KING'S COLLEGE JUNIOR SCHOOL

WIMBLEDON

Group E (11+)

SPECIMEN PAPER 2015

English - Reading

25 minutes

Instructions

- Answer ALL the questions; spend at least ten minutes on question eight
- Match your response to the marks available
- If you get stuck, move on to the next question

Surname: .....

First name: .....

Read the following passage then answer the questions that follow.

It was winter in the city. The sun was sinking fast. Night was drawing in. Snow whipped down from the sky in icy flakes. It was too cold for snow to melt, so it covered everything in white: the rooftops and drainpipes, the back streets and alleys.

A silver-blue cat with amber eyes raced forwards through the streets. His name was Varjak Paw, and he was running as fast as he could. He loved being out in the city. He'd grown up indoors, a pet in a house. He'd always dreamed about living free and wild. Now his dreams were coming true.

Beside him ran his friends: a spiky black-and-white cat called Holly, a shaggy chocolate-brown one named Tam, and a huge black dog called Cludge. They knew the city better than Varjak; he was still learning how to survive on the streets. And winter was harsh. Food was scarce. They'd been hunting all day with no luck. Now they were going to the city dump, hoping to find some scraps the people had thrown away.

They swerved into an alleyway. A rusting iron gate loomed up before them, rattling in the wind. It was the entrance to the dump. Far away on some main road, traffic rumbled and roared, but here the cars were all broken down. Their windscreens were smashed, their tyres slashed. Fragments of shattered glass stuck out of the snow. They could rip a cat's paws to pieces.

So this is it, thought Varjak. The city dump.

'Can't we keep hunting?' he said. 'I've got a good feeling. We're going to catch a mouse – we've got to!'

'I wish we would,' panted Tam. 'I'm starving.'

'Me too,' said Holly. 'But we haven't even seen a mouse since this snow started. They must be hiding from the weather. Or from *her*.' She shivered.

Above their heads, through swirling snow, an amber street light flickered into life. Day was almost done; nightfall was close. Holly and Tam shifted about on their paws. Even Cludge seemed nervous.

'Let's get it over with,' said Holly, her voice like the crunch of gravel. 'We don't want to be here after dark.'

Tam looked up at the rusty gate and shuddered. 'Er – why don't you and Varjak go first? I'll stay here and keep a look-out – even if I have to eat last,' she said, sounding noble.

Holly rolled her mustard-coloured eyes. 'I might've known. Fine. Come on, Varjak. At least now we know who's scared and who's not.'

'I'm not scared!' protested Tam. 'It's just that we need a look-out. What if *she* comes? It's actually braver to go last. It's actually...' She paused, and scratched her head. 'Actually, I think I'll come with you.'

'Oh no you don't,' laughed Holly. 'You're right. We need a look-out – and congratulations, Tam, you've got the job!'

Tam's big, round eyes went huge with fright. 'But – but - '

'It's all right,' said Varjak. He could see Holly was joking; but he could also see that Tam was not. 'I'll be look-out. I'll stand guard with Cludge.'

Tam's fur settled. 'Thanks, Varjak! I'll save you some food – if we find any.'

Holly and Tam crept forwards through the snow, past hulking smashed-up cars, picking their way over shattered glass towards the gate. Chains and padlocks hung from it, clattering in the wind. But they found gaps, cracks, ways through that people would never think of. In moments, Varjak and Cludge stood alone.

thud

thud

thud

Varjak's fur prickled. He thought he could hear something behind him. A cat's tail thumping? Something was moving, something was watching him.

From *The Outlaw Varjak Paw* by S F Said

Questions

1. What does 'Night was drawing in' (line 1) mean?

.....

(1 mark)

2. Give **one** reason why, according to the narrator, winter is a bad time for a cat.

.....

.....

(1 mark)

3. Where are Holly, Tam and Cludge running towards?

.....

(1 mark)

4. Why does Varjak enjoy being outside?

.....

.....

(2 marks)

TURN OVER

5. Explain the meaning of the following words in bold, **as used in the passage**:

(a) 'hoping to find some **scraps**' (line 12)

.....

(b) 'sounding **noble**' (line 29)

.....

(c) 'Varjak's fur **prickled**' (line 48)

.....

(3 marks)

6. What do you think is meant by 'her voice like the crunch of gravel' (line 26)?

.....

.....

(2 marks)

7. The words '*thud*

thud

thud' (lines 45-47) are striking to look at.

Why do you think these words were written like this?

.....

.....

(2 marks)

Q8 requires a longer, more detailed answer.

8. How does the writer build up tension in the passage?

Refer to details in the text to back up your ideas.

You might write about:

- the use of weather to create atmosphere
- how the entrance to the dump is described
- how the passage concludes
- any other ideas of your own

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(8 marks)

Total: 20 marks