



Indicative A response

Gaps and silences in text

Year 9

English

Appendix C: Gaps and silences

Information for teachers: The following is an example of an A response to Appendix C: Gaps and silences in the *Teacher guidelines*. This part of the assessment, if nominated for inclusion, would be implemented during Setting the scene.

After a discussion with your teacher and the class, decide on a useful definition for “gaps and silences” and write it in your notebook.

Gaps and silences are the deliberate exclusion of information from a text for a specific purpose. For example, the writer might think the story reads better without extra information, they may prefer to leave some things up to the reader to decide themselves, they may want to mislead the reader by deliberately leaving details out, or are allowing the reader to make their own assumptions.

In groups of three, discuss the following reflective questions to provide feedback to your class.

1. Are there gaps and silences in the text — *Looking for Alibrandi*?

Yes there are gaps and silences in the text.

2. Who or what is missing from the text?

- *We don't know a lot about Christina Alibrandi, what she thought about her mother and being part of the Italian community.*
- *Why did Christina decide against going through with the abortion that they had decided on together?*
- *What did Michael Andretti think and feel when he left Sydney for Adelaide all those years ago?*
- *What did Sister Louise really think of Josie?*
- *There is much about Francesco Alibrandi that we don't know, especially any discussions he had with Christina, how he felt about having an unfaithful wife etc.*

3. What did Melina Marchetta hope to achieve by creating these gaps and silences?

To give the readers a chance to make up their own minds and add what they wanted to their own understanding of the text.

Section 1. Filling in the gaps and silences

Choose **one** of the following **six** choices to write about. Complete the corresponding planning tools as accurately, and with as much detail as you can, so they are useful when you start drafting your new section.

Information for teachers: As this section asks the students to adopt a character from the novel when writing their responses, you should expect these to be written in first person.

Choice 1. Nonna Katia explains

In the role of Nonna Katia, explain to another character in the novel how your “Nonna Patrol” works and why you do this.

This planning matrix will help you plan your work.

Questions for consideration	Your response showing understanding
1. Who is Nonna Katia?	<i>I am Josie's grandmother. I am an Italian Australian who still tries to live a very traditional Italian lifestyle. However I have problems trying to convince my daughter and granddaughter to follow suit.</i>
2. What is your relationship like with Josie?	<i>While I love my granddaughter, I am the first to admit that our relationship is not the best as we don't see eye to eye on most things. Josie accuses me of spying on her and being old-fashioned but I believe it is my duty to protect my granddaughter.</i>
3. What is the “Nonna Patrol”?	<i>The “Nonna Patrol” is made up of a number of people who report back to me every time they see Josie doing something that they think is worthy of reporting, like talking to a boy or getting into a car. They are very quick to get on the phone and let me know what they have seen. It is likely that my spies do this duty not as a favour for me but more as a means of embarrassing me.</i>
4. Do you believe everything you hear about Josie? Explain.	<i>It is hard to say. It is likely that I believe most of the things or at least the old adage, “where there's smoke, there's fire”. Judging from the way I speak to Josie, it seems likely that I know Josie is a good girl, and I just want to keep her that way.</i>

(Continued on next page)

Indicative A response

5. Why do you keep such close tabs on your granddaughter?	<i>I like to know what Josie is up to so I can make sure Josie is behaving herself and not embarrassing me in front of the Italian community. I am also aware of what can happen to a young girl who makes a mistake because of my own mistakes in the past, especially that with Marcus Graham. I fear the public humiliation that Josie may face if she were to make an unwise choice.</i>
6. Do you understand how Josie feels about your Nonna Patrol? If so, then why do you persist with it?	<i>I am aware that Josie knows that I get phone calls from my friends about her. I am also aware that Josie doesn't like it but it is unlikely that I know that Josie thinks of it as a "patrol" and the depths of her dislike for it. I probably don't discourage my friends from calling me about Josie because it is true that I want to check up on Josie.</i>
7. How does your Nonna Patrol work with Christina?	<i>The patrol works for Christina to some extent but more so for Josie. Christina is older and has already made her mistakes. People aren't as interested in her as they are in Josie.</i>
8. Is it worth the grief it causes with the two people you love most in the world?	<i>I am quite obstinate in my ways. I don't seem to understand the need for me to change and try to be more accepting of Josie and Christina. I think the old ways of the past are still operating in the Italian community in modern Australia. Whether or not I would change my ways if I knew how much trouble it causes in my relationships with my family is hard to say, as I am a stickler for respect and authority and believe that my daughter and granddaughter should just be obedient to me.</i>

Choice 2. Confrontation

What did Michael Andretti say to Ron Bishop? Write a piece to fill in this silence in the text after Josie breaks Carly's nose.

