

The City School
North Nazimabad Boys Campus



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Comprehension-2

A young girl, Amy, has a startling experience on a visit to her local market.

- 1 'Hurry up, Amy. It's market day!' Amy stirred in her sleep, reluctant to leave her cosy world of dreams. 'Come along now,' her mother cried. 'The bus will be here any moment.' Her mother's impatient command sent her tumbling out of bed and hurrying to get ready; her mother hated anything that threatened the high point of her week. 5
- 2 The bus was already crowded when it arrived, and Amy and her mother barely managed to find room to sit. Off it went, rattling along over the dirt road, until eventually it trundled to a stop in the market area. Amy's mother bundled her off, eager to join the jostling crowds thronging the narrow streets.
- 3 They hurried by the displays of flashy jewellery spread out on the walk-ways, with their coloured bangles, crudely fashioned rings, and roughly polished stones, making for the stalls selling clothing materials. Amy's mother quickly began sifting through their repetitive patterns of colour, fashioning in her mind's eye some new dress, no doubt, or a best shirt for father. Amy, however, had her mind set on the caves near the market. She had heard of the attractions there: the tempting iced drinks, street musicians performing, and the fascinating puppet shows. Up till now she had not been allowed to go on her own. For the moment, though, the displays of luscious fruit across the road were temptation enough. She counted the coins in her purse, and treated herself to a small bag of juicy plums. 15
- 4 Back at the cloth stall, her mother was bargaining earnestly with the owner over some cotton fabric. The cut and thrust of argument was something that her mother relished at the market, perhaps even more than the sights and sounds of the market itself. 'There,' she said, smiling triumphantly at Amy. 'Enough to make a dress, or even two. Now for something for father.' 25
- 'Mother, can I go and have a look round the caves?' asked Amy. Amy's mother frowned slightly; she was not keen on Amy wandering too far on her own, but she quickly relented. 'Be back here in a hour, then, and not a minute later,' and she pressed a few coins into Amy's hand. Amy gratefully promised she would and ran off towards the steps that climbed steeply up to the caves. She bounded up them, eager to get to the biggest cave of all. Once inside, she was immediately stunned by its vastness, and its massive, grim-looking walls of stone. They made her feel insignificant, and, for some unaccountable reason, a little uneasy. 30
- 5 The next moment, though, she saw something more reassuring. In the far corner of the cave a large white cloth screen was being erected, musicians were gathering and people were taking their places for some sort of show. Suddenly there was a roll of drums. An old man made his entrance by the side of the screen, dressed in a tattered, grimy green cloak, and with a long, straggling beard. But it was his expression that startled Amy. It had an intensity she had never seen before and she imagined him as some sort of mysterious magician. Her feelings of uneasiness returned as she watched him gaze round the audience. 40
- 6 He clicked his fingers and immediately a small boy appeared, with large, sad eyes, and wearing a startling costume, all greens and reds. Even stranger was his face; his cheeks had been painted with scarlet make-up, making him look like some peculiar doll. From his hands dangled two wooden puppets, armed with miniature swords, and dressed as he was, in brightly coloured clothes, with their wooden cheeks picked out in scarlet paint. The doll-like appearance of the boy and his weird similarity to the puppets sent a shiver through Amy. 45

