



# Cambridge IGCSE™ (9–1)

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**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**0992/12**

Paper 1 Poetry and Prose

**May/June 2020**

**1 hour 30 minutes**



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

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## INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions in total:
  - Section A: answer **one** question.
  - Section B: answer **one** question.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

## INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

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This document has **28** pages. Blank pages are indicated.



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## SECTION A: POETRY

Answer **one** question from this section.

## SONGS OF OURSELVES VOLUME 1: from Part 3

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

**Either 1** Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

*She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways*

She dwelt among the untrodden ways  
Beside the springs of Dove,  
A Maid whom there were none to praise  
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone  
Half hidden from the eye!  
– Fair as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky.

5

She lived unknown, and few could know  
When Lucy ceased to be;  
But she is in her grave, and, oh,  
The difference to me!

10

*(William Wordsworth)*

How does Wordsworth movingly portray Lucy in this poem?

Or 2 In what ways does Dobson make *The Three Fates* such an intriguing poem?

*The Three Fates*

At the instant of drowning he invoked the three sisters.  
It was a mistake, an aberration, to cry out for  
Life everlasting.

He came up like a cork and back to the river-bank,  
Put on his clothes in reverse order, 5  
Returned to the house.

He suffered the enormous agonies of passion  
Writing poems from the end backwards,  
Brushing away tears that had not yet fallen.

Loving her wildly as the day regressed towards morning 10  
He watched her swinging in the garden, growing younger,  
Bare-foot, straw-hatted.

And when she was gone and the house and the swing and daylight  
There was an instant's pause before it began all over, 15  
The reel unrolling towards the river.

*(Rosemary Dobson)*

**SONGS OF OURSELVES VOLUME 2: from Part 2**

**Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.**

**Either 3** Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

*Ode on Melancholy*

I

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist  
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;  
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd  
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;  
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries, 5  
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be  
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl  
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;  
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,  
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul. 10

II

But when the melancholy fit shall fall  
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,  
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;  
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose, 15  
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;  
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes. 20

III

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;  
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
 Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:  
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight 25  
 Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue  
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;  
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,  
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung. 30

*(John Keats)*

Explore the ways in which Keats powerfully conveys thoughts and feelings in this poem.

- Or 4 How does Collins strikingly depict the effect that the cows have on him in *Afternoon with Irish Cows*?

*Afternoon with Irish Cows*

There were a few dozen who occupied the field

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above the wall with one wild, shocking eye.

*(Billy Collins)*

**CAROL ANN DUFFY: from *New Selected Poems***

**Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.**

**Either 5** Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

*Stealing*

The most unusual thing I ever stole? A snowman.  
Midnight. He looked magnificent; a tall, white mute  
beneath the winter moon. I wanted him, a mate  
with a mind as cold as the slice of ice  
within my own brain. I started with the head. 5

Better off dead than giving in, not taking  
what you want. He weighed a ton; his torso,  
frozen stiff, hugged to my chest, a fierce chill  
piercing my gut. Part of the thrill was knowing  
that children would cry in the morning. Life's tough. 10

Sometimes I steal things I don't need. I joy-ride cars  
to nowhere, break into houses just to have a look.  
I'm a mucky ghost, leave a mess, maybe pinch a camera.  
I watch my gloved hand twisting the doorknob.  
A stranger's bedroom. Mirrors. I sigh like this – *Aah*. 15

It took some time. Reassembled in the yard,  
he didn't look the same. I took a run  
and booted him. Again. Again. My breath ripped out  
in rags. It seems daft now. Then I was standing  
alone amongst lumps of snow, sick of the world. 20

Boredom. Mostly I'm so bored I could eat myself.  
One time, I stole a guitar and thought I might  
learn to play. I nicked a bust of Shakespeare once,  
flogged it, but the snowman was strangest.  
You don't understand a word I'm saying, do you? 25

In what ways does Duffy make this such a disturbing poem?



Or 6 How does Duffy powerfully convey the difficulties of living in a strange country in *Foreign*?

