U5 DOC A Hy Conrad , The Burning Bengalow, 2016

"Mom, please, I've never been inside a fire scene," Jonah whined.

"And you're not getting into this one," Carol said flatly. They were standing in front of a small bungalow on Beaverton's north side. The charred walls were still standing, but the fire had been intense enough to kill the home's single resident, a pretty, young waitress named Sarah Simmons who had lived there with her beloved cat. The arson investigator was here to determine if it was an accident or not, while Detective Bixby was on hand to oversee the removal of the body and preserve the scene, in case it proved to be homicide.



Jonah's mother joined the other investigators inside the bungalow, leaving him alone on the porch. "I tried to stop her, but she wouldn't listen," said a choked voice from behind him. Jonah turned to see a nervous little man with a thin, hawk-like face. He introduced himself as Billy Borenson, Sarah's neighbor.

"I just came home from the grocery store when I saw the fire." He pointed to his car, parked haphazardly in the driveway of the bungalow next door. "Her house was filled with flames. They were coming out the windows. I'm the one who called 911," he said, rather proudly. "I guess everyone else on the block was at work or something."

Jonah had no reason not to like Billy Borenson, but he didn't need a reason. The guy just seemed creepy. "What do you mean, you tried to stop her?"

"Oh, I mean Sarah. I would have gone in to save her, you know. But she came out just as I was about to. We stood on the lawn together, just waiting for the fire engines. And then I was dumb enough to ask about her cat, Mr. Tibbs. Before I could stop her, Sarah was running back in the house, calling for her cat."

"Why didn't you go in after her?" Jonah asked. He was a little irritated by the man's false boasts of bravery.

"That would've been suicide," Borenson said. "There were flames everywhere, even on the floor..." He stopped as he saw a younger man running up the driveway. "Uh-oh," he whispered to Jonah. "That's Sarah's boyfriend. Ex-boyfriend, I mean."

The man joined them on the porch, looking dazed. "What happened?" he asked, looking through the doorway and into the charred house. "I was here just an hour ago."

"I know," said Billy Borenson. "I could hear you and Sarah fighting from my house."

"What Sarah and I do is none of your business," the boyfriend snapped.

"Maybe," said Borenson. "But you were pretty mad. The firefighters think it might have been started by a cigarette in a trash can." Jonah's head was at about the same height as the boyfriend's chest, and he could easily see a pack of cigarettes stuffed into his shirt pocket.

"Really?" The boyfriend shrugged. "Where's Sarah?"

Neither Borenson nor Jonah had to answer that question, for just a second later two officers emerged through the doorway carrying a black plastic body bag. "Sarah!" the boyfriend shouted and almost dove at the bag.

"Please, sir, step back," said one of the officers. But Sarah's boyfriend stayed with them, calling out her name, all the way to the medical examiner's van.

Jonah looked back into the house. His mother and the arson investigator stood on the blackened remains of the living room rug. Right by their feet was a perfectly preserved piece of green carpet outlining the spot where Sarah's body had been lying.

Jonah wanted to go in and maybe have a look around. But he restrained himself. A few minutes later, Carol Bixby came out. "They think it's arson," she said simply. "So this is a murder scene."

"I know."

Carol recognized that tone of voice. "Okay, Jonah. What exactly do you know?"

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1. Make a presentation of the document. (type, author, main topic)

2. What about the situation? Where is the scene set and what has just happened?

3. Who are the characters present and mentioned in this text?

The victim (s)	witnesses	Investigators

4. This document falls into parts :

5. What do you you about the antecedents?

6. Explain the reason why the detective rather think this must be a murder. What must be the clue?

7. What are the elements showing the narrator does not fully believe in his version.

8. Describe and qualify Billy's reaction when Sarah's boyfriend arrives.

9. Whom must Jonah suspect of murder?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

10. Do you agree with him? Who do you think is the murderer? Use the expression of hypothesis with modals (must / can / could / may / might) to explain the murderer's motive.

11. How the victim must have been killed?

LIVEWORKSHEETS