- 7 The musicians struck up a lively dance tune. The wooden figures jerked into action in the boy's hands; they leapt and spun in the air, their miniature swords flashing, and all in time with the music, until Amy thought she was watching live creatures. The boy himself seemed to become as one with them; his little body mimicked the movements of his puppets, while his eyes glowed with an eager fire. The music stopped; the dolls fell limp. At a nod from his master the boy disappeared with him behind the screen. 50 55
- 8 The musicians struck up again, this time playing a solemn melody. Slowly the white cloth of the screen seemed to come alive; behind it the black shape of a temple appeared, followed by black shadowy figures moving in a stately procession. They were uncannily life-like, with their nodding heads and the slow, deliberate movement of their legs. The audience burst into applause, as the spell of their realism took hold. Amy was entranced and yet half-afraid as well. Dark shadows on a screen were taking on a reality all of their own. Was there something at work in the cave, creating this weird transformation? A solemn note on a gong marked the end of the procession. The shadowy figures, outlined on the slowly darkening screen, moved slowly inside the black shape of the temple – then silence. 60 65
- 9 A blast of trumpets broke the stillness of the cave. The screen was lit up once more, but this time with the shapes of two solitary figures, moving slowly round each other, just like boxers sizing each other up. Yet the sharp outlines of swords indicated the beginning of a much grimmer contest. Their pace quickened as they became locked in close combat. Amy held her breath, already believing in the deadly intent of their thrusting weapons. Suddenly the drums sounded again, and a sword rose high and swiftly fell, followed by a piercing scream, all too lifelike in its agony. Amy jumped up in terror, then thought the cry was from a frightened onlooker. One of the swordsmen had fallen to the ground. Convinced by the realism of the fight, Amy imagined she saw a slow, red stain spreading against the whiteness of the screen, and did not question the strange, unearthly contrast of colour against the black and white backdrop of the fight. A single note on a trumpet signalled the end of the contest and the screen went dark. 70 75
- 10 The audience broke into a stuttering applause, clearly moved by the grim realism of the contest. The old man appeared by the side of the screen, holding up the two puppets, the fighters in the grim contest. One of them raised its sword in a grisly gesture of triumph. Amy looked closer. The other puppet bore a fearful resemblance to the old man's assistant, the little boy, with his large, sad eyes and his awful, scarlet-tinted face. Amy panicked wildly. She ran screaming outside, stumbling madly down the steps, blundering past the crowds, desperate to get away from the ghastly presence of the cave. On she went, feet flying, heart pounding, as though through some endless tunnel..... 80 85
- 11 'There you are, Amy. Where on earth have you been? We'll miss the bus if we're not careful.' 90
- Amy stared around her, her eyes still wide with fear. The sound of her mother's voice and of the market place brought her back to normality, but how she had arrived safely at her mother's side she could not tell. She ignored her mother's impatience, and simply followed her quietly to the bus, sitting in silence on the journey home. Once there she made for the comforting familiarity of her tiny room. Her wooden doll still sat cosily in the corner, with its fixed smile and large round eyes. But was there now something faintly mocking about that smile? 95

Read the passage in the insert and then answer **all** the questions which follow below.

You are recommended to answer the questions in the order set.

Mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be penalised in any part of the Paper.

From paragraph 1:

- 1 (a) Why was Amy's mother 'impatient' with her? [1]
- (b) The market was the 'high point' of the week for Amy's mother. What does 'high point' mean here? [1]

From paragraph 3:

- 2 Give **one** example from the paragraph which shows that goods for sale in the market were cheaply made. [1]

From paragraph 4:

- 3 (a) Amy's mother smiled 'triumphantly'. What do you think her 'triumph' was? [1]
- (b) Why was Amy's mother at first unwilling for Amy to go to the caves? [1]
- (c) How did she then make up for her strict attitude? [1]
- (d) Apart from her feeling of fear, explain in **your own words two** other feelings Amy had immediately she entered the vast cave. [2]

From paragraphs 6 and 7:

- 4 (a) In line 49 the author refers to the boy's 'weird similarity' to the puppets. In what ways is this similarity achieved? [2]
- (b) How is the boy's similarity to the puppets shown again in paragraph 7? [1]

From paragraph 9:

- 5 The 'piercing scream' that frightened Amy was 'all too lifelike in its agony'. Explain what the author is saying here. [2]
- 6 In Amy's imagination, what was the 'slow, red stain'? [1]

From paragraph 10:

- 7 Amy panicked wildly. Explain what caused this panic. [2]

From paragraph 11:

- 8 Amy's mother was unaware of what Amy had just experienced. What **two** aspects of her mother's attitude made her seem unsympathetic? [2]
- 9 Explain **in your own words** why Amy went quickly to her room when she got home. [2]

From the whole passage:

- 10 Choose **five** of the following words or phrases. For each of them give **one** word or short phrase (of not more than **seven** words) which has the same meaning that the word or phrase has in the passage.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. set on (line 14) | 5. intent (line 72) |
| 2. earnestly (line 20) | 6. convinced (line 75) |
| 3. glowed (line 54) | 7. signalled (line 79) |
| 4. sharp (line 69) | 8. fixed (line 96) |
- [5]

Comprehension

Three men have set up camp on a small island in the Indian Ocean. They are getting ready to search for treasure from the wreck of a ship which had sunk nearby.