These two men are in a room separate to where Josie and Carly are. They are discussing what happened, who is to blame and what should happen?

Information for teachers: The following are examples of acceptable answers.

An A response does not need to give the same or all of the provided examples, but must show an understanding of the character in this context.

Questions for consideration	Your response showing understanding
1. Ron Bishop	<p>was thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I can't believe this guy doesn't know who I am. Does he live under a rock or something?</i> • <i>I thought Josie Alibrandi's mother was unmarried.</i> • <i>Who is this guy? How come I have never seen him or heard about him before.</i> • <i>I just want to get this over with and get Alibrandi to "pay up" — let him know who's boss!</i> • <i>Carly is a model. This could be disastrous for her, although it doesn't look too bad.</i>
	<p>was saying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"I'm surprised you don't know who I am."</i> • <i>"I'm sure we can come to some arrangement, Mr Alibrandi."</i> • <i>"Oh, sorry ... Mr Andretti. I just thought ..."</i> • <i>"Your daughter hit my daughter and it looks like she has a broken nose. Not happy Andretti. If you just agree to pay for her medical expenses and agree to some form of compensation we can forget all about this."</i> • <i>"Carly is a model. I'm sure you understand why she should be compensated."</i> • <i>"Your daughter is a hoodlum and a menace to society."</i> • <i>"I just want what's fair for my daughter."</i>

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Michael Andretti

was thinking:

- These people are bullies.
- What Carly said to Josie was inappropriate. It is just bullying and racism I am quite sure that she has picked this trait up from her father who seems to think he is someone important in this town.
- He seems to have changed his attitude since he has discovered I'm a barrister.
- I wish Josie had shown more restraint and not have hit her. Not a good character trait. Her mother is not the violent type. I suppose years of racial abuse are enough to make you boil over once in a while.
- Why should she keep putting up with all of this continuing racial vilification?
- I think I'll be able to put a stop to this before it goes any further.

was saying:

- "The name's Andretti. And, yes, I'm sure we can come to some arrangement too Mr Bishop."
- "I'm sure Josie will settle for an apology from your daughter, Mr Bishop, considering she has been the victim of racial discrimination here."
- "I agree that Josie could have settled the matter in a more appropriate way too. Nevertheless, she has suffered at the hands of people like your daughter long enough Mr Bishop. I'm sure you can understand why she is very upset."
- "There will be no compensation for Carly, however, if we can't settle this matter today, I'm sure we can in court. In which case we, that is my daughter and I, may see fit to sue both your daughter and St Martha's for ongoing racial taunts and a failure to stop this bullying at the school."
- "I'm sure we all want to avoid the embarrassment and expense of a drawn-out court case. Don't we, Mr Bishop?"

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<p>2. What was the outcome of the conversation?</p>	<p>Both Michael Andretti and Ron Bishop agree to let bygones be bygones and they both leave with their daughters. Both parents reprimand their daughters for using bad judgment.</p>
<p>3. Were the two parties happy with the outcome or were one or both parties annoyed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carly is furious that Josie won't be severely punished. • Josie is happy that she seems to have had a win for once and also that her father was there for her when it mattered and managed to get her out of a lot of trouble. She was happy because she felt that Sister Louise would see her in a different light now. • Michael is glad that he had a win over Ron Bishop. He was also happy that Josephine felt that she could ask him for help. He stated that he was getting used to the idea of being a father and that he liked it. • Ron Bishop was annoyed that Alibrandi wasn't impressed with his celebrity. He was also annoyed that Andretti was able to rescue Josephine Alibrandi who he thought shouldn't even be at St Martha's.

Choice 3. Christina and Josie

As Christina, write a journal entry in which you explain why you think that Josie faces a better world for women than you or Nonna did.

This is an opportunity for an important character in the novel to have a say. The reader reads a lot about her but Christina herself has very little dialogue.

