

Melissa Blease, 25 years old now, takes a deep breath mixed with sorrowful sighs before telling her story...

1. Supposedly you're the one who ventures out into the world and parents are the ones who stay behind. It didn't turn out like that for me. Both my parents were teachers, imaginative and loving towards myself and my sister. I remember growing up in an environment full of attention, affection and security. My parents were married for 21 years and seemed to be close. There were moments when they argued but as a typically self-centred 16-year-old, I paid little attention to their heated debates.

2. I remember a row and raised voices upstairs. My mother dashed past me on the stairs carrying a suitcase, her face turned away from me. No explanation, nothing. I looked outside and saw a man sitting in a van. My mum got into the passenger seat and they drove off, followed by my dad who dashed after them in his own car. I don't know what he intended to do if he caught up with them, but he came back shortly afterwards. My sister and I sat in the kitchen too stunned to talk. My dad was distant and uncommunicative.

3. A few weeks later, my dad found a new job in London. He wanted me to go and live with him, but I resented. My sister went to stay with her boyfriend's family. My mum, I guessed, was with the man in the van. And that was it: the end of life as my family knew it. I was alone. The days that followed were depressing, confusing. I tried vainly to enjoy my new-found freedom, but really I was anxiously worried about my parents' wellbeing. I was angry but I couldn't allow myself to admit the deep hurt they caused me.

4. I threw myself into socialising, inviting friends over for endless all-night parties. The family home I'd lived in for 10 years began to resemble a trash can. One by one, the utilities were switched off; the TV was taken away and the furniture mysteriously disappeared. Eventually the house was sold. I was glad that I could finally leave home myself. I used to feel bad when people asked, "When did you leave home?" , not wanting to admit to such a bitter truth. Now I don't mind saying, "I didn't leave home - my parents did it for me."

**By: Melissa Blease**



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## I/ READING COMPREHENSION;

### 1. Tick (✓) the most appropriate alternative

In telling her story, Melissa expresses:

- a. her gratitude to her parents for their endless support.
- b. her hatred and resentment towards her parents for leaving her alone.
- c. her mixed feelings of love, sorrow and nostalgia for her lost family.

### 2. Find in the text details showing that the following statements are false

- a. Melissa used to live with her parents in terrible conditions before their disappearance. (P.1)

.....

- b. Melissa's parents left their daughters to care for themselves and quit home together. (P.2)

.....

Despite her sadness to be left alone, Melissa enjoyed her new life of liberty. (P.3)

.....

Melissa was indifferent to her parents' sudden departure. (P.3)

.....

### Answer the following questions

- c. According to you, who's responsible for the whole mess that happened to the family? Why?

.....



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d. How did Melissa manage her life after she had been left alone at home?

.....

**Find in the text 2 details showing how Melissa has changed her attitude towards her parents after their departure?**

a- First attitude:.....

b- Second attitude:.....

**Find in the text words or expressions meaning nearly the same as**

e. Extremely surprised and shocked (P.2):

.....

f. Unsuccessfully, to no purpose (P.3):

.....

g. Comfort, safety and happiness (paragraph 3):

.....

**What do the underlined words refer to?**

a. 'them' (P.2) refers to:

.....

b. 'such a bitter truth' (P.4) refers to:

.....

**Give a personal justified answer to the following question.**

- What do you think of Melissa?

I think Melissa is .....because

.....

.....

.....



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