

Cambridge English Readers

Level 1

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Ten Long Years

Alan Battersby



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People in the story

Nat Marley: a New York private investigator

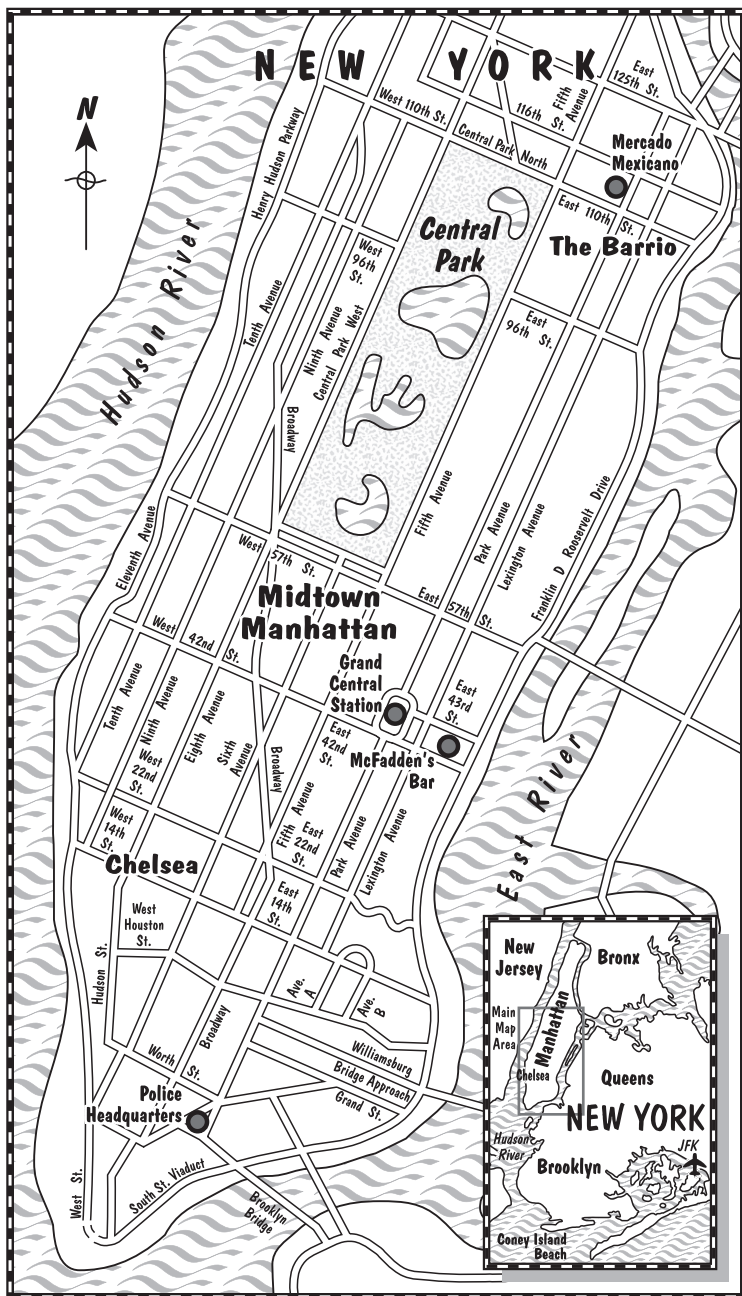
Jorge Hernandez: Nat Marley's client

Stella Delgado: Nat Marley's personal assistant

Mike Lopez: an old friend of Jorge Hernandez

Joe Blaney: a friend of Nat Marley, ex-NYPD (New York Police Department)

Captain Oldenberg: a police officer with the NYPD



Chapter 1 *McFadden's Bar*

One April evening, I went for a beer after work in McFadden's Bar on Second Avenue. A lot of people were in there, but I found a table. I sat down with my drink and started to read the *Daily News*.

The name's Nat Marley and I'm a New York private investigator. Before that, I was a cop – an NYPD police officer. That's why I know the streets of this city well – which is a great help in my job. People can't always get what they need from the police. Sometimes a wife wants to know if her husband is seeing another woman. Or a parent wants to find their teenage son. That's when they ask for my help.

A guy walked over to my table and asked, "Can I sit here?"

"Of course," I replied.

He had dark hair and a friendly face. His jacket and jeans looked old. He was about thirty-five years old, I thought. In his hand there was a big glass of beer. He put it on the table and smiled at it. Then he turned to me and said, "Doesn't that look beautiful after ten years without a beer?"

He drank fast, closed his eyes and smiled again. "I can't tell you how good that was!" he said.

I put my newspaper down and asked, "Can I get you another drink? You're a thirsty guy."

"That's real kind of you," he replied.

I bought him a beer. This time he drank slowly.



“You didn’t have a beer for ten years. Where were you? Saudi Arabia?” I asked.

He waited a minute before speaking. “Someplace where you have a lot of time to think,” he replied. “Someplace where you don’t want to be. A cold, gray world. A world where you can shout, but no one hears. You can talk, but no one listens.”

I understood, but I didn't want to ask any questions just then.

"It feels good to be back in the city again," he went on. "There's no city like New York. But what do you do, mister?"

"The name's Nat Marley," I said. "I'm a private investigator." I gave him my card.

"That's an interesting job," he said. "You must meet all kinds of people." Then he stood up and said, "I'm sorry, I need to go. It's the beer. My head feels kind of funny."

After he went, I thought, "Am I going to see him again?"

