



## THE CASE OF THE MISSING LUNCH BOXES

# Chapter 1

It was another summer holiday, and the children of the Summer Holidays Detective Agency were looking forward to another summer of solving mysteries. Their parents had surprised them all with a weekend away at the seaside. Mo and his family had arrived before the others, so he headed down to the beach to explore.

Mo knew that Edward, Kimmy and Ola wouldn't be far behind, but he didn't want to stick around at the caravan whilst his parents unpacked the car. If he wasn't careful, he'd be asked to help!

The beach near the caravan park was small and bordered by craggy cliffs and jagged rocks. It was perfect for splashing about in rock pools. The sun was high in the sky, and the water was warm, so Mo took his shoes off and paddled out. Once it reached the bottom of his shorts, he stopped and looked back towards the shore.

He noticed that the bay was horseshoe-shaped, almost like a bowl. There were steep steps that led back up to the caravans at the top of the hill, and the steep cliffs hugged the whole thing. There seemed to be lots of small caves on one side. Most of them were underwater at the moment, but Mo suspected that they'd be easy to get into when the tide was out.

Saltwater splashed into his mouth when a wave crashed into his back. It nearly sent him tumbling into the water. He steadied himself just as another barreled into him. This time, he wasn't so lucky, and he fell face-first into the water. He barely had time to close his eyes, which is why he was able to spot something rusty wedged into the seabed.

Mo surfaced, spluttering water and rubbing his eyes. Once he'd got his composure back, he ran his feet over the sand until he touched the small metal object. He used his toes to hook it and lift it out of the water. It made him feel a bit like a monkey in a nature documentary.

It was a key. It looked like a very old key, the kind of big chunky key that opens old



wooden wardrobes or giant front doors. It was rusty but strong. The loop at the end had been shaped to look like a skull.

Mo was so distracted by his find that he hadn't noticed the people shouting his name from the beach. When he looked up, he was delighted to see Edward, Ola and Kimmy racing across the sand towards the sea. He shoved the key into his pocket and waded back through the water to see them.

He knew that they'd be as excited as he was about the key. After all, solving mysteries was what the Summer Holidays Detective Agency was all about.

## INFERENCE FOCUS

1. Why didn't Mo want to stick around whilst his parents unpacked?
2. Did the children know they were going on a holiday together?
3. Why might Mo have stopped where he did when paddling out?
4. Why was it lucky that Mo was hit by the waves?
5. Why would his friends be excited by what he found?

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

**V**

Which phrase means that Mo calmed himself down?

**R**

What had Mo found?

**P**

What do you think it does?

**R**

Where did he find it?

**S**

Why did Mo feel like an animal?