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I Need a Friend sample
NOT FOR SALE

I NEED A FRIEND

Level 3 - A2/B1 Intermediate (1) Graded Reader from I Talk You Talk Press

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I Need a Friend

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ISBN: 978-4-907056-59-9

Publisher: I Talk You Talk Press

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Chapter One

Apartment 3,
205 Rue d'Auberge
Paris
May 20, 2017

Dear Rosie,

If you get this letter, I know you will be surprised. I don't know where you are living now. Are you married? Do you have a new name? I looked for you on the Internet, and on Facebook, but I couldn't find you. So I am sending this letter to your parents' address. I hope that somehow you will receive it.

Do you remember when we were best friends? We met at school when we were eight. The last time I saw you, we were both fifteen years old. My parents were getting a divorce, and my mother was going to stay with her family in Ireland. I had to go with her. My father was gone, and I was losing my best friend. I was going to live in a new country. I didn't know anyone in Ireland. I would be going to a new school among strangers. I was so unhappy. I was frightened too.

I promised I would send you the address when we found somewhere to live in Ireland. I promised I would write to you. I promised I would call you. My mother said I could come back and visit you. What happened? Why didn't I write to you? Why didn't I come back to visit you? It's hard to remember, but I think I was angry with you. I know I was jealous. You had a brother, two parents, a dog, a house and a beautiful garden. My mother and I were sharing a bedroom in a horrible dark house in Cork. We were living with her sister and her husband. They didn't want us there.

It was a long time ago and of course our lives are different now. I am living in Paris. It is such a beautiful and exciting city. I work for a fashion magazine. I love my job. I often get free clothes and cosmetics. Have you ever been to Paris? I am sure you have. I hope you might come and stay with me. It would be wonderful to meet again. You can tell me about your life. We can talk about our childhood. We can look at the old

photographs and laugh. It would be wonderful. I know the first weekend in June is a holiday weekend in England. Maybe if you are not doing anything you could come then. Of course you might have a husband and two children. Maybe you don't even live in England any more. Maybe you won't get this letter. But if you do get it, - if you can come – please, please do.

*Love from your one-time best friend,
Shelley*

Chapter Two

Rosemary sat at her kitchen table and stared at the letter. It was typed. She picked up the envelope. The address was written in pencil. The letter had been posted in Paris on May 20. It had been delivered to her parents' old house in Cheltenham. Someone had crossed out the address and written the address of Rosemary's apartment on the envelope. It had been delivered today, June 1st.

Three years ago, her parents sold their house to a friend of Rosemary's brother. They were living in Spain now.

My brother's friend, Jeremy, must have called my brother, thought Rosemary. That's how he got my address.

Rosemary remembered when Shelley left Cheltenham. Shelley had cried all the time. She didn't want to leave, and she was missing her father. Rosemary and her mother went to visit Shelley's mother. Rosemary's mother wanted to help, but Shelley's mother wouldn't talk to anyone. She was packing suitcases. She was banging doors and throwing things. Rosemary thought about Shelley's father. He was a very quiet man who worked as a postman. One day he came home from work and said he was leaving. He had met a very beautiful Chinese woman. She was only 22. He was going to live with her in Hong Kong. He planned to get a job as a teacher in a language school. Two days later, he was gone. Two weeks after that, Rosemary stood on the platform of the railway station, waving as the train with Shelley and her mother on board pulled out of the station.

I waited and waited for a letter from Shelley, thought Rosemary. I couldn't understand why she didn't contact me. She was my best friend and she hurt me so much.

After six months Rosemary accepted that Shelly was gone from her life. She realized that she would not get a letter or a phone call. Shelley would not come to visit. She

made new friends, studied for her O levels and A levels, went to university, and then got a job in a library in London. And now this. A letter from the past.

Rosemary got up from the table and went to the bookshelf in her living room. She pulled out a photograph album and took it back to the kitchen. She slowly turned the pages. There were family groups from Christmas and birthdays, and school photographs. There were no photographs of Shelley until Rosemary was eight. After that it seemed that Shelley was in almost every photograph. Rosemary and Shelley on the swing in the garden. Rosemary and Shelley at ballet class. Rosemary and Shelley with their families at a restaurant. *What celebration was that?* Rosemary couldn't remember.

The last photograph in the album was of Rosemary and Shelley outside Rosemary's parents' house. It was the day before Shelley left. Rosemary's father had taken it. The girls had their arms around each other. Small dark-haired Shelley, and tall blonde Rosemary.

I wonder why it's the last photograph in the album? thought Rosemary. *I guess we got digital cameras about that time. So all the later photographs are on the computer.*

That gave Rosemary an idea. She made herself a cup of tea. Then she took her laptop from her briefcase and turned it on. *I'll search the Internet for Shelley.*

Twenty minutes later, Rosemary gave up. She had searched all the online social media, records in Ireland, and fashion magazines in Paris. Shelley's father had been killed in a car accident in Hong Kong only six months after he had left England. She found that Shelley's mother had died five years previously. But there was no record of Shelley anywhere.

Rosemary shivered. It was cold in the apartment. She had picked up the letter from her mailbox and read it as soon as she came in from work. That was more than an hour ago. She turned on the heaters and went to her bedroom to change out of her work clothes. She switched on the television and took some soup out of the refrigerator. Sitting in front of the television with her soup, cheese and crackers, Rosemary wondered what she was going to do. Her thoughts were racing.

Why did Shelley contact me now? Maybe I could ask her? But there is no email address and no telephone number in the letter. Maybe she wants to see me because her life is so good. She wants to share her life with me. What should I do? I can ignore the letter, or I can go to Paris. Why should I go? She wants me to visit this weekend. Today is Friday.

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Rosemary knew that she would go to Paris. She knew that she had to go. Shelley was not her friend now. But long ago they had been best friends. And at the bottom of the letter, in pencil, Shelley had written, *I need a friend very badly. Please come.*

-----END OF SAMPLE-----

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