Alleyn's

11+ ENGLISH
SAMPLE EXAMINATION PAPER 2

One hour 10 minutes.

Co-educational
excellence

READING PASSAGE

In this story the narrator is remembering a story that her father told her about his childhood.

Ernest said that the tree outside his window arrived years ago from Holland, on Margot's twelfth birthday. A black pear, already twenty feet high, more than eight feet around, he said its root ball alone weighed almost three tonnes. The men stopped on the road with it strapped down in the bed of their lorry. Passing drivers slowed to make sense of what they were seeing, caught a glimpse of the felled giant, and then were gone.

''We ran outside, Margot leading the way'' he said, ''and there it was, a tree on its side, made from ravens and dragons, its thick bark crackled with scales, the buds of its leaves smooth and solid as claws.''

They invaded the tree like termites. Their mum watched with her arms folded and her mouth in a thin straight line before she called them inside and scolded them for playing near a road.

Margot fumed.

''But it's a lying-down tree,'' she said.

''And it's Margot's birthday,'' Ernest added. ''We thought it was for her.''

She didn't soften. She sent them upstairs to wash their hands and think about what they'd done.

''What would you do with your own tree anyway?'' Ernest asked.

''Climb it,'' Margot said. ''Carve my name in it with a knife, lean against its trunk in the shade, eat its fruit.'' She sighed. ''So much better than a doll.''

He said she'd slouched into the nursery that morning trailing the new doll after her, bumping it along the floorboards. She'd dragged the thing in by its long corn-yellow hair.

''What am I going to do with *this*?'' she asked.

Ernest sniggered. ''Tie it to some train tracks,'' he suggested. ''Shoot it with arrows. Gouge out its eyes and fill its head with birdseed.''

Margot grinned. ''Drown it in a cattle trough,'' she said. 'Set fire to its hair.''

And then the tree came, he said, and the doll was forgotten, left on the floor with one eye shut and its polka-dot dress pulled up over its head while the children pressed their faces flat against the windows to get a better view.

He sat up in bed and looked out while he told me.

''The crane driver sat in his cab,'' he said, pointing, ''and when the tree lifted, it came up head first and then hung just there, strangely upright, like it was planted in mid-air.''

It cast a shadow over all the rooms they ran through, a great dark beast flying past the house. It blocked out the sun, the birds stopped singing and downstairs someone dropped a plate on the flagstone floor.

The men dug a crater on the east side of the house. Margot wanted more than anything to crouch at the bottom of that hole and look up at the sky.

''Don't even think about it,'' said his mum, one hand resting on the back of Margot's neck.

''Of course it was too late,'' Ernest said. ''She already had.''

Ernest watched from the window while Margot skipped down the back stairs, took the spare key from the hook in the kitchen and was gone.

"By the time anyone else saw her," he said, "it was almost too late."

The crane screamed in its efforts to stop the tree from crashing down on top of her. There was a great screeching of brakes and a grinding of metal on metal and then the shouts of the men got louder. Ernest said his mum ran out of the house, shrieking and tearing at her hair, white as a sheet. She looked seasick, everyone did. Only Margot looked overjoyed and defiant, beaming, her arms and legs stuck with mud as she climbed out of the crater. Ernest burst into tears, but Margot couldn't stop smiling.

END OF PASSAGE

SECTION A: READING

You are advised to spend 30 minutes answering Section A. First, please read the passage carefully and then answer ALL the questions in this section.

1. Identify <u>three</u> pieces of information from lines 1 to 3 that tell us the tree was very big.

[3 marks]

1. ……
2. ……
3. ……

2. Look at lines 3 to 11. Identify <u>two</u> **actions** that show us that people found the arrival of the tree exciting and surprising, and explain how they show this. *[4 marks]*

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3. Look at lines 9 to 16. Identify <u>three</u> details that describe Ernest and Margot's mother and explain what they show us about her character. *[6 marks]*

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4. Explain how the following phrases are effective in describing the tree:

    a) “the felled giant” (line 5)

    b) “its thick bark crackled with scales” (line 7) *[4 marks]*

a) .....

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b) .....

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5. How does the writer make Margot such an interesting character? You should write about:

    a) words/phrases

    b) her speech and actions

    c) sentence lengths and sentence types *[12 marks]*

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6. Look back over the passage. Using your own words, explain what sort of boy you think Ernest is and why. *[6 marks]*

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END OF SECTION A

[Section A = 35 marks]

SECTION B: WRITING

You are advised to spend 30 minutes on section B.

You must take care to plan, check and correct your work.

Presentation and accuracy of spelling and punctuation will be assessed in the marking of this section.

Write a detailed description **OR** the opening of a story inspired by the image below.

You should make your writing as interesting and detailed as possible. *[25 marks]*



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END OF PAPER