*Foreign*

Imagine living in a strange, dark city for twenty years.  
There are some dismal dwellings on the east side  
and one of them is yours. On the landing, you hear  
your foreign accent echo down the stairs. You think  
in a language of your own and talk in theirs. 5

Then you are writing home. The voice in your head  
recites the letter in a local dialect; behind that  
is the sound of your mother singing to you,  
all that time ago, and now you do not know  
why your eyes are watering and what's the word for this. 10

You use the public transport. Work. Sleep. Imagine one night  
you saw a name for yourself sprayed in red  
against a brick wall. A hate name. Red like blood.  
It is snowing on the streets, under the neon lights,  
as if this place were coming to bits before your eyes. 15

And in the delicatessen, from time to time, the coins  
in your palm will not translate. Inarticulate,  
because this is not home, you point at fruit. Imagine  
that one of you says *Me not know what these people mean.*  
*It like they only go to bed and dream.* Imagine that. 20

## SECTION B: PROSE

Answer **one** question from this section.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË: *Jane Eyre*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

**Either 7** Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

No: stillness returned: each murmur and movement ceased gradually, and in about an hour Thornfield Hall was again as hushed as a desert. It seemed that sleep and night had resumed their empire. Meantime the moon declined: she was about to set. Not liking to sit in the cold and darkness, I thought I would lie down on my bed, dressed as I was. I left the window, and moved with little noise across the carpet; as I stooped to take off my shoes, a cautious hand tapped low at the door. 5

‘Am I wanted?’ I asked.

‘Are you up?’ asked the voice I expected to hear, namely, my master’s. 10

‘Yes, sir.’

‘And dressed?’

‘Yes.’

‘Come out, then, quietly.’

I obeyed. Mr Rochester stood in the gallery, holding a light. 15

‘I want you,’ he said: ‘come this way: take your time, and make no noise.’

My slippers were thin: I could walk the matted floor as softly as a cat. He glided up the gallery and up the stairs, and stopped in the dark, low corridor of the fateful third story: I had followed and stood at his side. 20

‘Have you a sponge in your room?’ he asked in a whisper.

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Have you any salts – volatile salts?’

‘Yes.’

‘Go back and fetch both.’ 25

I returned, sought the sponge on the washstand, the salts in my drawer, and once more retraced my steps. He still waited; he held a key in his hand: approaching one of the small, black doors, he put it in the lock; he paused, and addressed me again.

‘You don’t turn sick at the sight of blood?’ 30

‘I think I shall not: I have never been tried yet.’

I felt a thrill while I answered him; but no coldness, and no faintness.

‘Just give me your hand,’ he said: ‘it will not do to risk a fainting fit.’

I put my fingers into his. ‘Warm and steady,’ was his remark: he turned the key and opened the door. 35

I saw a room I remembered to have seen before, the day Mrs Fairfax showed me over the house: it was hung with tapestry; but the tapestry was now looped up in one part, and there was a door apparent, which had then been concealed. This door was open; a light shone out of the room within: I heard thence a snarling, snatching sound, almost like a dog quarrelling. Mr Rochester, putting down his candle, said to me, ‘Wait a minute,’ and he went forward to the inner apartment. A shout of laughter greeted his entrance; noisy at first, and terminating in Grace Poole’s own goblin ha! ha! *She* then was there. He made some sort of arrangement 40

without speaking, though I heard a low voice address him: he came out and closed the door behind him. 45

'Here, Jane!' he said; and I walked round to the other side of a large bed, which with its drawn curtains concealed a considerable portion of the chamber. An easy-chair was near the bed-head: a man sat in it, dressed with the exception of his coat; he was still; his head leant back; his eyes were closed. Mr Rochester held the candle over him; I recognised in his pale and seemingly lifeless face – the stranger, Mason: I saw, too, that his linen on one side, and one arm, was almost soaked in blood. 50

*[from Chapter 20]*

How does Brontë make this moment in the novel so dramatic?

**Or 8** Explore the ways in which Brontë vividly depicts the harshness of Lowood School.

**ANITA DESAI: *In Custody***

**Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.**

**Either 9** Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

Nur reflected on that for a long time, his opaque eyes turned inwards as he sipped his drink.

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He scrambled to his feet, and turned and fled.

*[from Chapter 5]*

Explore the ways in which Desai makes this such a shocking and entertaining moment in the novel.

**Or**      **10** How does Desai's writing vividly depict life in Mirpore?

CHARLES DICKENS: *Hard Times*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 11 Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

‘I speak to Mr Harthouse?’ she said, when they were alone.

‘To Mr Harthouse.’ He added in his mind, ‘And you speak to him with the most confiding eyes I ever saw, and the most earnest voice (though so quiet) I ever heard.’

