

Extract: THE BOY IN THE STRIPPED PJAMAS (John Boyne)

1. One afternoon, when Bruno came home from school, he was surprised to find Maria, the family's **maid**¹ - who always kept her head **bowed**² and never looked up from the carpet - standing in his bedroom, pulling all his belongings out of the wardrobe and packing them in four large wooden **crates**³, even the things he'd hidden at the back that belonged to him and were nobody else's business.
2. 'What are you doing?' he asked in as polite a tone as he could **muster**⁴, for although he wasn't happy to come home and find someone going through his possessions, his mother had always told him that he was to treat Maria respectfully and not just imitate the way Father spoke to her. 'You take your hands off my things.' Maria shook her head and pointed towards the staircase behind him, where Bruno's mother had just appeared. She was a tall woman with long red hair that she **bundled**⁵ into a sort of net behind her head, and she was twisting her hands together nervously as if there was something she didn't want to have to say or something she didn't want to have to believe.
3. 'Mother,' said Bruno, marching towards her, 'what's going on? Why is Maria going through my things?' 'She's packing them,' explained Mother. 'Packing them?' he asked, running quickly through the events of the previous few days to consider whether he'd been particularly **naughty**⁶ or had used those words out loud that he wasn't allowed to use and was being sent away because of it. He couldn't think of anything though. In fact over the last few days he had behaved in a perfectly **decent** manner to everyone and couldn't remember causing any chaos at all. 'Why?' he asked then. 'What have I done?'

¹ Maid: (noun) a woman who works as a servant

² Bowed: (adverb) bent over

³ Crate: (noun) a large wooden box for packing, storing or sending things

⁴ Muster: (verb) to produce or encourage something, such as an emotion or support

⁵ Bundle: (verb) to fasten or hold together many things

⁶ Naughty: (adjective) to behave badly (children)

COMPREHENSION B1: 3



Questions

1. From the first paragraph we can see that Maria
 - a) was treated like another member of the family
 - b) often spent time with Bruno
 - c) did not usually draw attention to herself

2. The second paragraph shows that the boy
 - a) tries to be polite and obedient
 - b) tries to imitate his father's behaviour.
 - c) tries to intimidate Maria.

3. Based on the third paragraph, which of the following is true?
 - a) Bruno thinks that what's happening is a punishment.
 - b) Bruno remembers all the bad things he has done recently.
 - c) Bruno wishes he had behaved better.

SEE ANSWERS OVERLEAF



COMPREHENSION B1: 3

Answers

1. c
2. a
3. a