Questions for consideration	Your response showing understanding
1. What was the world like when you became a teenage mother?	<i>There was probably more discrimination against women, especially those who were unmarried mothers. They were made to feel ashamed and their families humiliated.</i>
2. Was your family supportive of your predicament? Why, or why not?	<i>My family was not supportive of my predicament because my mother didn't want the shame. Katia also knew that to support me would mean problems with her husband as she knew he didn't love me. He certainly didn't want the humiliation of a pregnant daughter, especially one that was not really his, even though I didn't know this.</i>
3. What social changes have occurred since you fell pregnant as a teenager?	<i>I have noticed that the society in which we now live is far more accepting than when I was a pregnant teenager. This change in society also means that there are far more opportunities for women. Being a pregnant teenager no longer means that women can't receive an education and be treated as equals. It is debatable how much the thinking has changed within the Italian community. I believe that things are pretty much the same with these people.</i>
4. According to you, how would these changes affect Josie's life?	<i>This would mean that Josie would have far more chances of a happy and successful future with or without marriage and children.</i>
5. Do you feel that you have had fairness in your life? Why, or why not?	<i>I envy the opportunities that my daughter has, as I found life much more difficult and restrictive. Being an Italian Australian was also very limiting to what I felt I could achieve in my life under the circumstances.</i>
6. Which world would you rather live in, the one you experienced in your past or the future in Josie's world? Why?	<i>I would rather live in the present and future worlds where I could be free to be myself and not carry round the burden of shame because I was a single mother with a strict Italian upbringing.</i>

Choice 4. Michael's realisation

Write a series of three journal entries detailing Michael's reactions to his first encounter with Josie, his thoughts when he was called to her school, and an entry following one of their outings together (e.g. coffee and pizza).

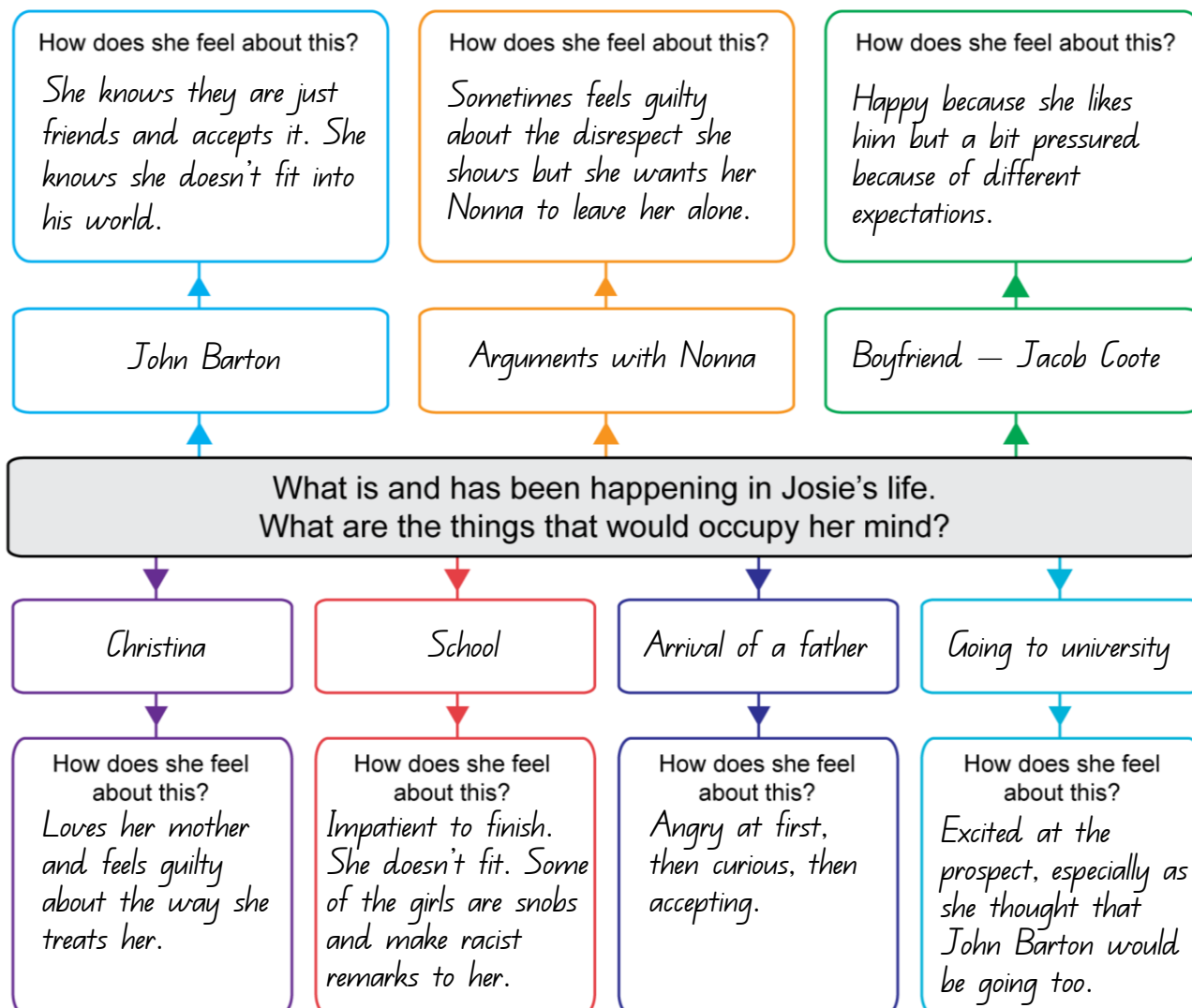
How did Michael feel? What was he thinking?

