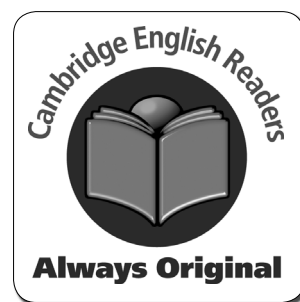


# Worksheet

## Level 6



### The Best of Times? Alan Maley

#### Before reading \_\_\_\_\_

1. Look at the title. What do you think it means?
2. Look at the front cover of the book. What does it show? What sort of story do you think this will be?
3. Read the blurb on the back cover. Is it the best of times now? Why/why not? Who seems to be the protagonist?
4. Look at the list of characters on page 4. There are two main sets of characters. How would you group them?
5. Read page 112. Summarise what you read in one sentence.
6. If you have the recording, listen to Chapter 1.

#### Check your reading \_\_\_\_\_

##### Chapter 1

1. What does the title of this chapter make you think of?
2. Who is narrating the story?
3. Who is ill in hospital?
4. How does he feel?
5. What makes him feel better?
6. Where was he in the morning?
7. What do you think has happened?

##### Chapter 2

1. Which of these statements is true?
  - a) Much of this chapter is a flashback to the past.
  - b) Chee Seng's father was very good to him when he was young.
  - c) Chee Seng's mother was very good at business.
  - d) He remembers his sixteenth birthday party.
  - e) His mother prepared all the food.
  - f) He invited only a few people to his party.

2. What does he notice about his parents' interaction with Auntie Veena?
  - a) his mother's
  - b) his father's
3. What is the image that keeps on coming back to him?

##### Chapter 3

1. What changes does Chee Seng notice in
  - a) his father?
  - b) his mother?
  - c) the maid?
  - d) the house?
  - e) what the family does?
2. Why did Chee Seng's mother have a swollen eye one morning?
3. Who does Chee Seng find with his father when he comes home early?
4. What do you think the problem is with Chee Seng's parents?

##### Chapter 4

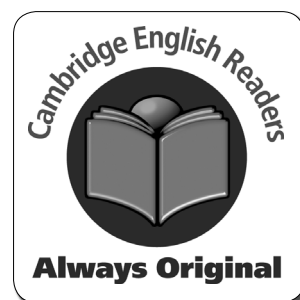
1. Who
  - a) doesn't want to eat anything?
  - b) gives Chee Seng a hug to make him feel better?
  - c) shouts at Chee Seng?
  - d) has left home?
  - e) comes to talk to Wei Fong?
  - f) tells Chee Seng everything will be all right?

##### Chapter 5

1. Which of these things happened to Chee Seng after his father left?
  - a) he had bad dreams
  - b) his school friends ignored him
  - c) his mother was always very nice to him
  - d) his school grades got worse
  - e) he ate badly
  - f) he slept all the time
2. What happened when Chee Seng's father rang him?

# Worksheet

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### The Best of Times? Alan Maley

#### Chapter 6

- Put the following statements in the correct order.
  - One evening Chee Seng goes to play on the proper playing field.
  - Chee Seng's mother criticises him all the time.
  - Puri has to go home to look after her family.
  - Raj gets killed by a taxi.
  - Chee Seng's mother gets a job.

#### Chapter 7

- Match the following people with the things they say or think below.
  - Chee Seng
  - Ka Ting
  - Auntie Swee Eng
  - 'Man, you should start to live'
  - 'I have a good feeling about you and your mum'
  - 'I don't have anyone I like that much'
  - I felt more and more that I was on my own.
  - 'Mum is sometimes a bit hard on you.'
  - 'How about Jessica?...I think she likes you.'

#### Chapter 8

- Answer these questions with short answers:
  - Why is Jessica having a party?
  - When does Chee Seng's mother want him home?
  - What happens between Chee Seng and Jessica before the party?
  - How do they get into the Pop Inn when they're under eighteen?
  - Chee Seng kisses Jessica first. True or False?
  - What do you think the small white pills are?
  - Why does Chee Seng panic when they get to Jessica's house?
  - Who does Chee Seng meet at Jessica's house?
  - Why isn't Chee Seng's mother at home?
  - Why is it good for Chee Seng that Auntie Swee Eng is at his house?

#### Chapter 9

- Match the beginnings and the endings of the sentences:
  - Chee Seng feels
  - Ka Ting invites
  - Chee Seng's mother says
  - Chee Seng's mother goes
  - At the party Chee Seng doesn't take
  - Chee Seng looks after
  - that he can't go to Ka Ting's party.
  - any of the white pills Ka Ting gives him.
  - bad for most of the day after the party.
  - Jessica and gets her home on time.
  - out to dinner, so he goes to the party anyway.
  - Chee Seng to a party at his house next Saturday.
- What happens when Chee Seng gets back home?

#### Chapter 10

Complete this summary.

