Vera says to Don and Angie. |
| d 'How exactly are we going to change our image?' | 4 Valdemar says to the people round the table. |
| e 'We need new faces and new ideas,' | 5 Valdemar asks himself. |
| f 'I'll never forget you,' | 6 Angie says to Vera. |



ACTIVITIES

WORD WORK

Use the words in the plane to complete the sentences. They all come from Chapter 1.



- a After the accident, they needed a lawyer to help them.
- b A lot of little fly around here at night.
- c I don't understand you very well. What do you mean?
- d He's always good at thinking of new
- e The clothes must be ready in time for the in London.
- f Their parents left a lot of money to them in their
- g No one knows what will happen next. The is unclear.
- h I'm not sure, but I think that she's afraid of him.
- i She's a very person who knows what she wants.
- j You've worked very well here. Would you like to be a in our business?
- k Her son wants to a doctor.
- l People think of our company as old and boring. We need to change our
- m The accident happened after something flew into both the of the plane.
- n The died in the plane crash.

GUESS WHAT

Which of these things do you think happen in the next chapter? Tick four boxes.

- a Some new people begin to work at Ballantine's.
- b Ed Valdemar marries Vera.
- c Don kills Viktor.
- d Angie becomes the new face of Ballantine's.
- e Viktor and Vera do not agree.
- f Angie hits Vera.
- g Angie calls Valdemar.
- h Don and Viktor go to Bulgaria.