After Michael's first encounter with Josie ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am in shock! I can't believe that now, after all these years I have a daughter. • She looks so much like her mother. • I can't say that I am happy. I am just numb. • What will they, Josie and Christina, expect of me? Surely, they don't expect me to be a "father". • I am angry I think. Angry that Christina didn't have the abortion that we had planned and angry that I have had a daughter for seventeen years and I didn't know. I feel that something important has been stolen from me. • I am concerned that Christina has had to face people and bring up my child on her own for this long. Does this change my plans?
When he was called to her school (before, during and after) ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Josephine Alibrandi is a mystery to me. One minute she's rude and dismissive of me and the next she is ringing me up at work and asking me for my help. • I hope I can help her because I don't want to let her down. I finally have an opportunity to do something for my daughter; I don't want to waste it. • It felt good being a father. It is a very worthwhile and comforting feeling to know that another human being really needs you. • It is good to feel so close to another human being, even though we don't even really know each other yet.
After one of their outings together ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The more I get to know her and become familiar with her ways, the more comfortable I am around her. • I feel like I can be myself around her, even tell her what I think of the things she says and does. • It feels good to have someone value me too. • The more I see her, the more I can see myself in her. • I didn't really want her working at McDonalds. Those late shifts, coming home at night and having to put up with rude people. • She was so happy when I offered her the job at my law firm. It felt good to be able to do that. • I was shocked when I found her walking along the street. I knew that Christina would never be so careless with her daughter's safety.

Choice 5. Josie's letter to John Barton

Write the letter that you think Josie would have written, detailing her feelings and fears.

Remember what has been happening in the lives of these characters before you start to write Josie's letter. Use the diagram below to think about the things that would go into her letter.



What are Josie's hopes and fears for the future?

- *To become a solicitor.*
- *To be accepted for herself as Josephine, not because she is Italian or Australian.*
- *To change her name to Andretti.*

What type of language would she use in a personal letter to a friend?

- ☐ formal
- ☒ informal

Choice 6. Your own thoughts

Consult with your teacher on this choice. Make sure you choose something that gives you enough material to develop into a new section.

Your planning tools will depend on the topic you choose.

Information for teachers: If this is chosen by the student, how they plan their response is entirely individual. Use teacher discretion in judging the relevance of the student's choice and their endeavour in demonstrating understanding of gaps and silences in the text.

Section 1. Filling in the gaps and silences — Written response

Choice 1. Nonna Katia explains

In the role of Nonna Katia, explain to another character in the novel how your “Nonna Patrol” works and why you do this.

Honestly, my dear Marcus, I am finding it more and more difficult to make Josie understand why I am so concerned about her whereabouts and who she is with. She just doesn't understand how important it is that she is a “good girl”.

I wish I could make her understand why I watch out for her the way I do. I have tried to explain but she just thinks I am a meddling woman. I know she becomes angry when one of my friends rings me up and tells me what they have seen. She calls them my “spies”. She calls them my “Nonna Patrol”. She is such a silly girl sometimes. What she doesn't understand is that I know more about the world and the way that it works than she does and I want her to stay safe. It is a good thing that I have friends to be my eyes and ears in more places.

