



E-Book

Richard Musman

Escape in New York

English Readers



Klett

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Escape in New York

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Contents

Chapter 1

A meeting at Niagara Falls

Chapter 2

Journey to New York

Chapter 3

The search for Cathy begins

Chapter 4

Kevin tries again

Chapter 5

The guide

Chapter 6

A trip to Harlem

Chapter 7

Things go wrong

Chapter 8

Cathy comes to stay

Place names in New York

Activities

1 A meeting at Niagara Falls



The [coffee shop](#) was empty. Kevin pushed the cup away from him and placed his arms on the counter. He had just left school and was off 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. His Aunt Bella, who he was going to stay with, had found him the job, and he had had no difficulty in getting a [work permit](#).

A boy and a girl came into the coffee shop. "Hi, Kev!" "Hi, [Di](#)! Hi, [Doug](#)!" Everyone liked Kevin, but his friends knew that there were moments when he wanted to be left alone. Doug and Di [passed](#) him by and sat down at a table near the window. Kevin was thinking of his mother. She was going to marry a Toronto businessman he did not like. He had told his mother exactly what he thought of his future [stepfather](#). She had replied that [it was none of his business](#). "OK, Mom! Marry him, but don't expect me to come and live with you." "Do what you like, Kev," she had said. He did not want to live alone in the house in Niagara Falls, so he had written to his Aunt Bella. He and Aunt Bella were great friends.

The thunder of the waterfall [reminded](#) him that the only thing that was interesting in Niagara Falls, Canada, was the Falls! There was nothing to keep him at home. It was at that moment that he saw opposite him, on the other side of the counter, a girl he had never seen before. She had a [heart-shaped](#) face and a large mouth. Her hair was very dark and fell below her ears. Her [bangs](#) hung halfway down her [forehead](#).

"Want anything else, Kev?" asked Betty, the girl behind the counter. He and Betty had been at school together. She was pretty, but she had nothing interesting to talk about. He shook his head and looked again at the girl across the counter. Her eyes, which were a bright blue, were full of [anxiety](#), 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.

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 are doing this. You don't know me."

"Well, I'll be [honest](#) with you. You look as though you're in trouble. I wondered if perhaps I could help you."

She looked straight into his eyes. "You know, I could be rather angry. A complete stranger [interfering](#) in somebody else's [affairs](#)! It isn't usual, 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 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 rather not](#) talk about it, if you don't mind. I'll have that cup of coffee, though. Let's go and sit at a table. It's more comfortable."

Betty smiled to herself as she came to take their order. She would have liked to be in the girl's place, instead of serving her. But Kev had never been interested in her.

"Just two cups of coffee, please, Betty," Kevin said.

"OK, sir!" Betty said.

"Where do you come from?" Kevin asked the girl.

"New York."

"Is that where you've come from now?"

"No. I'm still at school. I go to a boarding school twenty miles 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 away from school, then?"

"No - it's the first day of the [vacation](#)."

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

"I'm Kevin Patterson. I live here in Niagara Falls. What's your name?"

"Cathy."

"Cathy who?"

"Cathy O'Brien."

They shook hands.

"Why won't you tell me what's the matter, Cathy?"

She did not answer for a moment, and then she spoke in such a low voice that he could hardly 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 noise - the Falls, I mean?"

"No, [I guess](#) we're used to it."

Betty brought two cups and poured in the coffee. Then, when Kevin did not look at her, she gave him a kick 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 by your [stepmother](#)?"

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."