

49 "Give me all your money," he repeated, but with less conviction.
 "Get out of this building!" I retorted.
 "Give me –" he began again.
 "Didn't you hear me?" I cut in. "Get out of here. Get out of here now."
 Suddenly he glanced up the stairs. "Well," he said, "okay". And he slipped out of the building
 50 just as smoothly as he had entered it.
 For a moment, I stood there in a daze⁶, and then my knees
 began to shake. I put the grocery bags down on the floor and
 ran upstairs as fast as my wet-noodle legs would take me.

DANA T. PAYNE, *True Tales of American Life* (2001)

1. **deli** (n.): (short for "delicatessen") grocery selling fine, ethnic food
2. **stoop**: (US) small porch with steps in front of houses
3. **fan** (v): what you do (with your hand or any other device) to create a current of air
4. **rent week**: time when your rent (what you pay for the use of a flat or house) is due
5. **foyer** /'fɔ:ɪ/ (n.): (US) hall d'entrée
6. in a **daze**: stupefied

OUTLINE

Read from line 1 down to line 21

- a. Where and when is the story set?
- b. Pick out the following information about the narrator:

name	address (spot it on the map)	occupation	financial situation

RECAP what you've learnt about the narrator.

READ & REPLY

Read the text again down to line 21

- 1 a. Dana remembers New York in the summer-time. Would you say the atmosphere was:
 hostile – peaceful – lively – stuffy?
 Justify your choices.
- b. Pick out expressions showing that Dana felt safe in this neighbourhood.
- 2 Paragraph 3 opens with the following words: "On one hot Thursday evening...". What do you expect to read now?

Read from line 22 down to the end

- 3 Say in one sentence what happened to Dana on that "hot Thursday evening".
- 4 a. Explain why physically Dana and the man were not on equal grounds. Complete the grid with elements from the text:

Dana	the assailant
	tall,...



- b. Which of the following adjectives best qualify Dana's first reaction? (Justify.)
 instinctive – cowardly – fearless – thoughtless –
 sensible – brave
- c. Explain what prompted her reaction.
- 5 Pick out elements showing how she reacted in retrospect to the event.

RECAP the different stages of Dana's understanding and handling of the incident.

TRANSLATION

Translate from line 12 ("At night...") to line 17 ("... those days.")

WRITING

Imagine Dana's conversation with Elliot, her closest neighbour, after the mugger left. (200-250 words).

► See CAN YOU write a dialogue? p. 21