I suppose if she knew about my past, then she might understand my motives. I don't want her to know about you and me though. I would find it too humiliating and I don't think it would achieve anything other than give her more reason to disrespect me. It is better that both Josie and Christina continue to believe that my husband was their father and grandfather, not that it really was not him, but you.

I am surprised by what Josie knows about Christina's mistakes, that she isn't more understanding of me and why I watch over her the way I do. Even Christina knows why I worry but she isn't very sympathetic when Josie and I argue about it.

Sometimes she can be so disrespectful. It nearly breaks my heart when I think of her as a little girl and how happy she was. Always running here and running there, trying to keep up with her cousin Robert. Now, she always seems to be angry and impatient with me. Children no longer respect their elders Marcus.

Indicative A response

This Australian society, Marcus, is different to the society I grew up in. Now everyone is in a hurry, rushing here and there. Children don't respect their parents. Children are growing up far too young and ruining their chances of having the life that they wanted for themselves.

I know that if Christina didn't make the mistakes she did, then her life might be very different. She would be married to a nice man and have a house and children. She would make me proud. But no, she had a child when she was far too young and unmarried and this one act changed everything. If only Josie would see what might happen to her and why I worry about her so much.

It would make me very happy to see Josie married to a nice young Italian boy from a good family. She says that she doesn't want these things but she will change her mind when she gets older and wiser.

I know she will continue to resent me for it, but I am not going to give up looking out for her. If there is one thing I will always be sure of, it is that I don't want to see the mistakes of the past repeated. I don't want any more humiliation or shame.

Choice 2. Confrontation

What did Michael Andretti say to Ron Bishop? Write a piece to fill in this silence in the text after Josie breaks Carly's nose.

Michael Andretti and Ron Bishop walked purposefully into the outer office, both with a resolve — not the same resolve, but a resolve just the same. One wanted to make a point, humiliate and destroy, the other was there out of curiosity and a sense of responsibility knowing it was his chance to put things right with his daughter.

"Well Alibrandi, I'm sure we can both see what is going on here and as soon as we receive an apology from your daughter and a commitment from you to pay compensation in the event my daughter has a broken nose, we can all be on our way," asserted Ron Bishop as he turned to look Michael Andretti squarely in the face.

Michael pointedly, took his time to respond, the whole time never losing eye contact with Ron Bishop, "The name's Andretti, and I'm sure we can come to some arrangement too, Mr ... I'm sorry. What did you say your name was?"

"Bishop. Ron Bishop. I'm surprised you don't know who I am Mr Andretti."

No Mr. Bishop, I don't know who you are. Until this moment, I had never heard of you," said Michael Andretti with a wide-eyed look of innocence that was not innocent at all. This comment made to put Ron Bishop back in his place.

As far as an apology is concerned Mr Bishop, I'm sure that Josie would accept an apology made by your daughter to both of us. And as far as compensation is concerned. There will be none.

"Now listen here, Andretti. Your daughter hit my daughter with a heavy textbook and in all likelihood, has broken her nose. She is a menace to society. My daughter is the victim in all of this. She is a model and your daughter has put her future at risk. I just want what's fair," Ron Bishop objected.

"So do I," replied Michael Andretti. "I think that you will agree that the use of racial slurs and taunts against a person is not fair. And that having to put up with being ostracised because of the lunch one eats or the colour of their skin is not fair either. I agree that Josie should have handled the matter in a different way, nevertheless, she has suffered at the hands of people like your daughter long enough Mr Bishop. I'm sure you can understand why my daughter is very upset. There will be no compensation or apology Mr Bishop. Not from my daughter."

Ron Bishop, with his mouth open, stared at Michael Andretti. It finally dawned on him that he probably wasn't going to win this one and that his daughter probably got what she deserved but there was no way, he was going to admit it to this man. Listen Andretti, I don't think you understand ...

Indicative A response

"No Ron, you listen, interrupted Michael Andretti all the time maintaining his composure and calm but firm tone, "There will be no compensation or apology for you or Carly, however, if we can't settle this matter today, I'm sure we can in court in which case we, that is my daughter and I, may see fit to sue both you and St Martha's for not protecting my daughter from these ongoing racial taunts and a failure to handle the bullying issue at this school. Ron, I'm sure you don't want the cost and bad publicity of a long, drawn-out court case for either you or St Martha's."

