

Katie Melua was born in Georgia: not the one in America, but the one that is quite near Turkey. She moved to Belfast in Northern Ireland with her family when she was eight. The people in Northern Ireland were very friendly to her and she made really good friends at school there. When she was thirteen, she dreamed of becoming a politician (she thought she could make the world peaceful if she controlled it!) or a historian. After five years of living in Belfast, her family moved to London. Two years later, she was in a talent competition on television, she sang "Without You" (a Mariah Carey song) and won! The competition gave her experience of performing live on national TV.

Later, she went to a performing arts school. While she was there, she found out about different kinds of music. She wrote a song about Eva Cassidy called "Faraway Voice": Katie really liked one of Eva's songs and wrote it when she learned that the singer was dead. She sang this song when Mike Batt, a successful songwriter and producer, came to her school. He could see Katie's talent and asked her to work with him. "The Closest Thing to Crazy" became her first hit in the summer of 2003.

Since then, she has won many awards and her records have sold very well: I'm sure you have heard "Nine Million Bicycles" on the radio! She has performed for the British, Dutch and Norwegian royal families. She has also done a lot of concerts, both in big arenas and smaller clubs. She likes playing in small places because you can feel closer to other people in them.

She is an ambassador for a charity called *Save the Children* and has visited Sri Lanka to see the work that it is doing there. She performed at 46664, a concert organised by Nelson Mandela to get money for people with AIDS. She was on a new version of "Do They Know It's Christmas?", a song written more than twenty years ago to get money for poor people in Africa. She also sang on a new version of "Tears In Heaven": it was recorded to raise money for people who lost their homes and families because of the tsunami.

She is a talented young woman with a good heart.

(adapted from [www.katiemelua.com](http://www.katiemelua.com))

- Katie Melua was born in \_\_\_\_\_.  
 A. Northern Ireland.                      B. the USA.  
 C. the former Soviet Union.              D. Turkey.
- She first appeared on TV when she was \_\_\_\_\_ years old.  
 A. 15                      B. 13                      C. 8                      D. 18

3. One of her songs was dedicated to a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. historian      B. politician      C. singer      D. actress
4. Katie was noticed by a famous producer \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. at a talent competition.      B. on TV.  
C. in a school.      D. in a club.
5. Katie prefers to sing \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. in big concert halls.      B. in small clubs.  
C. at private parties.      D. in stadiums.
6. Katie helped to raise money for \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. children, people with AIDS and tsunami victims.  
B. children and people with AIDS.  
C. children and tsunami victims.  
D. people with AIDS and tsunami victims.
7. "Do They Know It's Christmas?" was written in \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. the early 90s      B. the late 90s      C. 2003      D. the 80s



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### A FAMILY TRAGEDY

Today, Cecile Dionne looks much like any other suburban grandmother, but she and her four identical sisters were once the most celebrated children on the face of the planet. They were known to the world as the Dionne Quintuplets.

25-year-old Elzire Dionne, already the mother of five children, gave birth to the quintuplets in May, 1934. Identical sisters were born in the family home in rural Ontario. No one expected the five tiny infants to survive. But when Annette, Emilie, Yvonne, Cecile and Marie did – the first quintuplets ever do so – they became a sensation.

Within days of their birth, their father sold a promoter the rights to exhibit his daughters. Stung by the resultant public outcry, the Ontario government stepped in. The girls were taken away from their parents and placed under the care of a board of guardians.

It was not long, however, before the guardians, too, began to exploit them. The Ontario authorities built a nine-room nursery on Oliva's farm right across the road from the family home, later expanding it into a bizarre facility nicknamed "Quintland". It included a horseshoe-shaped observatory, where crowds peered through screened glass

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windows while the little girls played. The quints soon developed into a major tourist attraction, drawing as many as 10,000 visitors a month.

The quints should have earned a fortune, certainly enough to last them the rest of their lives. They were on the covers of magazines. They appeared in films and on radio. Still, by the time they were seven years old in 1941, \$1 million had accumulated in a trust account held for the girls until they turned 21 in 1955. The quints were finally reunited with their parents and siblings (three more were born after them) when they were nine. Around that time, the parents won back custody of the girls and greater access to the trust fund fed by their earnings.

Cecile has decidedly mixed feelings about her parents. In television drama her mother is portrayed as consumed by love for the five little girls. That is not the way Cecile remembered her. "I didn't even really know my mother. She was always too busy. But I suppose there were too many for her to love. After all, she already had seven other kids by the time we went back to the big house." If there is a glimmer of sympathy in Cecile's attitude to her mother, there is little for her father. "He was a difficult man to know and communicate," she says.

The difficult moments came later, after the Dionnes were reunited. There were two distinct entities in the family. On the one hand, there were the five little girls who had finally returned home. On the other, there were brothers and sisters who were both proud and envious at the same time. It was not an easy situation. Cecile remembers it well. "We lived separate lives," she says. "But there was always so much tension in our relationships, always so many quarrels. Our brothers and sisters, even our parents, always thought that we were the cause of their misery, their unhappiness."

1. The Dionne sisters became so famous because they were the only quintuplets \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. who had lived past infancy.
  - B. who were not born in a hospital.
  - C. whose mother had already had children.
  - D. who nearly died at birth.
2. Why did the Ontario government take the girls away from their parents?
  - A. They thought their parents would cause problems.
  - B. They thought their father was exploiting them.
  - C. They responded to people's reaction to the quints' situation.
  - D. They wanted to make money out of the girls.