- 1 Early in the morning we took the boat out to begin our dives to the wrecked ship which lay just outside the coral reefs that ringed the island. Once our boat was in position, Gerry and I pulled on our diving suits, loaded on our underwater breathing equipment and dived into the still waters, leaving Angelo to look after the boat.
- 2 We had been down thirty minutes when we heard a metallic clink! clink! clink! transmitted through the water. We paused and listened; it came again, and then a third time. Undoubtedly Angelo was beating out some sort of emergency signal on the side of the boat. I indicated to Gerry that we should return to the surface at once, but I was annoyed that we had to abandon our dive so soon. As we climbed aboard, I asked impatiently, 'What's the matter, Angelo?' and in reply he pointed out to sea. I pulled off my mask and peered into the distance. A thin, dark smear lay low and black against the sea. Even as I watched, it seemed to grow, spreading wider into the paler blue of the sky. Angelo whistled softly and shook his head. 'Here comes a cyclone, and, man, he is in a big hurry.'
- 3 The speed of that dark, black cloud was uncanny. It rose higher and higher, as though drawing a curtain across the sky, and as Angelo started the boat's motors the first racing clouds spread across the sun. Gerry looked anxiously at me. 'A cyclone's coming,' I said. 'You know what a cyclone is, a vicious tropical storm. And this one's hunting for us.'
- 4 With our boat speeding across the waters to the shelter of the island, we watched the cyclone come on in awesome grandeur, overwhelming the sun until the whole sky was changed into a mass of darkening cloud. Then with a shriek the wind was upon us, turning the air into a mist of driven spray. Our hearts sank at the sense of human frailty before such force and power.
- 5 'The motors,' Angelo bellowed at me, as our boat touched the beach. The two outboard motors on the boat were new, and very expensive. 'We'll take them with us,' I yelled. Immediately we freed the motors, and, heaving them onto our shoulders, we shouted to Gerry to get ashore. Angelo and I jumped in after him, lumbering through the waves under our heavy burdens.
- 6 As we struggled out of the water onto the shore, the howling wind drove dense clouds of sand into our faces, stinging our flesh. We started making for the trees nearby, trying to run, though keeping our balance in the howling wind and on the soft, wind-blown sand was a torture in itself. Yet if we had hoped to find shelter among the trees we were fools, for we found ourselves transferred from a position of acute discomfort into one of real and deadly danger. The great winds of the cyclone were thrashing the palm trees into a lunatic frenzy. Their long trunks whipped about wildly, and the wind clawed at the branches, sending them flying off into the air like huge missiles, with us as the likely targets.
- 7 We ran on through the trees, and for the first time I was grateful for the scanty cover given me by the outboard motor on my shoulder, since all of us were now exposed to an even worse danger. The whipping movements of the tall palms hurled their clusters of coconuts through the air. Big as cannon balls, these projectiles bombarded us as we ran. One of them struck the motor I carried with a force that made me stagger; another fell beside the path and on the second bounce hit Gerry on the lower leg. Even though most of its power was spent, still it knocked him down and rolled him in the sand. When he regained his feet he was limping heavily, but he ran on through the deadly hail of coconuts.

