TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Test for Entrance into Year 9: Specimen B

English

Paper 1

Time Allowed : 90 minutes

Total Marks : 50

Answer ALL the questions on the lined paper provided.

Dictionaries may **NOT** be used.

You are advised to spend 45 minutes on each section.

Section A: Poetry

The poem below was written by Sylvia Plath. Read the poem carefully and then answer all the questions which follow.

Mirror

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see, I swallow immediately.
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful –
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me.
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns back to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises towards her day after day, like a terrible fish.

1. There are **four** quotations underlined; explain how in each one the poet creates a powerful effect through the specific language used. **[8]**

2. Choose **four** more phrases or images from this poem and explain why each one is effective in suggesting something about the power of a mirror. **[8]**

3. This poem personifies the mirror, making it seem human. What kind of a character do you think the mirror has, and why? Give examples from the poem's language and phrasing to explain your ideas. You may refer to quotations you have already discussed in previous answers, and should use a minimum of five or six quotations. **[9]**

Section B – Prose

Read the opening to the novel 'Dracula' by Bram Stoker and answer the questions that follow. The narrator of the passage describes a journey in a horse-drawn carriage through the mountains up to a mysterious castle belonging to Count Dracula.

Soon we were hemmed in with trees, which in places arched right over the roadway till we passed as through a tunnel; and again great frowning rocks guarded us boldly on either side. Though we were in shelter, we could hear the rising wind, for it moaned and whistled through the rocks, and the branches of the trees crashed together as we swept along. It grew colder and colder still, and fine, powdery snow began to fall, so that soon we and all around us were covered with a white blanket. The keen wind still carried the howling of the dogs, though this grew fainter as we went on our way. The baying of the wolves sounded nearer and nearer, as though they were closing round on us from every side. I grew dreadfully afraid, and the horses shared my fear. The driver, however, was not in the least disturbed; he kept turning his head to left and right, but I could not see anything through the darkness.

Suddenly, away on our left, I saw a faint flickering blue flame. The driver saw it at the same moment; he at once checked the horses, and, jumping to the ground, disappeared into the darkness. I did not know what to do, the less as the howling of the wolves grew closer; but while I wondered the driver suddenly appeared again, and without a word took his seat, and we resumed our journey. I think I must have fallen asleep and kept dreaming of the incident, for it seemed to be repeated endlessly, and now looking back, it is like a sort of awful nightmare.

At last there came a time when the driver went further afield than he had yet gone, and during his absence, the horses began to tremble worse than ever and to snort and scream with fright. I could not see any cause for it, for the howling of the wolves had ceased altogether; but just then the moon, sailing through the black clouds, appeared behind the jagged crest of a beetling, pine-clad rock, and by its light I saw around us a ring of wolves, with white teeth and lolling red tongues, with long, sinewy limbs and shaggy hair. They were a hundred times more terrible in the grim silence which held them than even when they howled. For myself, I felt a sort of paralysis of fear. It is only when a man feels himself face to face with such horrors that he can understand their true import.

All at once the wolves began to howl as though the moonlight had had some peculiar effect on them. The horses jumped about and reared, and looked helplessly round with eyes that rolled in a way painful to see; but the living ring of terror encompassed them on every side; and they had perforce to remain within it. I called to the coachman to come, for it seemed to me that our only chance was to try to break out through the ring and to aid his approach. I shouted and beat the side of the calèche, hoping by the noise to scare the wolves from that side, so as to give him a chance of reaching the trap. How he came there, I know not, but I heard his voice raised in a tone of imperious command, and looking towards the sound, saw him stand in the roadway. As he swept his long arms, as though brushing aside some impalpable obstacle, the wolves fell back and back further

still. Just then a heavy cloud passed across the face of the moon, so that we were again in darkness.

When I could see again the driver was climbing into the calèche, and the wolves had disappeared. This was all so strange and uncanny that a dreadful fear came upon me, and I was afraid to speak or move. The time seemed interminable as we swept on our way, now in almost complete darkness, for the rolling clouds obscured the moon. We kept on ascending, with occasional periods of quick descent, but in the main always ascending. Suddenly, I became conscious of the fact that the driver was in the act of pulling up the horses in the courtyard of a vast ruined castle, from whose tall black windows came no ray of light, and whose broken battlements showed a jagged line against the moonlit sky.

Caleche – coach

Impalpable – untouchable

Uncanny – weird and almost supernatural

1. How does the writer develop a sense of atmosphere in the first paragraph? Choose **three quotations** and discuss them. **[5]**

2. How does the writer convey the narrator's growing terror in the **third and fourth paragraphs**? Choose **four quotations** and discuss them, making any relevant comments. **[8]**

3. What impression do you get of the mysterious coachman from the passage as a whole? You should choose several quotations and focus on the language and imagery in your answer. **[6]**

4. How does the writer develop a sense of the 'strange and uncanny' through the passage as a whole?

[6]

END OF PAPER