

Aunt Casey

'Hey, Addo, look what I found,' she said, pulling a key from one of her many pockets. I didn't ask her where she 'found' it. It was better that I didn't know.

'Do you want to take out a rowing boat?' she asked. But a question from Aunt Casey was not a question: it was a suggestion that was always going to be enacted. She knew it, and so did I. It was her enthusiasm that made her impossible to resist; it infected all those around her, especially me.

'I know we are only supposed to be *strolling* along the river ...' She had unlocked the shed and single-handedly pulled a boat down to the sandy bank before she had finished her sentence. '... but I thought it was high time my favourite nephew and I had a bit of fun!'

'Are you sure? After last time?' But my attempt to put the brakes on this was purely token. I was already in the boat when I questioned her. There was nothing better than hanging out with Aunt

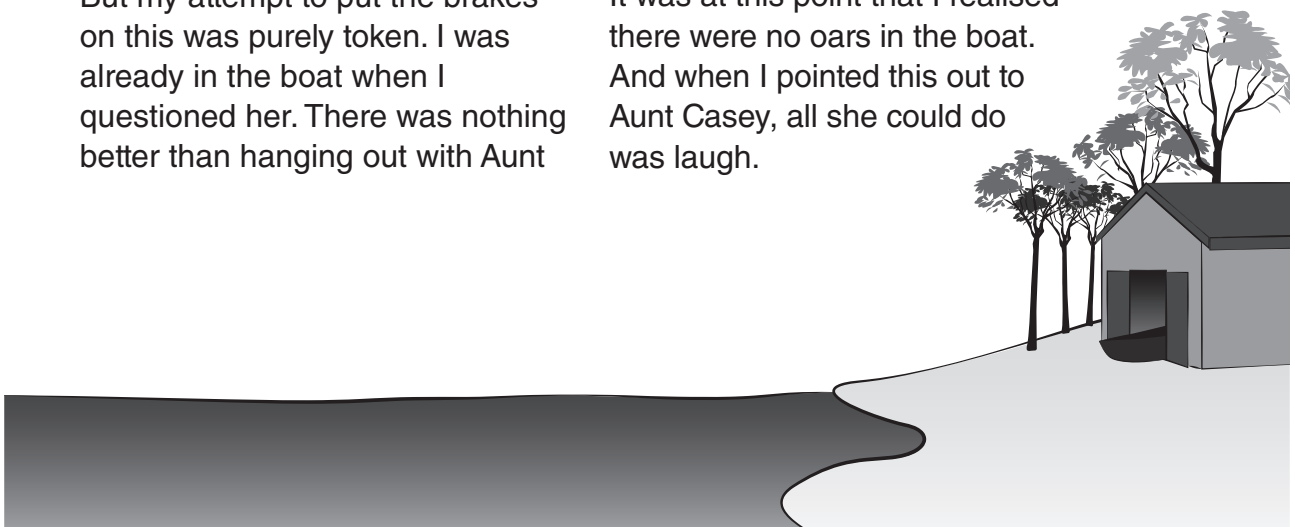
Casey, even if it always meant me putting my life in danger, perhaps because it meant me putting my life in danger. 'Shouldn't we have life-jackets?'

But she had pushed us off.

Jumping into the boat, the bottom of her trousers sopping wet, she dismissed my arguments with a wave of her hand. She stood at the back of the boat, feet apart, rocking from side to side. She wasn't trying to scare me; she was trying to scare herself. My emotions were secondary.

'Let's head for the other bank,' she said throwing her arm in the direction of an old twisted tree, her momentum almost tipping us out of the boat. 'Be a darling and row for me. A strong, young lad like you should be able to row there in no time.'

It was at this point that I realised there were no oars in the boat. And when I pointed this out to Aunt Casey, all she could do was laugh.



PAIS Sample Questions

- 1** Which word best describes Aunt Casey's attitude to life?
- A** reckless
 - B** intolerant
 - C** thoughtful
 - D** responsible
- 2** Why didn't Addo ask Aunt Casey where she found the key?
- A** He expected she might take too long to explain.
 - B** He knew if he asked he would sound ungrateful.
 - C** He realised she had done something mischievous.
 - D** He thought she would not answer him truthfully.
- 3** What is Addo most likely thinking at the end of the text?
- A** Aunt Casey did this on purpose.
 - B** This has turned into the best day ever.
 - C** I can't wait to tell my parents about this.
 - D** I knew something like this would happen.