

**Moira and the Gunman**  
*Type Bac Comprehension Exercise*

**I. Where does the scene take place? Justify with a quotation.**

- 1- in Ulster                      2- in Eire                      3- in England

**II. When does the scene take place? Justify with a quotation**

- 1- in the morning              2- around lunch              3- in the evening

**III. Who or what do the underlined words refer to?**

- 1- l.1: "He came back and ..."  
2- l. 11: "than the rest of us."  
3- l. 12: "She turned and stared at..."  
4- l. 25: "what to do with it."  
5- l. 27: "I'll shut it for you."  
6- l. 32: "Not mine, not ..."

**IV. The characters and their attitudes:**

- 1- Pick out one sentence showing that **Dillon** cares for his wife.  
2- Which 2 adjectives apply best to **Moira**? Justify with 1 quotation per word:  
a- insulting      b- submissive      c- fearful      d- provocative  
e- unconcerned  
3- The **gunman** is :      a- young                      b- middle-aged                      c- old ?  
Justify with a quotation.  
4- **True or False**: Justify with a quotation from the text.  
a- The gunman despises (*méprise*) Moira.  
b- The gunman is not wearing a mask.

**V. Moira's arguments:** Choose the arguments really mentioned by Moira in the passage.

- 1- Only few Catholics would support the IRA at an election.  
2- All the paramilitary groups in Ireland swindle (*extorquent*) money from people.  
3- If they were given power, the IRA would be unable to govern the country.  
4- The IRA use children to fight against British troops.

**VI. Vocabulary: Find the translations** of these words or expressions in the text.

Indicate the line. (*in the right order*)

- 1- Ça ne vous regarde pas                      4- mon œil !  
2- fixa du regard                      5- je gaspille ma salive  
3- une bande d'escrocs                      6- sans cligner des yeux

**VII. Bonus :** (*ou à traiter en homework*)

- 1- How do you consider Moira's attitude? Justify in your own words (30 words)  
She is : a- courageous                      b- stupid                      c- heroic  
2- How do you consider Dillon's attitude? Justify in your own words (30 words)  
He is : a- fearful                      b- cowardly                      c- cautious (*prudent*)

# Moira and the gunman

*Moira and her husband Dillon are being held hostage by the IRA<sup>1</sup> in their Belfast home. An IRA member is keeping watch on them.*



1 He came back and sat  
down again, facing Moira  
and Dillon. "You people are  
Catholics, is that right?" he  
5 asked.

"None of your business,"  
Moira said.

"I mean, if you saw anything you shouldn't I don't think either of you  
would say anythin', would you? *Would you?* I'm not threatenin', mind.  
10 I know you probably don't have any more time for the Brits<sup>2</sup> than the  
rest of us."

"Do you, indeed?" Moira said. She turned and stared at him. At once  
Dillon took hold of her hand, squeezing it in warning. But she pulled  
free and turned again to the gunman. "Who the hell do you think you  
15 are, telling us what to do? Do you know what I've been sitting here think-  
ing? Whose fault is it that you're in my house tonight? It's my fault. I  
don't know how we let you get this far. If there was a vote tomorrow  
among the Catholics in Northern Ireland you wouldn't get five per cent  
of it. You're just a bunch of crooks, IRA or UDA<sup>3</sup>, Protestants or  
20 Catholics, you're all in the same business. Racketeers, the bunch of you.  
There isn't a building site in this city or a pub that you or the UDA don't  
hold up for protection money. *Protection money!* Military operation,  
my foot! You've made this place into a bloody shambles and if it was  
handed over to your crowd tomorrow, lock, stock and barrel, you  
25 wouldn't have the first notion of what to do with it."

"Shut your mouth," the tall youth said. "Do you hear me? Shut your  
mouth, or I'll shut it for you."

"Go on, hit me, hit me," Moira said.

"What's the use? You're just a woman, you don't know what you're  
30 talking about."

"No? I'll tell you one thing I *do* know. You're not fighting for any-  
body's freedom. Not mine, not the people of Northern Ireland's, not  
anybody's. The only thing you're doing is making people hate each other  
worse than ever. Maybe that's what you want, isn't it? Because if the  
35 Catholics here stopped hating the Prods<sup>4</sup>, where would the IRA be?  
And the worst of it is, I'm wasting my breath talking to you because  
you're too stupid to know the harm you've done."

The faceless eyes in the woollen mask stared at her, unblinking. "Have  
you finished?"

1. IRA : Irish Republican  
Army (Catholics)

2. The Brits (slang) : the  
British

3. UDA : Ulster Defence  
Association (Protestants)

4. The Prods (slang) : the  
Protestants