‘If I do not understand – and I do not, sir’ – said Sissy, ‘what your honour as a gentleman binds you to, in other matters:’ the blood really rose in his face as she began in these words: ‘I am sure I may rely upon it to keep my visit secret, and to keep secret what I am going to say. I will rely upon it, if you will tell me I may so far trust –’

‘You may, I assure you.’

‘I am young, as you see; I am alone, as you see. In coming to you, sir, I have no advice or encouragement beyond my own hope.’

He thought, ‘But that is very strong,’ as he followed the momentary upward glance of her eyes. He thought besides, ‘This is a very odd beginning. I don’t see where we are going.’

‘I think,’ said Sissy, ‘you have already guessed whom I left just now?’

‘I have been in the greatest concern and uneasiness during the last four-and-twenty hours (which have appeared as many years),’ he returned, ‘on a lady’s account. The hopes I have been encouraged to form that you come from that lady, do not deceive me, I trust.’

‘I left her within an hour.’

‘At – ?’

‘At her father’s.’

Mr Harthouse’s face lengthened in spite of his coolness, and his perplexity increased. ‘Then I certainly,’ he thought, ‘do *not* see where we are going.’

‘She hurried there last night. She arrived there in great agitation, and was insensible all through the night. I live at her father’s, and was with her. You may be sure, sir, you will never see her again as long as you live.’

Mr Harthouse drew a long breath; and, if ever man found himself in the position of not knowing what to say, made the discovery beyond all question that he was so circumstanced. The child-like ingenuousness with which his visitor spoke, her modest fearlessness, her truthfulness which put all artifice aside, her entire forgetfulness of herself in her earnest quiet holding to the object with which she had come; all this, together with her reliance on his easily-given promise – which in itself shamed him – presented something in which he was so inexperienced, and against which he knew any of his usual weapons would fall so powerless; that not a word could he rally to his relief.

At last he said:

‘So startling an announcement, so confidently made, and by such lips, is really disconcerting in the last degree. May I be permitted to inquire, if you are charged to convey that information to me in those hopeless words, by the lady of whom we speak.’

‘I have no charge from her.’

‘The drowning man catches at the straw. With no disrespect for your judgement, and with no doubt of your sincerity, excuse my saying

that I cling to the belief that there is yet hope that I am not condemned to perpetual exile from that lady's presence.' 50

'There is not the least hope. The first object of my coming here, sir, is to assure you that you must believe that there is no more hope of your ever speaking with her again, than there would be if she had died when she came home last night.'

'Must believe? But if I can't – or if I should, by infirmity of nature, be obstinate – and won't –' 55

'It is still true. There is no hope.'

James Harthouse looked at her with an incredulous smile upon his lips; but her mind looked over and beyond him, and the smile was quite thrown away. 60

*[from Book 3 Chapter 2]*

How does Dickens make Sissy so impressive at this moment in the novel?

- Or**      **12** Explore the ways in which Dickens powerfully depicts the lives of factory workers in the novel.

**ZORA NEALE HURSTON: *Their Eyes Were Watching God***

**Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.**

**Either 13** Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

So gradually, she pressed her teeth together and learned to hush.

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That was a bow to the  
outside of things.

*[from Chapter 6]*

Explore how Hurston movingly conveys Janie's thoughts and feelings at this moment in the novel.

**Or 14** How does Hurston make the love story of Janie and Tea Cake so compelling?



**TURN OVER FOR QUESTION 15.**

JOHN KNOWLES: *A Separate Peace*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 15 Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

I went into the First Building, walked up the stairs where Finny had fallen, and joined my 11:10 class, which was in mathematics. We were given a ten-minute trigonometry problem which appeared to solve itself on my paper.

At 12 I left the First Building, recrossed the Common and went into the Jared Potter Building for lunch. It was a breaded veal cutlet, spinach, mashed potatoes, and prune whip. At the table we discussed whether there was any saltpeter in the mashed potatoes. I defended the negative.

After lunch I walked back to the dormitory with Brinker. He alluded to last night only by asking how Phineas was; I said he seemed to be in good spirits. I went on to my room and read the assigned pages of *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*. At 2:30 I left my room, and walking along one side of the oval Finny had used for my track workouts during the winter, I reached the Far Common and beyond it the gym. I went past the Trophy Room, downstairs into the pungent air of the locker room, changed into gym pants, and spent an hour wrestling. I pinned my opponent once and he pinned me once. Phil Latham showed me an involved method of escape in which you executed a modified somersault over your opponent's back. He started to talk about the accident but I concentrated on the escape method and the subject was dropped. Then I took a shower, dressed, and went back to the dormitory, reread part of *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, and at 4:45, instead of going to a scheduled meeting of the Commencement Arrangements Committee, on which I had been persuaded to take Brinker's place, I went to the Infirmary.

