

Richard Musman

Escape in New York

ENGLISH READERS

A2
B1

PALIER 2

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Before Reading

1. Have a close look at the cover and say everything you can about it.

HELP BOX: in the background, in the foreground, on the left, on the right, at the top, at the bottom, in the middle...

2. Can you spot the Niagara Falls on a map?
 3. Do you know the origin of the word “Niagara”? Look for information about it on the internet.
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4. What is the best English synonym for this word?

- ☐ thunder
- ☐ awful noise

5. What do you expect to read?

- ☐ a fairy tale
- ☐ a science fiction story
- ☐ a detective story
- ☐ a love story

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A Meeting at Niagara Falls



The coffee shop¹ was empty. Kevin pushed the cup away² from him and put his arms on the counter³. He had just left school and was going to New York in a week's time to be a tourist guide. He had spent a year in New York when he was fifteen and knew the city well. He was going to stay with his Aunt Bella, who had found him 5 the job.

Kevin was thinking of his mother. She was going to marry a Toronto businessman he did not like. He told his mother exactly what he thought of his future stepfather⁴. She replied that it was

1. the coffee shop (AE) bar (BE), le café | 2. Kevin pushed the cup away Kevin écarta sa tasse | 3. the counter le comptoir | 4. stepfather son beau-père

none of his business¹. “OK, Mom! Marry him, but don’t expect me to come and live with you.” “Do what you like, Kev,” she said. He did not want to live alone in the house in Niagara Falls, so he wrote to his Aunt Bella. He and Aunt Bella were great friends.

- 5 **The thunder of the waterfall**² reminded him that the only thing that was interesting in Niagara Falls was the Falls themselves! There was nothing to keep him at home. Just then he saw opposite him, on the other side of the counter, a girl he had never seen before. She had a **heart-shaped**³ face and a large mouth. Her hair
10 was very dark and fell below her ears. **Her bangs hung halfway down her forehead**⁴.

- “Want anything else, Kev?” asked Betty, the girl behind the counter. He and Betty used to be at school together. She was pretty, but she had nothing interesting to talk about. **He shook his**
15 **head**⁵ and looked again at the girl across the counter. Her bright blue eyes were full of **anxiety**⁶, and she kept looking towards the door as if she was expecting an unwelcome visitor.

“Hi!” he said, walking round the counter and sitting down beside her.

- 20 The girl looked at him with surprise. “Hi!” she said.

“Let me get you a coffee,” he said, “or do you want something to eat?”

She smiled. “I don’t know why you’re doing this. You don’t know me.”

- 25 “Well, I’ll be honest with you. You look **as though**⁷ you’re in trouble. **I wondered**⁸ if perhaps I could help you.”

1. **it was none of his business** cela ne le regardait pas | 2. **the thunder of the waterfall** le grondement des chutes | 3. **heart-shaped** en forme de cœur | 4. **her bangs hung halfway down her forehead** la frange recouvrait son front à moitié | 5. **he shook his head** il a hoché la tête | 6. **anxiety** de l'angoisse | 7. **as though** comme si | 8. **I wondered** je me demandais

She looked straight into¹ his eyes. “You know, I could be rather crazy². A complete stranger interfering in somebody else’s affairs³! It isn’t normal, is it?”

“No, it isn’t. But when I see somebody I think looks especially nice, I try to make friends – to see if I was right! No, but I do think 5 you’re in trouble, and I would like to help you if you’ll let me.”

She smiled. “Well you’re honest! But you can’t help me, I’m afraid, and I’d prefer not to talk about it, if you don’t mind. I’ll have that cup of coffee, though⁴. Let’s go and sit at a table. It’s more comfortable.”

“Just two cups of coffee, please, Betty,” Kevin said. 10

“OK, sir!” Betty said.

“Where do you come from?” Kevin asked the girl.

“New York.”

“Have you come from there now?”

“No. I’m still at school. I go to a boarding school⁵ twenty miles 15 from Niagara. It’s called Saint Cecilia’s. Have you heard of it?”

“No. Is it one of those schools for rich girls?”

“Yes, but I hate it! If I wasn’t able to read a lot of books, I don’t know what I’d do.”

“Have you run away⁶ from school, then?” 20

“No – it’s the first day of the vacation⁷.”

She looked straight into his eyes. He leaned⁸ across the table.

“I’m Kevin Patterson. I live here in Niagara Falls. What’s your name?”

“Cathy.” 25

“Cathy who?⁹”

1. she looked straight into elle l’a regardé droit dans | 2. I could be rather crazy je pourrais être un peu en colère | 3. interfering in somebody else’s affairs qui se mêle des affaires des autres | 4. though quand même | 5. boarding school un pensionnat | 6. run away s’enfuir | 7. vacation (AE) holiday (BE), les vacances | 8. he leaned il s’est penché | 9. Cathy who? Cathy comment ?

“Cathy O’Brien.”

They shook hands¹.

“Why won’t you tell me **what’s the matter**², Cathy?”

She did not answer for a moment, and then she spoke in such a low voice that he could **hardly**³ hear her. “Because if you knew, it might get you into serious trouble.”

