BENENDEN

Lower School Entrance 2019

ENGLISH

13+

1 Hour

Name:	.....
School:	.....
Date:	.....

Instructions to Candidates:

- There are 2 questions. They are both worth 50 marks each.

The following is an extract from the opening to the novel 'The Girl With All The Gifts' by M.R.Carey. Read the extract carefully and answer the question below.

Her name is Melanie. It means "the black girl", from an ancient Greek word, but her skin is actually very fair so she thinks maybe it's not such a good name for her. She likes the name Pandora a whole lot, but you don't get to choose. Miss Justineau assigns names from a big list; new children get the top name on the boys' list or the top name on the girls' list, and that, Miss Justineau says, is that.

There haven't been any new children for a long time now. Melanie doesn't know why that is. There used to be lots; every week, or every couple of weeks, voices in the night. Muttered orders, complaints, the occasional curse. A cell door slamming. Then, after a while, usually a month or two, a new face in the classroom–a new boy or girl who hadn't even learned to talk yet. But they got it fast.

Melanie was new herself, once, but that's hard to remember because it was a long time ago. It was before there were any words; there were just things without names, and things without names don't stay in your mind. They fall out, and then they're gone.

Now she's ten years old, and she has skin like a princess in a fairy tale; skin as white as snow. So she knows that when she grows up she'll be beautiful, with princes falling over themselves to climb her tower and rescue her.

Assuming, of course, that she has a tower.

In the meantime, she has the cell, the corridor, the classroom and the shower room.

The cell is small and square. It has a bed, a chair and a table. On the walls, which are painted grey, there are pictures; a big one of the Amazon rainforest and a smaller one of a pussycat drinking from a saucer of milk. Sometimes Sergeant and his people move the children around, so Melanie knows that some of the cells have different pictures in them. She used to have a horse in a meadow and a mountain with snow on the top, which she liked better.

It's Miss Justineau who puts the pictures up. She cuts them out from the stack of old magazines in the classroom, and she sticks them up with bits of blue sticky stuff at the corners. She hoards the blue sticky stuff like a miser in a story. Whenever she takes a picture down, or puts a new one up, she scrapes up every last bit that's stuck to the wall and puts it back on the little round ball of the stuff that she keeps in her desk.

When it's gone, it's gone, Miss Justineau says.

The corridor has twenty doors on the left-hand side and eighteen doors on the right-hand side. Also it has a door at either end. One door is painted red, and it leads to the classroom–so Melanie thinks of that as the classroom end of the corridor. The door at the other end is bare grey steel and it's really, really thick. Where it leads to is a bit harder to say. Once when Melanie was being taken back to her cell, the door was off its hinges, with some men working on it, and she could see how it had all these bolts and sticking-out bits around the edges of it, so when it's closed it would be really hard

to open. Past the door, there was a long flight of concrete steps going up and up. She wasn't supposed to see any of that stuff. But she saw, and she remembers

You should spend 30 minutes on Question 1 and 30 minutes on Question 2. Try to leave some time to read through and check your work thoroughly.

1. How does Carey make this an engaging opening to his novel? You could think about any particular ideas, words or techniques that make this novel appeal to the reader and hook them into the story.

(50 marks)

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2. **Creative/Descriptive writing:** Write the opening to a story in which a young person is alone. This could be a real experience or an imagined one. Your work will be assessed for the creativity of your ideas and the accuracy of your expression.

(50 marks)

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Total for paper: 100 marks