Dr. Stanpole was not patrolling the corridor as he habitually did when he was not busy, so I sat down on a bench amid the medical smells and waited. After about ten minutes he came walking rapidly out of his office, his head down and his hands sunk in the pockets of his white smock. He didn't notice me until he was almost past me, and then he stopped short. His eyes met mine carefully, and I said, 'Well, how is he, sir?' in a calm voice which, the moment after I had spoken, alarmed me unreasonably.

Dr. Stanpole sat down next to me and put his capable-looking hand on my leg. 'This is something I think boys of your generation are going to see a lot of,' he said quietly, 'and I will have to tell you about it now. Your friend is dead.'

He was incomprehensible. I felt an extremely cold chill along my back and neck, that was all. Dr. Stanpole went on talking incomprehensibly. 'It was such a simple, clean break. Anyone could have set it. Of course, I didn't send him to Boston. Why should I?'

He seemed to expect an answer from me, so I shook my head and repeated, 'Why should you?'

'In the middle of it his heart simply stopped, without warning. I can't explain it. Yes, I can. There is only one explanation. As I was moving the bone some of the marrow must have escaped into his blood stream and gone directly to his heart and stopped it. That's the only possible explanation. The only one. There are risks, there are always risks. An operating room is a place where the risks are just more formal than in other places. An operating room and a war.' And I noticed that his

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self-control was breaking up. 'Why did it have to happen to you boys so soon, here at Devon?'

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'The marrow of his bone ...' I repeated aimlessly. This at last penetrated my mind. Phineas had died from the marrow of his bone flowing down his blood stream to his heart.

I did not cry then or ever about Finny. I did not cry even when I stood watching him being lowered into his family's strait-laced burial ground outside of Boston. I could not escape a feeling that this was my own funeral, and you do not cry in that case.

55

*[from Chapter 12]*

How does Knowles make this such a distressing climax to the novel?

- Or**     **16** Explore the ways in which Knowles makes the games that the boys play such a memorable part of the novel.

## GEORGE ORWELL: 1984

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 17 Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

Parsons was Winston's fellow-employee at the Ministry of Truth. He was a fattish but active man of paralysing stupidity, a mass of imbecile enthusiasms—one of those completely unquestioning, devoted drudges on whom, more even than on the Thought Police, the stability of the Party depended. At thirty-five he had just been unwillingly evicted from the Youth League, and before graduating into the Youth League he had managed to stay on in the Spies for a year beyond the statutory age. At the Ministry he was employed in some subordinate post for which intelligence was not required, but on the other hand he was a leading figure on the Sports Committee and all the other committees engaged in organising community hikes, spontaneous demonstrations, savings campaigns and voluntary activities generally. He would inform you with quiet pride, between whiffs of his pipe, that he had put in an appearance at the Community Centre every evening for the past four years. An overpowering smell of sweat, a sort of unconscious testimony to the strenuousness of his life, followed him about wherever he went, and even remained behind him after he had gone.

'Have you got a spanner?' said Winston, fiddling with the nut on the angle-joint.

'A spanner,' said Mrs Parsons, immediately becoming invertebrate. 'I don't know, I'm sure. Perhaps the children——'

There was a trampling of boots and another blast on the comb as the children charged into the living-room. Mrs Parsons brought the spanner. Winston let out the water and disgustedly removed the clot of human hair that had blocked up the pipe. He cleaned his fingers as best he could in the cold water from the tap and went back into the other room.

'Up with your hands!' yelled a savage voice.

A handsome, tough-looking boy of nine had popped up from behind the table and was menacing him with a toy automatic pistol, while his small sister, about two years younger, made the same gesture with a fragment of wood. Both of them were dressed in the blue shorts, grey shirts and red neckerchiefs which were the uniform of the Spies. Winston raised his hands above his head, but with an uneasy feeling, so vicious was the boy's demeanour, that it was not altogether a game.

'You're a traitor!' yelled the boy. 'You're a thought-criminal! You're a Eurasian spy! I'll shoot you, I'll vaporize you, I'll send you to the salt mines!'