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3. What is Cecile's lasting impression of the quint's early years at Quintland?
  - A. The nurses were cruel to them.
  - B. The other quint's missed their parents.
  - C. People made a lot of fuss of them.
  - D. They had very little privacy.
4. What happened when the quint's were nine?
  - A. Their mother had triplets.
  - B. They gained more control over their finances.
  - C. They earned \$1 million dollars.
  - D. They went back to live with the rest of the family.
5. How does Cecile feel about her parents?
  - A. She feels sorry for them both for having had such a large family.
  - B. She appreciates the difficulty of her mother's situation.
  - C. She wishes she had been able to talk to her father.
  - D. She feels they were not properly portrayed in a book and TV programme.
6. Why was life more difficult when the quint's moved back to live with their family?
  - A. The family were divided over what to do with quint's earnings.
  - B. The other Dionne children felt ambivalent about them.
  - C. The girls couldn't spend as much time together as they had before.
  - D. They made the rest of the family miserable by quarrelling all the time.
7. How does the writer of the article react to Cecile's account of her childhood?
  - A. She is not convicted by it.
  - B. She accepts it as fact.
  - C. She thinks Cecile is concealing the truth.
  - D. She thinks Cecile is exaggerating.

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### THE BEST OF FRIENDS

The evidence for harmony in the family may not be obvious in some households. But it seems that four out of five young people now get on with their parents, which is the opposite of the popularly-held image of sullen teenagers locked in their room after endless family rows. An important new study into teenage attitudes surprisingly reveals that their family life is more harmonious than it has ever been in the past: more than half of 13 to 18-year-olds get on with their brothers. Eighty-five per cent of 13 to 18-year-olds agree with the statement "I'm happy with my family life," while a majority said their lives were "happy", "fun" and "carefree". Only one in ten said that they definitely did not get on with their parents.

"We were surprised by just how positive today's young people seem to be about their families," said one member of the research team. "There're expected to be rebellious and selfish but actually they have other things on their minds; they want a car and material goods, and they worry about whether school is serving them well. There's more negotiation and discussion between parents and children, and children expect to participate in the family decision-making process. They don't want to rock the boat."

So it seems that this generation of parents is much more likely than parents of 30 years ago to treat their children as friends rather than subordinates. There are actual statements to back this up. "My parents are happy to discuss things with me and make compromises," says 17-year-old Daniel Lazall. I always tell them when I'm going out climbing, or which girl I'm going out with. As long as they know what I'm doing, they are fine with it."

Susan Crome, who is now 21, agrees. "Looking back on the last ten years, there was a lot of what you could call negotiation... or you might have called it bribery. But as long as I'd done all my housework, I could go out on a Saturday night. But I think my grandparents were a lot

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stricter with their children." But maybe this positive view of family life should not be unexpected. It is possible that ideas of adolescence being a difficult time are not rooted in real facts. A psychologist comments, "Our surprise that teenagers say they get along well with their parents comes because of a brief period in our social history when teenagers were identified as different beings. But the idea of rebelling and breaking away from their parents really only happened during that one time in the 1960s when everyone rebelled. The normal situation throughout history has been a smooth transition from helping out with the family business to taking it over."

"The present generation has grown up in a period of economic growth, and as a result teenagers appear to believe much more in individualism and self-reliance than in the past. **That** has contributed to their confidence in the fairness of life, and thus to a general peace within the family unit."

But is life really fair? Nine out of ten young people think "if you work hard enough, you will get just rewards." However, some recognized that this was not actually inevitable – and not always fair. "If you have fewer opportunities and live in an inner city," one 15-year-old boy told researchers, "you've got to work 110 per cent. Otherwise you can work 50 per cent and get away with it."

But greater family stability has to be a good place for young people to start out in life, and the findings of the study supports this. In spite of some gloomy forecasts about the decline of the family, the future looks good!

1. What is important about the study into teenage attitude?
  - A. It confirms previous findings.
  - B. It gives actual figures for its results.
  - C. It shows that most teenagers do not get on with their parents.
  - D. It identifies unexpected facts about family relationships.
2. What is surprising about young people today, according to the research team?
  - A. They worry about being rebellious.
  - B. They think that education is important.
  - C. They negotiate with their parents.
  - D. They discuss things with their families.
3. Daniel Lazall and Susan Crome \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. have very different opinions about parents.
  - B. could both talk to their parents honestly.
  - C. had no limits placed on what they were allowed to do.
  - D. are both very responsible.

4. The writer says that "the positive view of family life should not be unexpected" because \_\_\_\_\_
- A. a happy family is the normal situation.
  - B. this view comes from a specific time in the past.
  - C. parents allow children a lot of freedom nowadays.
  - D. children can be bribed to behave well.
5. What does underlined "that" refer to?
- A. a period of economic growth
  - B. a belief in individualism and self-reliance
  - C. an attitude held only in the past
  - D. a confidence in the fairness of life
6. What do some young people believe about life today?
- A. It always gives everyone a fair chance.
  - B. Making money is the most important goal.
  - C. Some people have to work longer than others.
  - D. Not everyone have equal opportunities.
7. The purpose of the article is to \_\_\_\_\_
- A. help people improve family relationships.
  - B. show young people how to choose a career.
  - C. demonstrate that popular ideas about relationships may be false.
  - D. suggest ways of educating children in developing relationships.

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