

# Reading 2 — A Fire in the Middle of the Night

Russell flipped his textbook in frustration. Muttering under his breath, Russell grumbled about how tired he was. If he did not have an examination the following day, he would have been at his cousin's wedding dinner with his parents that night. With a sigh, Russell turned the page again. Just then, he smelt something burning.

Swivelling around in his chair, Russell sniffed the air. The smell seemed to have disappeared. He was about to return to his revision when he got another whiff of the smell. There was definitely something burning. As Russell got up to open his bedroom door, he tried to recall if he had left something cooking on the stove. When he opened the door, a puff of dark grey smoke rushed towards him. Russell slammed his door and backed away from it. To his dismay, he remembered that the fire extinguisher was in the living room. He could not get out of his room as there was too much smoke. He was not even sure where the fire had started.

Russell remembered reading that he should put towels at the gap below the door to prevent the smoke from coming in. By then, smoke was already snaking in through the gap. Grabbing three towels, Russell rolled them and stuffed them in the gap. It seemed to stop the smoke from coming in but Russell knew that it was only a temporary measure. He had to find a way out. Using the remaining towel in his wardrobe to cover his mouth, he threw open his window to get a breath of fresh air. Russell was

about to shout for help when he saw the large crowd gathering below his flat. Looking out, Russell was stunned to see smoke billowing out of his living room window. At that moment, Russell heard the sound of a siren from a distance. Someone must have called the fire brigade. Before long, the fire engine came rumbling into Russell's estate and screeched to a stop across the street. Russell waved frantically from his window, yelling for help at the same time.

It did not take long for the firemen to put out the fire, which had started in Russell's kitchen. He had forgotten to switch off the fire on the stove when he went to his room. A piece of paper had blown onto the stove and had caught fire. Russell was ashamed to know that he had been the cause of the fire. Not only was his house burnt, his neighbour's house had been affected as well. However, he was relieved that no one was hurt in the fire.