

“All right, Mrs Dornan. Describe your son to me,” the police officer said.

“He’s seven and small for his age,” Catherine said. They were sitting in a squad car<sup>1</sup>, parked in front of Saks, near the spot<sup>2</sup> where the violinist had been playing.

She felt Michael’s hand clutch hers reassuringly.

“What color hair?” the officer asked.

Michael answered, “Like mine. Kind of reddish. His eyes are blue. [...] One of his front teeth is missing. He has the same kind of pants I’m wearing, and his jacket is like mine ’cept<sup>3</sup> it’s blue and mine is green. He’s skinny.”

The policeman looked approvingly at Michael. “You’re a real help, son.” [...]

15 “Where do you live, ma’am? What I mean is, do you want to call anyone?” The policeman looked at the rings on Catherine’s left hand, “Your husband?”

20 “My husband is in Sloan-Kettering hospital. He is very ill. He’ll be wondering where we are. In fact, we should be with him soon. He’s expecting us.” Catherine put her hand on the door of the squad car. “I can’t just sit here. I’ve got to look for Brian.”

25 “Mrs Dornan, I’m going to get Brian’s description out right now. In three minutes every cop in Manhattan is going to be on the lookout for him. You know, he may have just wandered away<sup>4</sup> and gotten confused. It happens. Do you come downtown often?”

30 “We used to live in New York, but we live in Nebraska now,” Michael told him.

“We visit my grandmother every summer. She lives on Eighty-Seventh Street. We came back last week because my dad had leukemia and he needed an operation. He went to medical school with the doctor  
30 who operated on him.”

Manuel Ortiz had been a policeman only a year, but already he had come in contact with grief<sup>5</sup> and despair many times. He saw both in the eyes of this young woman. She had a husband who was very sick, now a missing kid. It was obvious to him that she could easily go into shock.

35 “Dad’s gonna know something’s wrong,” Michael said, worried, “Mom, shouldn’t you go see him?”

“Mrs Dornan, how about leaving Michael with us?” [...] “I’ll get another car to take you up to hospital and wait for you.”

Adapted from Mary Higgins Clark, *Silent Night*, 1995.

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1. squad car: *voiture de police*.

2. spot: *endroit*.

3. 'cept: *sauf que*.

4. to wander away: *s'égarer*.

5. grief: *chagrin*.

**1** Tick the right box and justify your choice by quoting the text (2 quotations).

The story takes place in

the United States.       Canada.       England.

1. ...
2. ...

**2** Identify the characters. Tick the right boxes.

|              | <i>Mother</i> | <i>Father</i> | <i>Policeman</i> | <i>Missing boy</i> | <i>Other boy</i> | <i>Doctor</i> |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Mrs Dornan   |               |               |                  |                    |                  |               |
| Catherine    |               |               |                  |                    |                  |               |
| Manuel Ortiz |               |               |                  |                    |                  |               |
| Brian        |               |               |                  |                    |                  |               |
| Michael      |               |               |                  |                    |                  |               |

**3** Identify the place where each character is by writing the right letter in the box.

1.  Mrs Dornan
  2.  The police officer
  3.  Michael
  4.  The father
  5.  Brian
  6.  The grandmother
- a)* in hospital  
*b)* we don't know  
*c)* in a police car

**4** True (T) or false (F)? Justify by quoting the text.

1. Brian is a tall dark-haired teenager.       T    F ...
2. Michael is wearing a green jacket.       T    F ...
3. They come to New-York regularly.       T    F ...
4. They've come to New-York for a holiday.       T    F ...
5. Mrs Dornan's son has been arrested.       T    F ...
6. Her husband is going to be worried.       T    F ...
7. The policeman is a senior officer.       T    F ...

**5** Tick *all* the correct statements. There may be more than one correct answer for each question.

Michael

1.  looks like his brother.
2.  plays the violin.
3.  lives in Manhattan.
4.  realizes his mother is worried.

### The policeman

1.  is not used to helping people in trouble.
2.  would like Michael to stay with him.
3.  thinks perhaps Brian got lost.
4.  has no patience for hysterical women.

### Catherine

1.  is very upset.
2.  can't stand sitting there doing nothing.
3.  thinks her husband can wait.
4.  gives a detailed description of Brian.

### 6 Quote one sentence from the text which proves that

1. The mother is desperate: ...
2. Michael acts like an adult: ...
3. The policeman wants to reassure the mother: ...
4. The policeman does not keep Mrs Dornan with him: ...

### EXPRESSION

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#### Traiter les deux sujets.

- 1 On TV, Mrs Dornan asks viewers to help her find Brian. (Description of the boy, circumstances, etc.) (80 words)
- 2 Do you think that living in a big city is more dangerous for children than living in the country? (100 words)