

READING/WRITING

The “stolen generations”

Janet is part of Australian’s “stolen generations”. These were Aborigines and mixed-race children who were taken from their families between 1869 and 1970.

Read the text about her experiences growing up.

Janet couldn’t remember what her mother and father looked like. She was too young, just five years old, the last time she saw them. For years she was told she was an orphan, but one day she received a letter from an aunt. The day she received the letter, Janet’s world collapsed. Her parents hadn’t died when she was a child. They had spent years looking for her, her aunt wrote. One day, fifteen years ago, Janet’s
5 father had taken his daughter to hospital. She was ill and her parents were worried. The doctors told Janet’s father that she had to stay in hospital and they sent him home. That was the last time they saw each other.

Janet was taken to a special home run by the church where there were lots of other Aboriginal children. The people who ran the home were cruel. They punished Janet because she called for her mother at
10 night. She wasn’t allowed to eat. Sometimes they beat her. They told the children that the dark-skinned Aborigines were not as good as the white Australians.

When she was seven, Janet went to live with a family in Darwin. Her new “parents” were kind and said that they loved her, but she always felt that she was different to them. At school the other children didn’t talk to her. Some of them called her names because of her dark skin. If Janet asked about her real
15 family, they always told her the same. Her parents were dead and the rest of the family was too poor to look after her. They told her she was lucky. She had a new family now and a new future.

That new future disappeared the day she found out who she really was. Her parents had never given up hope. They knew she was alive somewhere. Janet’s father went back to the hospital many times, but the doctors said they didn’t know where Janet was. Over the years they searched for Janet everywhere they
20 could. It was difficult to find help. Finally, after many years, Janet’s aunt found out where she was living and wrote her a letter. Her parents were both very ill, but they hoped to see her. The aunt sent her an address and a telephone number. Janet didn’t know what to think. She didn’t know what to do. But she did know that her life would never be the same again.

a) *Read the text and complete the sentences about the most important steps in Janet’s life.*

1 When Janet was five years old, _____

2 Until she was seven _____

3 Then _____

4 When she was 20, _____

b) Write how Janet felt and why she felt like that. Use your own words. Do not copy the text.

How did Janet feel ...

1 ... when she lived in the children's home? _____

Why? _____

2 ... when she lived with her new family in Darwin? _____

Why? _____

3 ... when she received her aunt's letter? _____

Why? _____
