



1 Puffing from the run, Erika leapt feet first into the toasty sand, beating Toby, her twin brother, by a whisker. The surf was good today; the sky full of light and the twins had Peppermint Beach all to themselves.

Toby chucked his towel onto the sand and launched himself towards the frothing waves. Erika hung back and watched her brother. Out of the two, Toby was by far the more adventurous. Toby plunged through the walls of water, while Erika waded out and floated in

the shallows, listening to the whiplash of the waves. Soon her eyes were closing. It was time to relax in the sun's warmth.

2 "SQUAAAAAAAAARRR!" a jolting shadow flew right across Erika's face. She splashed in shock, accidentally swallowing bitter sea water. With a splutter, Erika stood up. She saw Toby chasing a seagull up onto the beach. The squawking horror dodged Toby, lifting up into the air towards the cliffs. For some reason Toby stopped running, his eyes drawn to a point just behind a sand dune.

"Whoa, Erika, check this out!" he shouted, disappearing from view.

3 Erika wondered what trouble he was about to get them into, this time. Her feet made a dull flump as she ran over the wet sand. Erika crested the sand dune and saw what had

caught her brother's attention. Yawning like a giant's mouth, was a sand cave, nestled at the point where the dune met the cliff. Toby's footprints led all the way into it. Erika groaned. This wasn't good at all.

4 Erika slid down the dune, the sand squeaking with each step. She could just make out Toby's silhouette, hunched over inside the cave. He was pulling at something. Erika stopped at the entrance to the cave — its crumbling sides weren't too welcoming.

"Toby, what are you doing? Come out of there."

5 There was no answer except for Toby's squeaky laugh. He was digging at the side of the cave. The sand there was much looser, as if it had just freshly fallen.

"Do you reckon pirates hid their treasure here? We'll be so rich! Give us a hand," Toby called out, not taking his attention away from the cave wall.

6 Time snapped. One moment Toby was crouched in the cave, the next Erika was knocked back as the roof of the sand cave slumped over her brother. Sharp sand sprayed over Erika, getting in her eyes, nose and mouth. What had happened? Where was Toby? Erika's heart drummed in her chest, her legs and arms wouldn't work properly. He was gone. The ground had just swallowed her brother. No, not gone — buried. Trapped!

7 Erika couldn't think straight. She crawled to where the cave entrance had been. She had to dig her brother out. Sand flew in all

directions as Erika tried to reach Toby. But it was no use. New rivulets of sand trickled down to replace what she dug away. Erika screamed. She punched the sandy wall and fell backwards, tears running down her sand-crusted face. If she couldn't save Toby she'd have to find someone who could.

8 Erika sprinted back towards the Peppermint Beach campsite. Waves of panic crested and crashed inside her. Eventually, the sand dunes gave way to coarse bushes; their crisscrossing roots giving her feet something solid to grip as she ran. Up ahead, through the bushes, was the campsite.

9 At first, no one could understand Erika, a sandy, red-eyed monster that could only speak in high-pitched bursts. All she could do was point towards the beach and shout, "Toby ... buried!" between gasps for breath. When people finally understood what she meant, the entire campsite stirred into action. Erika's dad scooped her up into his arms as the crowd ran towards the beach.

10 Row after row of sand dunes splayed across the beach, trying their best to hide Toby's location. Her eyes scanned the rolling sand, trying to find the right dune. They all looked so similar.

Familiar squawks rang out from beyond the beach cliffs. A cloud of white and grey feathers flew over the beach, singing out to Erika and the rescue party. As one, the seagulls came to rest on a single dune. It sounded like they were squawking: "Here. Here. Here. Here."

"He's there!" Erika yelled, pointing straight at the bird dune.

11 New hands cradled Erika, pulling her into the safety of her mum's arms. Adult shapes streamed past her towards the sand dune, towards her buried brother. Minutes ticked by — each one seemed like an hour. Erika hoped the seagulls hadn't lied.

"We've got him!" cheered a voice.

12 Erika bolted upright, leaping from her mother's arms as they ran towards the voices. Her father was holding a limp body to his chest. His eyes weren't giving any answers. Someone had thought to call an ambulance and Erika could already hear its siren beyond the bushes.

13 That night the family huddled together in the hospital waiting room. Toby had been buried for about a quarter of an hour, his little body almost squeezed into lifelessness. Somehow he had miraculously survived in a small pocket of air.

14 It was a week before Toby woke up. Erika couldn't remember a time when she'd hugged him so tightly. She looked at her brother's eyes and could see that cheeky glint returning.



Questions

1 Who floated in the shallows?

- a Toby
- b Erika
- c a seagull

2 What was Toby doing in the sand cave?

- a looking for water
- b digging for treasure
- c sheltering from the sun

3 Why did Erika have trouble digging Toby out of the cave?

- a The sand was too wet.
- b She had sand in her eyes.
- c The sand kept falling back into the hole.

4 How did they know someone had called an ambulance?

- a They could hear it coming.
- b They could see it through the bushes.
- c They were told someone had phoned.

5 When Erika reached the campsite

- a she talked clearly.
- b she asked for her dad.
- c she talked in high-pitched bursts.

6 Why did Erika have difficulty speaking when she got back to camp?

- a She had sand in her mouth.
- b She couldn't remember what to say.
- c She was puffed after climbing the sand hills.

Vocabulary

Match the words from the text to the clues. The brackets show the text sections ().

silhouette nestled rivulets miraculously squawked

- 7 To be in a close, snug position (3)
- 8 The outline of a dark shape (4)
- 9 Small streams (7)
- 10 Loud, screeching calls (10)
- 11 Amazingly, unbelievably (13)

Alphabetical Order

The following words appear in the text. When placed in alphabetical order, which one would be **first**?

- 12 full, face, flew, find
- 13 panic, point, plunged, party
- 14 drummed, dune, digging, drawn
- 15 rich, relax, right, remember

Back To The Text...

16 Which of the following words describes the surf?

- a frothing
- b toasty

17 Another good name for this text might be:

- a Buried Alive
- b Fun at Peppermint Beach

18 What part of speech is the word *silhouette* in section 4?

- a verb
- b noun

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

19 a Toby chased a seagull.
b Erika swallowed sea water.

20 a Toby dug into the side of the cave.
b Erika stopped at the entrance to the cave.

21 a Sand sprayed into Erika's eyes.
b Erika punched the sandy wall.

Think About This

22 Which one of these statements is true?

- a Erika was not upset.
- b Erika told Toby not to panic.
- c Erika forgot to mark the place where Toby was buried.

23 Where did the SQUAAAAAAAAARRR noise come from?

- a Toby
- b Erika
- c a bird

Challenge Option

Design: Make a sign that will warn children about climbing in sand tunnels.

