



WORLD LITERATURE

Paper 2 Unseen

0408/21

May/June 2017

1 hour 15 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

You are advised to spend about 20 minutes reading the question paper and planning your answer.

Both questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **5** printed pages and **3** blank pages.

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

EITHER

- 1 Read carefully the following poem (on pages 2 and 3).

It describes a storm coming in from the sea which hits the city of Petrograd, causing the River Neva to flood.

How does the poet strikingly convey the force of the storm?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- how he describes the weather
- the words and images he uses to portray the River Neva
- the impact of the storm on the city and its people.

From *The Bronze Horseman*

On Petrograd the dark mists rose,
November blew and autumn froze.
The noisy Neva splashed ahead
And in her shapely confines heaved,
As does a sick man, in his bed
Tossing and turning, unrelieved.
And in the midnight darkness rain
Beat bitterly upon the pane.
The keening tempest howled and squalled.

The stormy grey
Fades from the misty night outside,
And thins before a pale new day...
A day of horror!

All that night
The Neva faced both storm and sea,
Crushed by their wild stupidity,
Until she could no longer fight...

By morning crowds were teeming by
 Along her banks to watch and wonder
 At waters splashing mountains high
 And foaming furiously asunder¹.
 But gales were blowing from the bay
 To block the Neva; coming round,
 She stormed and seethed, and in her way
 The islands, one by one, were drowned.
 The weather raged with greater force,
 The Neva, rising in her course,
 A roaring cauldron, swirled and spat,
 Then, like a savage beast, leapt at
 The city... All that stood before
 Recoiled and ran. The space around
 Soon stood deserted. Underground,
 The cellars filled before the spate,
 Canals gushed up at every grate.

A siege! The wicked waters strike,
 Climbing through windows, burglar-like.
 The stems of boats in full career
 Smash panes. Now hawkers'² trays appear
 With covers soaked; beams, roofs go past
 From broken huts; cheap things amassed
 By poor, pale beggars, few by few;
 Storm-shattered bridges; coffins, too,
 From steeping cemeteries exhumed³,
 Swim down the streets!...

The people fear
 God's wrath and sense his judgement near.
 Their food, their shelter, all is doomed!
 Where shall they turn?

¹*asunder*: apart
²*hawkers*: street-sellers
³*exhumed*: dug up

OR

2 Read carefully the following extract from a novel.

The narrator, Sira, has come with her boyfriend (Ramiro) and her mother to visit her father. Sira is about to meet her father for the first time.

Explore how the writing strikingly conveys Sira's thoughts and feelings at this significant moment in her life.

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the description of their arrival at her father's house
- Sira's reaction to her mother's behaviour
- how her father's words and actions make such an impact on Sira.

From my mother's expression when we arrived, I deduced that she was displeased to see Ramiro at my side. Seeing our intention to go in together, she stopped us without a thought.

"This is family business; if you don't mind, you'll remain here."

And without waiting for a response, she turned and crossed through the imposing black iron and glass door. I wanted to have him beside me, I needed his support and his strength, but I didn't dare face her down. I merely whispered to Ramiro that it would be best if he left and I followed her inside.

We went through the wide door and began to climb the stairs, my mother ahead of me, stepping firmly, without even touching the polished wood of the banister, in a suit I didn't recognize. Me behind her, fearful, clinging to the handrail as though to a life vest on a stormy night. The two of us silent as tombs. Thoughts gathered in my head as we went up the steps one by one. First landing. Why did my mother move around so familiarly in that unknown place? Mezzanine¹. What would the man we were coming to see be like, why this sudden insistence on meeting me after so many years? Main floor. The rest of my thoughts remained crowded together in the limbo of my mind. I didn't have time for them; we'd arrived. A large door to the right, my mother's finger on the bell pressing firmly, without any sign of intimidation. The door opened at once, an old, shrivelled maid in a black uniform and spotless white cap.

"Good afternoon, Servanda. We've come to see the master of the house. I imagine he's in the library."

Servanda's mouth was left half open, the greeting hanging from it, as though she had been visited by a couple of ghosts. When she managed to react and it seemed she was at last going to be able to say something, a faceless voice could be heard over hers. A man's voice, hoarse, strong, from the back.

"Let them come through."

The maid stepped to one side, still caught in a nervous fluster. She didn't need to show us the way: my mother seemed to know it all too well. We walked down a broad corridor, passing large rooms, their walls covered with hangings, tapestries, and family portraits. Arriving at a double door, open on the left-hand side, my mother turned toward it. We then noticed a large man waiting for us in the middle of the room. And the powerful voice again.

"Come in."

A large desk covered in paper, a large bookcase filled with books, a large man looking at me, first my eyes, then down, then back up again. Discovering me. He swallowed, I swallowed. He took a few steps toward us, put his hand on my arm, and squeezed, not too hard, as though wanting to be sure that I really existed. He smiled slightly, as though with an aftertaste of melancholy.

"You're just like your mother was twenty-five years ago."

He kept his gaze fixed on mine as he held on to me for a second, two, three, ten. Then, still without letting me go, he looked away and fixed his gaze on my mother. The weak, bitter smile returned to his face.

“How long it’s been, Dolores.”

She didn’t answer, nor did she avoid his eyes. Then he released his hand from my arm and held it out toward her; he didn’t seem to be after a greeting, just a contact, a glancing touch, as though hoping that her fingers would come out to meet his. But she remained immobile, not answering the invitation, until he seemed to awake from the enchantment, cleared his throat, and, in a tone that was as courteous as it was determinedly neutral, offered us a seat.

Instead of heading for the big work table where the papers were gathered, he invited us toward another corner of the library. My mother settled into one armchair, and he sat opposite. And me alone on a sofa, in the middle, between the two of them. Tense, uncomfortable, all three of us. He busied himself lighting a cigar. She remained sitting erect, her knees together and her back straight. Meanwhile, I scratched with my index finger at the wine-colored damask upholstery of the sofa, my attention focused on the task, as though I were trying to make a hole in the warp of the fabric and escape through it like a little lizard. The atmosphere filled with smoke, and the throat clearing returned as though in anticipation of some intervention, but before this could be spilled into the air my mother spoke. She was addressing me, though her eyes remained on him. Her voice forced me at last to lift my gaze to the two of them.

“Well, Sira, so this is your father, you meet him at last.”

¹*Mezzanine*: a middle level between floors

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