

Eilis, a young Irish girl who emigrated to the USA to find a better life, goes back to Ireland after her sister's death. She has never told her mother that she is now married to an Italian immigrant.

She thought she was going to be able to speak now, but she found that she could not. Her mother turned around again and looked at her. "Are you all right? Are you upset?" "Mammy, there's something I should have told you when I came back first but I have to tell you now. I got married in Brooklyn before I came home." (...) "Is he American?" "He is, Mammy. He's from Brooklyn." Her mother **sighed** (...). She **nodded** her head slowly." "Eily, if you are married, you should be with your husband." "I know." Eilis started to cry and put her head down on her arms. (...) "Is he nice, Eily?" She nodded. "He is," she said. "If you married him, he'd have to be nice, that's what I think," she said. Her mother's voice was soft and low and reassuring, but Eilis could see from the look in her eyes how much effort she was putting into saying as little as possible of what she felt. "I have to go back," Eilis said. (...) "And you kept this from me all the time?" her mother said.

"I am sorry, Mammy." She began to cry again. "You didn't have to marry him? You weren't in trouble?" her mother asked. "No." "And tell me something: if you hadn't married him, would you still be going back?" "I don't know," Eilis said.

sigh (v.) = soupirer

nod (v.) = hocher la tête

“I’m going to bed because I’m tired and so I won’t see you in the morning. So I’ll say goodbye now.” “It’s still early,” Eilis said. “I’d rather say goodbye now and only once.” (...) Her mother came towards her, and, as Eilis stood up, she embraced her.” Eily, **you’re not to** cry. If you made a decision to marry someone, then he’d have to be very nice and kind and very special.” (...) “He is, Mammy.” “Well, that’s a match, then, because you’re all of those things as well. And I’ll miss you. But he must be missing you too.”

Colm Tóibín, *Brooklyn*, 2009

you’re not to (exp.) = you mustn’t/shouln’t