TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Scholarship Examination 2016

ENGLISH I

Monday, 25th April 2016
9.30 am

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Attempt BOTH sections, taking care to read the instructions for each section.
Begin each section on a separate sheet of paper, with your name at the top.
Hand in each section separately.

Section A is worth 25 marks and section B is worth 25 marks.
You are advised to spend no more than 45 minutes on section A.

SECTION A – Poetry Comprehension

Read the following poem carefully and answer the questions that follow. You are advised to pay close attention to the marks available for each section.

The poem was written by Judith Wright (1915-2000).

Hunting Snake

Sun-warmed in this late season's grace
under the autumn's gentlest sky
we walked, and froze half-through a pace.
The great black snake went reeling by.

Head-down, tongue flickering on the trail
he quested through the parting grass;
sun glazed his curves of diamond scale,
and we lost breath to watch him pass.

What track he followed, what small food
fled living from his fierce intent,
we scarcely thought; still as we stood
our eyes went with him as he went.

Cold, dark and splendid he was gone
into the grass that hid his prey.
We took a deeper breath of day,
looked at each other, and went on.

Questions

1. Re-read the four underlined phrases. What is the effect of the diction (choice of words) and imagery (metaphors, similes etc) in each line or phrase? [8]

2. How does the poet develop a sense of power and beauty through the description of the snake? You should make close reference to the language, imagery and form of the poem in your answer. You may refer to quotations you have already analysed in Question 1 if you would like to. [10]

3. What effect do you think the snake has on the speaker and her walking companion? Use quotations from the poem in your answer. Again, you may refer to quotations you have already analysed in your answer. [7]

[Total for Section A: 25]

SECTION B – Prose Comprehension

Read the following prose extract carefully and answer the questions that follow. You are advised to pay close attention to the marks available for each question.

This extract is taken from Great Expectations *by Charles Dickens, published in 1861. A young boy named Pip is invited to a grand house by a strange old woman, Miss Havisham, who has kept everything exactly as it was on the morning, years ago, when she was to be married.*

I entered, therefore, and found myself in a pretty large room, well lighted with wax candles. No glimpse of daylight was to be seen in it. It was a dressing-room, as I supposed from the furniture, though much of it was of forms and uses then quite unknown to me. But prominent in it was a draped table with a gilded looking-glass, and that I made out at first sight to be a fine lady's dressing-table.

Whether I should have made out this object so soon if there had been no fine lady sitting at it, I cannot say. In an arm-chair, with an elbow resting on the table and her head leaning on that hand, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or shall ever see.

She was dressed in rich materials,—satins, and lace, and silks,—all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table. Dresses, less splendid than the dress she wore, and half-packed trunks, were scattered about. She had not quite finished dressing, for she had but one shoe on,—the other was on the table near her hand,—her veil was but half arranged, her watch and chain were not put on, and some lace for her bosom lay with those trinkets, and with her handkerchief, and gloves, and some flowers, and a Prayer-Book all confusedly heaped about the looking-glass.

It was not in the first few moments that I saw all these things, though I saw more of them in the first moments than might be supposed. But I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose had shrunk to skin and bone. Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

"Who is it?" said the lady at the table.

"Pip, ma'am."

"Pip?"

"Mr. Pumblechook's boy, ma'am. Come—to play."

"Come nearer; let me look at you. Come close."

It was when I stood before her, avoiding her eyes, that I took note of the surrounding objects in detail, and saw that her watch had stopped at twenty minutes to nine, and that a clock in the room had stopped at twenty minutes to nine.

"Look at me," said Miss Havisham. "You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?"

I regret to state that I was not afraid of telling the enormous lie comprehended in the answer "No."

"Do you know what I touch here?" she said, laying her hands, one upon the other, on her left side.

"Yes, ma'am." (It made me think of the young man.)

"What do I touch?"

"Your heart."

"Broken!"

She uttered the word with an eager look, and with strong emphasis, and with a weird smile that had a kind of boast in it. Afterwards she kept her hands there for a little while, and slowly took them away as if they were heavy.

"I am tired," said Miss Havisham. "I want diversion, and I have done with men and women. Play."

I think it will be conceded by my most disputatious reader, that she could hardly have directed an unfortunate boy to do anything in the wide world more difficult to be done under the circumstances.

"I sometimes have sick fancies," she went on, "and I have a sick fancy that I want to see some play. There, there!" with an impatient movement of the fingers of her right hand; "play, play, play!"

For a moment, with the fear of my sister's working me before my eyes, I had a desperate idea of starting round the room in the assumed character of Mr. Pumblechook's chaise-cart. But I felt myself so unequal to the performance that I gave it up, and stood looking at Miss Havisham in what I suppose she took for a dogged manner, inasmuch as she said, when we had taken a good look at each other,—

"Are you sullen and obstinate?"

"No, ma'am, I am very sorry for you, and very sorry I can't play just now. If you complain of me I shall get into trouble with my sister, so I would do it if I could; but it's so new here, and so strange, and so fine,—and melancholy—." I stopped, fearing I might say too much, or had already said it, and we took another look at each other.

Before she spoke again, she turned her eyes from me, and looked at the dress she wore, and at the dressing-table, and finally at herself in the looking-glass.

"So new to him," she muttered, "so old to me; so strange to him, so familiar to me; so melancholy to both of us!'

Glossary

Lustre – sparkle
Looking-glass – mirror
Disputatious – argumentative
Chaise-cart – horse-drawn cart
Sullen – moody
Melancholy – sad, depressing

Questions

1. Re-read the third and fourth paragraphs (from 'She was dressed in rich materials…' to 'I should have cried out, if I could'.) How does the writer convey the strangeness of Miss Havisham? Refer to the effects of individual words and phrases in your answer. [10]

2. How does the writer develop our understanding of Pip's feelings about the old woman in the passage as a whole? Refer to the effects of individual words and phrases in your answer, as well as the form in which the extract is written. [5]

3. Select words and phrases from the whole passage to explain how the writer has employed an eye for strange and striking details in the character and appearance of Miss Havisham, as well as the setting of the old house, to make the passage entertaining to read. Refer to the effects of individual words and phrases in your answer. [10]

[Total for Section B: 25]

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