Suddenly they were both leaping round him, shouting 'Traitor!' and 'Thought-criminal!', the little girl imitating her brother in every movement. It was somehow slightly frightening, like the gambolling of tiger cubs which will soon grow up into man-eaters. There was a sort of calculating ferocity in the boy's eye, a quite evident desire to hit or kick Winston and a consciousness of being very nearly big enough to do so. It was a good job it was not a real pistol he was holding, Winston thought.

Mrs Parsons's eyes flitted nervously from Winston to the children, and back again. In the better light of the living-room he noticed with interest that there actually was dust in the creases of her face.

'They do get so noisy,' she said. 'They're disappointed because they couldn't go to see the hanging, that's what it is. I'm too busy to take them, and Tom won't be back from work in time.'

'Why can't we go and see the hanging?' roared the boy in his huge voice. 50

'Want to see the hanging! Want to see the hanging!' chanted the little girl, still capering round.

Some Eurasian prisoners, guilty of war crimes, were to be hanged in the Park that evening, Winston remembered. This happened about once a month, and was a popular spectacle. Children always clamoured to be taken to see it. He took his leave of Mrs Parsons and made for the door. But he had not gone six steps down the passage when something hit the back of his neck an agonisingly painful blow. It was as though a red-hot wire had been jabbed into him. He spun round just in time to see Mrs Parsons dragging her son back into the doorway while the boy pocketed a catapult. 55 60

'Goldstein!' bellowed the boy as the door closed on him. But what most struck Winston was the look of helpless fright on the woman's greyish face.

*[from Part 1]*

How does Orwell make this such a disturbing moment in the novel?

- Or**      **18** Explore the ways in which Orwell makes O'Brien's treatment of Winston in the Ministry of Love so disturbing.

ALAN PATON: *Cry, the Beloved Country*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 19 Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

Have no doubt it is fear in the land. For what can men do when so many have grown lawless? Who can enjoy the lovely land, who can enjoy the seventy years, and the sun that pours down on the earth, when there is fear in the heart? Who can walk quietly in the shadow of the jacarandas, when their beauty is grown to danger? Who can lie peacefully abed, while the darkness holds some secret? What lovers can lie sweetly under the stars, when menace grows with the measure of their seclusion? 5

There are voices crying what must be done, a hundred, a thousand voices. But what do they help if one seeks for counsel, for one cries this, and one cries that, and another cries something that is neither this nor that. 10

\*

It's a crying scandal, ladies and gentlemen, that we get so few police. This suburb pays more in taxes than most of the suburbs of Johannesburg, and what do we get for it? A third-class police station, with one man on the beat, and one at the telephone. This is the second outrage of its kind in six months, and we must demand more protection. 15

(*Applause.*)

Mr McLaren, will you read us your resolution?

\*

I say we shall always have native crime to fear until the native people of this country have worthy purposes to inspire them and worthy goals to work for. For it is only because they see neither purpose nor goal that they turn to drink and crime and prostitution. Which do we prefer, a law-abiding, industrious, and purposeful native people, or a lawless, idle, and purposeless people? The truth is that we do not know, for we fear them both. And so long as we vacillate, so long will we pay dearly for the dubious pleasure of not having to make up our minds. And the answer does not lie, except temporarily, in more police and more protection. (*Applause.*) 20 25

\*

And you think, Mr de Villiers, that increased schooling facilities would cause a decrease in juvenile delinquency amongst native children? 30

– I am sure of it, Mr Chairman.

– Have you the figures for the percentage of children at school, Mr de Villiers?

– In Johannesburg, Mr Chairman, not more than four out of ten are at school. But of those four not even one will reach his sixth standard. Six are being educated in the streets. 35

– May I ask Mr de Villiers a question, Mr Chairman?

– By all means, Mr Scott.

– Who do you think should pay for this schooling, Mr de Villiers?

– We should pay for it. If we wait till native parents can pay for it, we will pay more heavily in other ways. 40

– Don't you think, Mr de Villiers, that more schooling simply means cleverer criminals?

– I am sure that is not true.

– Let me give you a case. I had a boy working for me who had passed Standard Six. Perfect gentleman, bow-tie, hat to the side, and the latest 45

socks. I treated him well and paid him well. Now do you know, Mr de Villiers, that this self-same scoundrel ...

