

The following text is from: *The Fahrenheit Twins (Short Stories)* by Michel Faber



# SERIOUS SWIMMERS

Michel Faber

There were a couple of hiccups between Gail and Ant before they even got to the swimming pool.

For a start, 'My name's not Ant,' the child said. 'It's Anthony.' Now why did he have to say that, with the social worker right there in the car with them, listening to everything? For a few moments (none of Gail's emotions lasted very long) she hated her little boy so much she couldn't breathe, and she hated the social worker even more, for being there to hear Ant's complaint. She wished the social worker could die somehow and take the knowledge of Gail's humiliation with him; he deserved to die anyway, the parasite. But the social worker remained alive and at the wheel, noting Gail's come-uppance in his little black book of a brain, and then [...] Ant went and did it again when they were almost there, by asking Gail, 'What was that little drink you had back there?'

'What little drink?'

'The little drink you had at the chemist. In the little plastic cup.'

'Medicine, cutie.'

'My name's not cutie,' stated the child. 'It's Anthony.'

Then, as the car was drawing to a halt in front of the Melbourne public baths, this kid, this Anthony who had grown out of being the Ant she'd lost to the State five years ago, said to her,

'Are you still sick?'

'I used to be really sick,' was Gail's answer. 'Now I'm a lot better.'

The boy looked unimpressed.

'Moira says people shouldn't take medicine if they're not sick.'

Moira was Anthony's foster-carer. He didn't call her Mum. But then he didn't call Gail Mum either. He was careful not to call her anything.

'Your mum is only a little bit sick now,' the social worker chipped in, his head twisted away as he parked the car. 'The last bit.'

Gail hadn't expected this from him. She was glad the social worker was alive now, grateful. She was willing to do anything for him, anything he wanted, like for free. Although she'd better be careful who she slept with these days, if she wanted to get Ant back.

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## Tekst 4 Serious swimmers

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- 4p 15 Geef voor elk van de onderstaande beweringen aan of deze wel of niet in overeenstemming is met de inhoud van het fragment uit *Serious Swimmers*.
- 1 Anthony is vroeger door zijn moeder geslagen.
  - 2 Anthony woont al een aantal jaren niet meer bij zijn moeder.
  - 3 De maatschappelijk werker noteert meteen zijn conclusies in een dossier.
  - 4 De maatschappelijk werker neemt het onverwacht op voor Gail.
  - 5 Gails gesprek met Anthony vindt plaats in een auto op weg naar een zwembad.
  - 6 Gail is moeilijk van haar mening af te brengen als ze die eenmaal heeft.
  - 7 Het contact tussen Anthony en Gail verloopt moeizaam.
  - 8 Moira vindt dat Gail niet in staat is om voor Anthony te zorgen.
- Noteer het nummer van elke bewering, gevolgd door “wel” of “niet”.

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### Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.