"OK Andretti. You win. But this had better not happen again or you won't be talking to me. You will be talking to my lawyers," replied a defeated but angry Ron Bishop.

Bishop nodded, and said, "Andretti."

"Goodbye Ron," Michael Andretti smiled knowing all the while that he had been beaten by a couple of ethnics from the poor suburbs of Sydney.

Choice 3. Christina and Josie

As Christina, write a journal entry in which you explain why you think that Josie faces a better world for women than you or Nonna did.

Dear Diary,

Today Josie started working for her father Michael Andretti at his law firm in the city. It was so nice to see her so happy. She was nervous getting ready for work, changing from one outfit to the other, then back again until she found something perfect. When he arrived to pick her up, she gave me one of those special smiles and hugs as she walked out the door. She has grown up so fast and she is so beautiful.

Josie is very fortunate to have been born now and not when I was. The world has changed so much in that short time. It is a much better place for women if they make the right choices and take the opportunities that come along. Josie is a smart girl and knows that the only thing that can hold her back is herself.

I know she still struggles with the racism in this country but she is much better coping with taunts than I ever was. She is more confident. I think having Australian friends is a big help. They make her feel like part of the group and her ethnicity doesn't come into it at all. This has helped her to develop the confidence to stand up for herself.

Young women, both Australian and Italian, get out into the community more now and are not kept in their houses with their mothers and grandmothers learning how to be good mothers. They are active outside the home, play sport, have friends, are educated are involved with the world around them.

It would have been so different for me if the world had been different then and not the mean and judgmental place that it was. Girls who get themselves into trouble with boys these days have people they can go to and ask for help. I wouldn't have had to ask Nonna for help if I had had the opportunities that young women do today.

There is more social acceptance for young unmarried parents now. That would have been nice. I wouldn't have had to listen to my mother go on and on about the disgrace and humiliation I had brought upon the family.

Josie will never have to face a father who hates her and makes her feel like she wished she had never been born. Why my father was like this I will never understand. He was mean and cruel to my mother as well. So many sad things have happened.

The educational opportunities are great now and the chance to travel and to make more out of life has never been so good. There really is nothing that she can't do if she is prepared to keep on doing the right things and working hard.

I am so lucky because my darling daughter really has the world at her fingertips. It is now up to her to develop her strengths and leave her mark on the world.

Choice 4. Michael's realisation

Write a series of three journal entries detailing Michael's reactions to his first encounter with Josie, his thoughts when he was called to her school, and an entry following one of their outings together (e.g. coffee and pizza).

Sunday

This will be a Sunday that I won't ever forget. Today I went to visit an old family friend, Katia Alibrandi. She still lives in Glebe in the same house. Everything looked the same until I set my eyes upon a teenage girl who looked very familiar to me even though I know I had never met her before. I knew something was amiss as soon as I saw her but I couldn't put my finger on what was bothering me.

Then Katia came in the room and introduced me to Josephine Alibrandi, her granddaughter and Christina's daughter. Then the penny dropped. The realisation that I had a daughter was mind-blowing. Then the past sped back at me and all of the old memories raced through my brain: Christina, our love affair, and then the news of the pregnancy. But Christina and I decided to have an abortion. I even gave her the money to pay for it. Obviously, her plans had changed when I was safely tucked away in Adelaide with my family.

Katia didn't know about me either until that moment, it was obvious. Then, she too, had the same realisation. She was embarrassed and didn't know what to say. The room became icy cold and I wanted to get out of there as quickly as I could and not continue the visit.

I am in a state of shock. It is so hard to accept that after all these years I have a living, breathing offspring in the form of the lovely Josephine Alibrandi. I could tell that she wasn't thrilled to see me and that she knew who I was as soon as she saw me.

I can't say that I am happy about her. I am numb. I am angry, I think. Angry that Christina didn't have the abortion and that we had planned and angry that I had a daughter for seventeen years and I didn't know. I feel that Christina has stolen something very personal and momentous from me. Yet I don't blame her.

What will they, Josie and Christina expect from me? Surely not for me to be a father all of a sudden! How does this affect me? I am so confused. I don't know how I feel about this news. At the same time I feel concerned that Christina would have gone through much difficulty proceeding with the pregnancy on her own, having no one to help her face the world. I'm sure her father wouldn't have helped her.