- 8 By now the wind had increased in power. I heard it shrieking overhead on a higher, angrier note, and as I glanced ahead I saw the first palm tree begin to go. It leant out wearily, exhausted by its efforts to resist the wind. The earth around its base heaved upwards as the roots were torn from the sandy soil. Gerry was fifteen paces in front of me, head down, and just beginning the ascent of some low hill ahead. To my horror, I realised he was running right into the path of the falling tree. He looked so small and fragile compared with that solid mass of descending timber that I knew it would crush him with a single gigantic blow. As it began to fall, so it gathered speed, swinging in a terrible curve, like the axe of some fearful executioner. 50
- 9 I screamed at him, but he could not hear me. I dropped the motor, and dived forwards, reaching out to the full stretch of my right arm, and hit Gerry's back foot. This tap on the ankle, just like that delivered by a crafty footballer, tripped him. The tree struck the earth barely half a metre in front of Gerry with a blow that shook my whole body and rattled the teeth in my skull. 55
- 10 Instantly I was up and dragging Gerry to his feet. I hauled him over the fallen tree, pointed him towards the top of the hill beyond and gave him a shove. 'Run!' I shouted and he staggered onwards. Up ahead I saw Angelo toiling up the slope of the hill, and, heaving the motor onto my shoulder once more, I hurried after them. 60
- 11 All around in the palm groves I could hear the thud and crash of other trees falling. I tried to run with my face upturned so as to dodge the next threat before it developed, but another flying coconut hit me a glancing blow on the temple, dimming my vision for a moment and sending me staggering on blindly. I reached the crest of the hill without realising it, and so was unprepared for the full force of the wind in my back. It hurled me forward, and I was thrown down from the top of the hill. My knees gave way, and the motor and I rolled headlong down the slope beyond. 65
- 12 As I tumbled down I caught up with Gerry, catching him in the back of the legs and taking him with me in my undignified descent. We lay together in a battered and weary heap, protected from the direct fury of the wind by the hill above us, and so it was possible to hear what Gerry was saying. It was immediately obvious that he bitterly resented what he considered to be an unprovoked assault on my part. In our present situation, his anger was suddenly terribly comical, and, despite all we had been through, I began to laugh. He stared at me for a moment as though I had gone mad; then he started to laugh, but the laughter had a wild, hysterical note to it. 70
- 13 Angelo thought Gerry was upset when he reached us and so he helped him down the last few hundred metres to the cave where we had our camp. Luckily, the cave was well placed to withstand the cyclone winds. I used some canvas sheeting there to screen the entrance, piling stones upon the trailing end to hold it down. Now we had a haven into which we crept like wounded animals. 75

Read the passage in the insert and then answer **all** the questions which follow below.

You are recommended to answer the questions in the order set.

Mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be penalised in any part of the Paper.

From paragraph 1:

- 1 The wrecked boat lay outside the coral reefs that 'ringed' the island. What does 'ringed' mean here? [1]

From paragraph 2:

- 2 What made the two divers decide to return to the surface at once? [1]

From paragraph 3:

- 3 The cloud of the cyclone seemed to be 'drawing a curtain across the sky'. What effect of the cloud is described here by 'drawing a curtain across the sky'? [1]

From paragraph 4:

- 4 (a) Write down **one** word from the paragraph that best describes the noise of the wind as it hit the people in the boat. [1]
- (b) The power of the wind made their hearts sink 'at the sense of human frailty'. Explain in **your own words** what 'the sense of human frailty' means. [3]

From paragraph 5:

- 5 Why did it seem essential to take the 'heavy burdens' with them in such a dangerous situation? [2]

From paragraph 6:

- 6 When they first came ashore, the three companions were immediately in 'a position of acute discomfort' (lines 35-36). Give **two** reasons for their discomfort. [2]

From paragraph 8:

- 7 (a) The author seems to be comparing the palm tree to a human being in its failure to resist the wind. Write down the **two** single words he uses which make this comparison. [2]
- (b) Lines 57-58, 'swinging in a terrible curve, like the axe of some fearful executioner', give the idea of the speed and curving fall of the palm tree. What else do you think is implied by the author's words? [1]

From paragraph 11:

8 The author tried to run with his face upturned. How would this help him 'to dodge the next threat'? [1]

From paragraph 12:

9 (a) Explain **in your own words** what it was that Gerry 'bitterly resented' on the part of the author. [2]

(b) Gerry thought that the author had gone mad when he laughed. Why should he think that? [2]

From paragraph 13:

10 Write down the phrase the author uses in this paragraph to gain the reader's sympathy for his friends and himself. [1]

From the whole passage:

11 Choose **five** of the following words or phrases. For each of them give **one** word or short phrase (of not more than **seven** words) which has the same meaning that the word or phrase has in the passage.

1. racing (line 17)

2. dense (line 31)

3. scanty (line 40)

4. spent (line 46)

5. crafty (line 61)

6. gave way (line 74)

7. withstand (line 86)

8. screen (line 87)

[5]