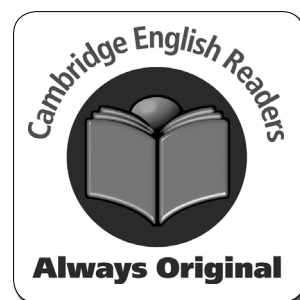
When Chee Seng gets home his mother is very angry and she \_\_\_\_\_ (1) him across the face. Next day she tells him he can't go to any more parties and she stops his \_\_\_\_\_ (2). His mother goes out, and Jessica sends him a \_\_\_\_\_ (3); she needs to see him. She goes round to Chee Seng's house and tells him that her parents are sending her to \_\_\_\_\_ (4). She tells him that they are worried about her because she had an affair with a \_\_\_\_\_ (5). They want her to go in two weeks' time at the end of the \_\_\_\_\_ (6). Jessica and Chee Seng don't know what to do. Ka Ting invites Chee Seng to another party the following Saturday, but he says he can't go; Ka Ting \_\_\_\_\_ (7) Chee Seng some money.

#### Chapter 11

- What is Chee Seng's plan with Jessica?
- What two problems does Chee Seng's mother tell him she has?
- Where is his mother going again on Saturday and why?

# Worksheet

## Level 6



### The Best of Times? Alan Maley

4. Where does Chee Seng go on Saturday night?
5. What does he look at and talk about with her?
6. Who was Gana?

#### Chapter 12

1. Match the people with the way they feel:
 

a) Chee Seng	1) excited about the party
b) Chee Seng's mother	2) sad about the past
c) Ka Ting	3) nervous about the plans
d) Swee Eng	4) tired and sick
2. What does Swee Eng tell Chee Seng about her past that relates to his present?

#### Chapter 13

1. Put the events in the order in which they happened.
  - a) Chee Seng arrives at Ka Ting's party.
  - b) Jessica gets annoyed when Chee Seng asks who she's dancing with.
  - c) Chee Seng steals some of his mother's money.
  - d) Everyone jumps into the swimming pool except Chee Seng.
  - e) Chee Seng refuses the tablets Ka Ting offers him.
  - f) Chee Seng packs his backpack at home
2. What happens to Jessica?
3. What does Chee Seng do?
4. What is wrong with Jessica?

#### Chapter 14

1. Answer the questions with a name and short answer:
 

e.g. Who gave Jessica mouth-to-mouth resuscitation? *Chee Seng did.*

  - a) Who took Jessica away?
  - b) Who looked like a frightened boy?
  - c) Who shouted at the people?
  - d) Who gave them weak tea and rice soup?
  - e) Who questioned Chee Seng in the small room?

- f) Who collected Chee Seng from the police station?

2. Where do you think Auntie Swee Eng is taking Chee Seng at the end of the chapter?

#### Chapter 15

1. What did Chee Seng's mother do when she found out about Chee Seng?
2. How was Auntie Swee Eng able to get her to hospital in time?
3. What other bad thing had happened to Chee Seng's mother before he got into trouble?
4. Auntie Swee Eng says that:
  - a) Chee Seng is to blame for everything.
  - b) Chee Seng's mother is to blame for everything.
  - c) Chee Seng's father is to blame for everything.
  - d) She is to blame for everything.
  - e) No one is to blame for anything.

#### Chapter 16

Match the beginnings and endings of the sentences.

- a) At the start of the chapter Chee Seng's mother is seriously ill
- b) Jessica is out of danger and Chee Seng visits her
- c) Auntie Swee Eng tells Chee Seng some more about the past
- d) Chee Seng's father wants to come back and live with him and his mother
- e) Chee Seng realises he treated his best friends badly earlier

- 1) and at the end she gives him a photo album, so that he sees he is part of the story.
- 2) but they are not sure that they want him to come back yet.
- 3) but by the end of the chapter she is back home and better.
- 4) but they come and bring him presents on his birthday anyway.
- 5) but they realise it's probably better if they part.

# Worksheet

## Level 6



## The Best of Times? Alan Maley

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### After reading \_\_\_\_\_

Choose some of these activities.

1. Choose one of the characters and write a description of what sort of person they are.
2. Write the newspaper article with the headline TRAGEDY AT TEENAGE POOL PARTY.
3. Think of another title for *The Best of Times* and give reasons for your choice.
4. Make a quiz for others who have read this story, including some true/false questions and correct/incorrect sentences.
5. What do you think would have happened if Chee Seng and Jessica had managed to run away together? Write 100–150 words about it.
6. What happens in Chee Seng's family next? Write 100–150 words about the next year in their lives.
7. Write an email to Alan Maley telling him what you liked and didn't like about this story.
8. Write a letter from Jessica to Chee Seng after she has been in Australia for a month.
9. Which character did you like best and which least? Write a paragraph about each of them and explain why.