Thursday

Today I got a phone call from Sister Louise at St Martha's requesting an immediate meeting about Josie. Now, that was a surprise considering Josie and I haven't really been getting on that well lately. I would have expected that Christina would handle these types of matters. I didn't know what I was walking into other than I was needed to help sort out a matter involving Josephine. So, off I went to see what trouble she had gotten herself into.

While Christina is gentle and quiet, Josie is not. I would say she has quite a temper. So I expected anything. Apparently, Josie had thrown a textbook at a girl called Carly. I was a bit surprised that she would do something like that. As it turned out, Josie had been provoked and was quite justified in retaliating. Probably not by throwing text book, but she certainly had been treated badly.

I have forgotten how it feels to be singled out for the ethnic taunts that she faces daily. Working in my profession has protected me from a lot of discrimination and being a male adult helps too. It's not that being called a "wog" is so bad; I am proud of it. It is that "you are worthless" element that comes with the name tag. I am proud that she can look after herself. She certainly is feisty.

When she was talking about what happened, I knew exactly how she felt when she was picked on. It felt good to be with someone who just "knows". I think Josie felt the same way too. She even thanked me for understanding her and not judging her. She said that sometimes her mother says, "Don't worry about it," or "Don't be so dramatic, Josephine". She said she was glad that I understood and let her be angry without having to feel guilty about it.

I think I'm starting to understand this "parent thing". I think I like it. I like the way she needs me and the way we connect sometimes.

Saturday

I picked up Josie tonight wandering along the city street. She had just had an argument with Jacob Coote and walked away from him. I must admit, I wasn't too happy seeing her at night in the city on her own. Sometimes you have to wonder what the girl uses for brains. But I must admit that when we stopped for a pizza, I did enjoy sitting and talking to her. She really is a good kid. She loves her mother very much and really respects her. It must be nice to know that someone loves you that much.

I feel like I can be myself when I am around her and I like the way we can talk and agree and disagree and still nothing changes. It is good to know that no matter what we agree or even argue about, it doesn't matter because she is my daughter and I am her father and that will never change.

I don't like her working at McDonalds because of the late shifts and her having to walk home so I offered her a job in my legal firm and she accepted. I am very relieved and happy with the idea of seeing her most afternoons. She is so excited about working in a real law firm.

Having a daughter is good, especially one with so much spirit. She has made a real difference to my life. The more I see of her, the more I see myself in her. She knows that I am getting better at being a father. She told me so. She said that she liked having me around. It feels so comfortable knowing that I have someone who values me because I am me, Michael Andretti, father of Josephine Alibrandi.

Choice 5. Josie's letter to John Barton

Write the letter that you think Josie would have written, detailing her feelings and fears.

Dear John,

What a great idea, writing this letter. Makes me feel like I can say anything I want to because it is a secret and I won't see your face when you read it. There is so much to say too. What a year we have had and next year looks like it is going to be even bigger.

I have a lot going on in my life right now. The thing that most worries me, though, is the HSCs coming up very soon. Common sense tells me that I am intelligent and should do very well but I still worry and think, what if I go blank? Or what happens if I get sick? I know that it is probably normal to feel like this but knowing that doesn't make it any easier. It seems silly to me that twelve years of schooling comes to this — the pinnacle of our education. Oh well, good luck to us!

I am so happy to be going through this with someone like you though. It is great to think that next year we will both be at university together studying law. It seems less scary when I think of it like that.

A lot has happened to me this year. Getting to know my father is probably the biggest. I am so glad that he has come into my life. It is a nice feeling having a father, especially one like my father. I think he is OK! You are very lucky to have had one for your whole life, even though you don't think so.

Jacob Coote has probably been the other big thing in my life this year. I know you don't think much of him but if you gave him a chance and got to know him, I think you would be pleasantly surprised. He is very warm and tries to understand.

School is finally over and I am happy about that. I have finally got to the point where Carly and Poison Ivy don't really bother me anymore. They are just products of their environment like all of us. They are snobs but deep down I think they have some good qualities too.

My grandmother, Nonna Katia is still annoying. She won't be happy until she sees me married to a nice Italian boy with a bunch of kids running around my back yard. She is going to be very disappointed because John, Josephine Alibrandi is going places. I am going to live.

I am not going to stay in Glebe all my life and lament about racism and being treated unfairly. I am going to have a great life and so are you my friend. University, then the stars for both of us.

I hope you are truly happy and know that things are just going to get better and better.

Josie