\*

- They should enforce the pass-laws, Jackson.
- But I tell you the pass-laws don't work.
- They'd work if they were enforced. 50
- But I tell you they're unenforceable. Do you know that we send one hundred thousand natives every year to prison, where they mix with real criminals?
- That's not quite true, Jackson. I know they're trying road-camps and farm-labour and several other things. 55
- Well, perhaps you know. But it doesn't alter my argument at all, that the pass-laws are unenforceable. You can send 'em to road-camps or farms or anywhere else you damn well please, but you can't tell me it's a healthy thing even to convict one hundred thousand people.
- What would you do then? 60
- Well now you're asking. I don't know what I'd do. But I just know the pass-laws don't work.

*[from Book 1 Chapter 12]*

Explore the ways in which Paton vividly conveys different viewpoints at this moment in the novel.

- Or**      **20** How does Paton make the relationship between Stephen Kumalo and his wife particularly moving for you?

from *Stories of Ourselves*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

- Either 21** Read this passage from *On Her Knees* (by Tim Winton), and then answer the question that follows it:

Honestly, Mum, why didn't we just give the place a light go through?  
Or better, just take the dough and split.  
Because it would look like an admission of guilt.  
Shit.  
Language. 5  
But this won't convince her, Mum.  
No, probably not.  
You should report them missing yourself. Ask them to search our  
place. Force the issue. There's nothing that can come of it.  
Except talk. Imagine the talk. I'd lose the rest of my jobs. 10  
She was shining with sweat. Her hair had tightened into damp poodle  
curls. She had been so pretty once.  
So you're stuffed either way.  
Love, we grin and bear it.  
I shook my head. I hit the button on the vac and blitzed the carpet 15  
beneath the bed. I could sense her still behind me, waiting to say something  
but I pretended to be absorbed in the work. Up at the head of the bed there  
was a nest of Red Tulip chocolate wrappers. They made a slurping noise  
as they were sucked into the machine. I only had half of them up when the  
ping of something hard racketing along the pipe made me turn my head. 20  
Mum stepped on the button. The machine wound down to silence.  
Money, probably, I murmured.  
Let's open it up.  
I cracked the hatch and felt around in the horrible gullet of the dustbag.  
From wads of lint and hair and dirt came an earring. 25  
Five hundred dollars? she muttered. That's rich.  
I didn't know anything about jewellery. I shrugged, gave it to her.  
Look under there. The other one's bound to be close by.  
I found it hard up against the skirting board.  
She's left them on the pillow, she said. Forgotten about them. She's 30  
come in and swept them off as she got into bed. She hasn't even looked.  
That's all it was, just carelessness.  
All this fake outrage. She couldn't be bothered going to the cops  
because they're cheap? Is that it?  
I don't know. 35  
It wasn't important.  
It was important to me.  
Well, you've cleared your name. That's something.  
She shook her head with a furious smile.  
Why not? I asked. Show her what we found, what she was too lazy to 40  
look for. Show her where they were.  
All she has to say is that she made me guilty enough to give them  
back. That I just wanted to keep the job. To save my good name. Vic, that's  
all I've got – my good name. These people, they can say anything they  
like. You can't fight back. 45  
I looked away at the floor. I heard her blow her nose. I was powerless  
to defend her. It was the lowest feeling.



I'll finish the kitchen, she said. Ten minutes.

I vacuumed the rest of the bedroom. The earrings lay on the bed. I looked at them. They were pretty enough but I was no judge. Perhaps their real value was sentimental. I snatched them up from the quilt and took them into the laundry. I chucked them into the cat tray. Let her find them there if she cared to look. 50

In the kitchen Mum was ready to go. The rags and bottles were in the bucket. She walked a towel across the floor and that was it. 55

What about the money? I said, looking at the scrubbed bench.

I'm worth more, she said.

You're not taking it?

No.

I smiled and shook my head. 60

You forgot the vacuum, she said.

Oh, yeah. Right.

I went back to the laundry, knelt at the catbox and picked out the earrings. I dusted them off on my sweaty shirt. In my palm they weighed nothing. I grabbed the Electrolux from the bedroom and made my way out again. In the kitchen I put the earrings beside the unstrung key and the thin envelope of money. 65

My mother stood silhouetted in the open doorway. It seemed that the very light of day was pouring out through her limbs. I had my breath back. I followed her into the hot afternoon. 70

To what extent do you think Winton makes this a satisfying ending to the story?

Or 22 Explore the ways in which Grace strikingly depicts the old man's journey in *Journey*.





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