



WORLD LITERATURE

0408/02

Paper 2 Unseen

October/November 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 **4** printed pages.

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

EITHER

- 1 Read carefully the following poem. It is about a woman who has a bad headache during the night.

How does the poet vividly convey Mrs Philpott's experience?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- how the poet describes Mrs Philpott's actions and feelings
- how the poet portrays the objects in the house
- the impact of the final two stanzas.

Headache

Mrs Philpott pads secretly downstairs,
going by touch. Her fingers feel for the banister
in the rich dark. The carpet whispers

slow, slow. The house is peopled by creaks.
A line of grey is the kitchen door.
Slatted blinds slice up the night.

She strokes the big fridge. It purrs and hums.
Her headache demands: *Come on, come on.*
She pulls the door open. Loud light drums.

Milk. She needs milk to help her sleep
and small white pills for her jagged brain.
She gulps the liquid straight from the jug.

The fridge whines. She makes no response.
She has to get back, somehow, upstairs
over the slivers of silver pain.

In the big bed by the open window
Philpott¹ snores under the stars.
She lifts the duvet and slips inside.

Her body is milk and dazzled moon.
She floods the pool of her sleeping self.
He dreams she's discovered a way to drown.

¹*Philpott*: her husband

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following passage from a novel. The narrator and her friend, Lila, are daring to go up to the apartment of their feared neighbour, Don Achille.

Explore how the writer vividly conveys the impact of this moment on the narrator.

To help you answer, you might consider:

- how the writer describes Don Achille
- the description of the girls' approach to Don Achille's apartment
- the portrayal of the narrator's relationship with her friend, Lila.

My friendship with Lila began the day we decided to go up the dark stairs that led, step after step, flight after flight, to the door of Don Achille's apartment.

I remember the violet light of the courtyard, the smells of a warm spring evening. The mothers were making dinner, it was time to go home, but we delayed, challenging each other, without ever saying a word, testing our courage. For some time, in school and outside of it, that was what we had been doing. Lila would thrust her hand and then her whole arm into the black mouth of a manhole, and I, in turn, immediately did the same, my heart pounding, hoping that the cockroaches wouldn't run over my skin, that the rats wouldn't bite me. Lila climbed up to Signora Spagnuolo's ground-floor window, and, hanging from the iron bar that the clothesline was attached to, swung back and forth, then lowered herself down to the sidewalk, and I immediately did the same, although I was afraid of falling and hurting myself. Lila stuck into her skin the rusted safety pin that she had found on the street somewhere but kept in her pocket like the gift of a fairy godmother; I watched the metal point as it dug a whitish tunnel into her palm, and then, when she pulled it out and handed it to me, I did the same.

At some point she gave me one of her firm looks, eyes narrowed, and headed toward the building where Don Achille lived. I was frozen with fear. Don Achille was the ogre of fairy tales, I was absolutely forbidden to go near him, speak to him, look at him, spy on him, I was to act as if neither he nor his family existed. Regarding him there was, in my house but not only mine, a fear and a hatred whose origin I didn't know. The way my father talked about him, I imagined a huge man, covered with purple boils, violent in spite of the "don," which to me suggested a calm authority. He was a being created out of some unidentifiable material, iron, glass, nettles, but alive, alive, the hot breath streaming from his nose and mouth. I thought that if I merely saw him from a distance he would drive something sharp and burning into my eyes. So if I was mad enough to approach the door of his house he would kill me.

I waited to see if Lila would have second thoughts and turn back. I knew what she wanted to do, I had hoped that she would forget about it, but in vain. The street lamps were not yet lighted, nor were the lights on the stairs. From the apartments came irritable voices. To follow Lila I had to leave the bluish light of the courtyard and enter the black of the doorway. When I finally made up my mind, I saw nothing at first, there was only an odour of old junk and DDT¹. Then I got used to the darkness and found Lila sitting on the first step of the first flight of stairs. She got up and we began to climb.

We kept to the side where the wall was, she two steps ahead, I two steps behind, torn between shortening the distance or letting it increase. I can still feel my shoulder inching along the flaking wall and the idea that the steps were very high, higher than those in the building where I lived. I was trembling. Every footfall, every voice was Don

Achille creeping up behind us or coming down toward us with a long knife, the kind used for slicing open a chicken breast. There was an odour of sautéing garlic. Maria, Don Achille's wife, would put me in the pan of boiling oil, the children would eat me.

We stopped often, and each time I hoped that Lila would decide to turn back. I was all sweaty, I don't know about her. Every so often she looked up, but I couldn't tell at what, all that was visible was the grey areas of the big windows at every landing. Suddenly the lights came on, but they were faint, dusty, leaving broad zones of shadow, full of dangers. We waited to see if it was Don Achille who had turned the switch, but we heard nothing, neither footsteps nor the opening or closing of a door. Then Lila continued on, and I followed.

She thought that what we were doing was just and necessary; I had forgotten every good reason, and certainly was there only because she was. We climbed slowly toward the greatest of our terrors of that time, we went to expose ourselves to fear and interrogate it.

At the fourth flight Lila did something unexpected. She stopped to wait for me, and when I reached her she gave me her hand. This gesture changed everything between us forever.

¹*DDT*: a strong substance for killing insects

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