

Podcast #133 A Birthday Dilemma

Original Version

Two guys were talking at work.

"I've got a problem," said the first one.

"What is it?" said his friend.

"My wife has done it to me again. It's my mother-in-law's birthday tomorrow. I'm supposed to buy her a present. I am totally out of ideas. It isn't fair. It's her mother, not mine."

"What did you buy her last year?"

"A very expensive cemetery plot."

"It's hard to top that one," said his friend.

They couldn't think of anything. So the son-in-law bought nothing. The mother-in-law was quite upset at her birthday party.

"Couldn't you find anything for me?" she said.

The son-in-law had to say something.

"Well, you know what we got you last year? You haven't even used it yet."

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Choose the correct word or term

Two guys (was – were) talking at work.

“(I got – I've got) a problem,” said the first one.

“What is it?” (said – sayed) his friend.

“My wife (she has – has) done it to me again. It's my mother-in-law's birthday (tomorrow – tomorow). (Im – I'm) supposed to buy her a present. I am totally out of ideas. It isn't (fare – fair). It's her mother, not (my – mine).”

“What (you did – did you) buy her last year?” asked his friend.

“A very expensive (cemetery – cemategy) plot.”

“It's hard to top that one,” said his friend.

They couldn't think of (nothing – anything). So the son-in-law (bought – buyed) nothing. The mother-in-law was (quiet – quite) upset at her birthday party.

“Couldn't you (find – not find) anything for me?” she said.

The son-in-law had to say something.

“Well, you know what we got you last year? You (hasn't – haven't) even used it yet.”

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Practice with incorrect or missing articles, indefinite pronouns, and verbs.

In the following version of the story, circle or underline places where (a) a grammatically incorrect article is used, or (b) any of the following is missing:

- a grammatically required article (*a, an, the*)
- a personal pronoun (for example, *he*)
- a possessive pronoun (for example, *his*)
- an indefinite pronoun such as *some* or *any*
- a form of the verb *to be* (for example, *was*)

The first sentence has been underlined to show where you would circle or underline a word or phrase.

Two guys talking at work.

“I’ve got problem,” said first one.

“What is?” said friend.

“Wife has done it to me again. It’s mother-in-law’s birthday tomorrow. I’m supposed to buy her the present. Am totally out of ideas. Isn’t fair. It’s her mother, not mine.”

“What did you buy her last year?” asked friend.

“Very expensive cemetery plot.”

“Is hard to top that one,” said friend.

They couldn’t think of anything. So son-in-law bought nothing. Mother-in-law quite upset at birthday party.

“Couldn’t you find anything for me?” she said.

Son-in-law had to say something.

“Well, you know what we got you last year? You haven’t even used it yet.”