“I’ll risk it. Please tell me! I don’t like mysteries between friends.”

“No. Please don’t talk about it again.” She looked out the window.

“Don’t you get tired of that **awful**⁴ noise – the Falls, I mean?”

“No, **I guess**⁵ we’re used to it.”

Betty brought two cups and **poured**⁶ in the coffee. Then, when Kevin did not look at her, she gave him a **kick**⁷ under the table. Kevin did not notice.

“How is it your eyes are blue when your hair is so dark, Cathy?”

“That often happens with Irish people. My mother was Irish. My father was an Irish American.”

“Are your parents dead?”

“Yes. My mother died when my brother was born. I was ten then. My father married again, but he died when I was twelve.”

“So you were **brought up**⁸ by your **stepmother**⁹?”

She hesitated. “Well, I live with her. My brother is luckier. He’s been brought up by my grandmother in Charleston, South Carolina. I hardly ever see him, and that makes me very sad.”

“How old are you, Cathy?”

“Seventeen.”

1. **they shook hands** il se sont serré la main | 2. **what’s the matter?** qu’est-ce qui se passe ? | 3. **hardly** à peine | 4. **awful** horrible | 5. **I guess (AE)** I expect, I think (BE), je suppose | 6. **(he) poured** il a versé | 7. **kick** un coup de pied | 8. **(to be) brought up** (être) élevé | 9. **stepmother** la belle-mère

“Me too. I’ll be eighteen next month. I’ve just left **high school**¹. I’m going to be a guide for Swift’s Tours in New York for a year. Do you know them?”

She shook her head².

“I know New York well. I **spent**³ a year there when I was fifteen. 5 We must meet. I’ll be there next week. Tell me your address.”

She looked down at the table. “No, I don’t think that would be safe. But I’d love to see you. Why don’t you give me your address?”

“**Sure**⁴!” Kevin answered.

1. **high school** le lycée | 2. **she shook her head** elle a secoué la tête |
3. **I spent** j’ai passé | 4. **sure (AE)** *of course, certainly* (BE), bien sûr

Chapter 1: A Meeting at Niagara Falls

1. Listen and tick ☒ the correct information:

1. Where does the scene take place?

☐ in New York City

☐ in Niagara Falls

2. Who are the main characters?

☐ Betty

☐ Kevin

☐ Bella

☐ Cathy

3. Where did they meet?

☐ in a restaurant

☐ in a coffee shop


**2. Listen again and pick out information about Kevin and Cathy.
Then fill in the chart:**

Kevin	
LAST NAME	
AGE	
NATIONALITY	
PLANS	

Cathy	
LAST NAME	
AGE	
NATIONALITY	
INFORMATION ABOUT HER FAMILY	
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	

3. Tick ☒ the correct informations.


The facts:

- ☐ Kevin has found a job as a tourist guide in New York City.
 - ☐ Kevin is still a student.
 - ☐ Kevin's never been to New York City.
 - ☐ Kevin's already lived there.
 - ☐ Kevin loves the place where he's living and doesn't want to move away.
 - ☐ Kevin thinks his place is boring.
 - ☐ Cathy is an orphan and an only child.
 - ☐ Cathy is an orphan but she's got a brother.
 - ☐ Cathy tells him her secret.
 - ☐ Cathy doesn't tell him her secret.
 - ☐ They're going to meet again.
 - ☐ Cathy refuses to see him again.
- 

Their feelings:

- ☐ Kevin and his mother don't get on well.
- ☐ Kevin and his mother get on well.
- ☐ Kevin is shrewd.
- ☐ Kevin is not clever.
- ☐ Cathy is outgoing.
- ☐ Cathy is unfriendly.
- ☐ Cathy misses her brother.
- ☐ Cathy hates her brother.

4. Listen again and choose the best summary.



☐ **SUMMARY ONE:** While sitting in a coffee shop Kevin, a young Canadian boy, has made up his mind: he's moving to New York because he can't stand his future stepfather. He'll earn his living there as a tour guide and stay at his Aunt Bella's. Cathy, a girl he has just made friends with, looks scared. He's ready to help her, but unfortunately she must go back to school in Niagara Falls and refuses to give him her address.

☐ **SUMMARY TWO:** While sitting in a coffee shop Kevin, a young Canadian boy, has made up his mind: he's moving to New York because he can't stand his future stepfather. He'll earn his living there as a tour guide and stay at his Aunt Bella's. Cathy, a girl he has just made friends with, looks scared. He wants to help her: she refuses but agrees to give him her address in New York.

5. Speak about these points:

1. Why does Kevin decide to sit down at Cathy's table?
2. Why doesn't Cathy want to talk about her problems?

Chapter 2: Mrs O'Brien

1. Group work.

Group 1: Concentrate on Mrs O'Brien's physical portrait. Pick out the following elements.

- Face?
- Hair?
- Clothes?
- Appearance?

Group 2: Concentrate on Mrs O'Brien's personality. Read the sentences and match them with the adjectives that best describe her personality.

aggressive

friendly

nosy

kind

nasty

warm-hearted

scornful

mild

violent

fishy

respectable