



**Cambridge International Examinations**  
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

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**LITERATURE (ENGLISH)**

**0486/41**

Paper 4

**May/June 2014**

**2 hours 15 minutes**

No Additional Materials are required.

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**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 **three** questions: **one** question from Section A, **one** question from Section B, and **one** question from Section C.

Answer at least **one** passage-based question (marked \*) and at least **one** essay question (marked †).

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.



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**Section A: DRAMA**

**ARTHUR MILLER: *All My Sons***

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

*Ann:* You're not so dumb, Joe.

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*Keller:* Right again.

[from Act 2]

Explore the ways in which Miller reveals the thoughts of the characters at this moment in the play so dramatically.

- Or** †2 How far do you think Miller suggests that Kate Keller is a bad mother and a bad wife? Support your ideas with details from the writing.
- Or** 3 You are Chris. Ann Deever is coming to stay.  
Write your thoughts.



	You are contented to be led in triumph Thorough the streets of Rome?	50
<i>Brutus:</i>	No, Cassius, no. Think not, thou noble Roman, That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome; He bears too great a mind. But this same day Must end that work the ides of March begun, And whether we shall meet again I know not. Therefore our everlasting farewell take: For ever and for ever farewell, Cassius! If we do meet again, why, we shall smile; If not, why then this parting was well made.	55
<i>Cassius:</i>	For ever and for ever farewell, Brutus! If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed; If not, 'tis true this parting was well made.	60
<i>Brutus:</i>	Why then, lead on. O that a man might know The end of this day's business ere it come! But it sufficeth that the day will end, And then the end is known. Come, ho! away!	65

[*Exeunt.*

[*from Act 5 Scene 1*]

How does Shakespeare create sympathy for Cassius at this moment in the play?

- Or** †5 Brutus says 'Antony is but a limb of Caesar'. How does Shakespeare make it clear to you that there is more to Antony than Brutus thinks? Support your ideas with details from the play.
- Or** 6 You are Portia. You have just sent Lucius to the Capitol to find out what is happening. Write your thoughts.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *The Tempest*

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

<i>Ferdinand:</i>	Where should this music be? I'th' air or th'earth? It sounds no more; and sure it waits upon Some god o'th' island. Sitting on a bank, Weeping again the King my father's wreck, This music crept by me upon the waters, Allaying both their fury and my passion With its sweet air. Thence I have followed it— Or it hath drawn me rather. But 'tis gone. No, it begins again.	5
	<i>Song</i>	10
<i>Ariel:</i>	Full fathom five thy father lies. Of his bones are coral made; Those are pearls that were his eyes; Nothing of him that doth fade But doth suffer a sea-change Into something rich and strange. Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:	15
<i>Spirits:</i>	[ <i>within</i> ] Ding dong.	
<i>Ariel:</i>	Hark, now I hear them.	
<i>Spirits:</i>	[ <i>within</i> ] Ding-dong bell. [ <i>etc.</i> ]	20
<i>Ferdinand:</i>	The ditty does remember my drowned father. This is no mortal business, nor no sound That the earth owes.  [ <i>Music</i> ]	
	I hear it now above me.	25
<i>Prospero:</i>	[ <i>to MIRANDA</i> ] The fringed curtains of thine eye advance, And say what thou seest yon.	
<i>Miranda:</i>	What is't? A spirit? Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir, It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit.	30
<i>Prospero:</i>	No, wench, it eats and sleeps, and hath such senses As we have, such. This gallant which thou seest Was in the wreck, and but he's something stained With grief, that's beauty's canker, thou mightst call him A goodly person. He hath lost his fellows, And strays about to find 'em.	35
<i>Miranda:</i>	I might call him A thing divine, for nothing natural I ever saw so noble.	40
<i>Prospero:</i>	[ <i>aside</i> ] It goes on, I see, As my soul prompts it. [ <i>To ARIEL</i> ] Spirit, fine spirit, I'll free thee Within two days for this.	
<i>Ferdinand:</i>	[ <i>aside</i> ] Most sure the goddess On whom these airs attend. [ <i>To MIRANDA</i> ] Vouchsafe my prayer May know if you remain upon this island, And that you will some good instruction give	45

	How I may bear me here. My prime request, Which I do last pronounce, is—O you wonder— If you be maid or no?	50
<i>Miranda:</i>	No wonder, sir; But certainly a maid.	
<i>Ferdinand:</i>	My language? Heavens! I am the best of them that speak this speech, Were I but where 'tis spoken.	55
<i>Prospero:</i>	How? The best? What wert thou, if the King of Naples heard thee?	
<i>Ferdinand:</i>	A single thing, as I am now that wonders To hear thee speak of Naples. He does hear me, And that he does I weep. Myself am Naples, Who with mine eyes, never since at ebb, beheld The King my father wrecked.	60
<i>Miranda:</i>	Alack, for mercy!	
<i>Ferdinand:</i>	Yes, faith, and all his lords, the Duke of Milan And his brave son being twain.	65
<i>Prospero:</i>	[ <i>aside</i> ] The Duke of Milan And his more braver daughter could control thee, If now 'twere fit to do't. At the first sight They have changed eyes.—Delicate Ariel, I'll set thee free for this. [ <i>To FERDINAND</i> ] A word, good sir. I fear you have done yourself some wrong. A word.	70

[from Act 1 Scene 2]

Explore the ways in which Shakespeare makes this such a dramatic and moving moment in the play.

**Or** †8 Do you feel that justice has been done by the end of the play? Support your ideas with details from Shakespeare's writing.

**Or** 9 You are Trinculo. Caliban has been persuading you and Stephano to kill Prospero and take over the island. You hear some mysterious music, and set off to try and find where it is coming from.

Write your thoughts.

OSCAR WILDE: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

**Either \*10** Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

- Merriman:* The dog-cart is at the door, sir.  
*[Algernon looks appealingly at Cecily.]*
- Cecily:* It can wait, Merriman ... for ... five minutes.
- Merriman:* Yes, Miss. *[Exit Merriman.]*
- Algernon:* I hope, Cecily, I shall not offend you if I state quite frankly and openly that you seem to me to be in every way the visible personification of absolute perfection. 5
- Cecily:* I think your frankness does you great credit, Ernest. If you will allow me, I will copy your remarks into my diary.  
*[Goes over to table and begins writing in diary.]* 10
- Algernon:* Do you really keep a diary? I'd give anything to look at it. May I?
- Cecily:* Oh, no! *[Puts her hand over it.]* You see, it is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions and consequently meant for publication. When it appears in volume form I hope you will order a copy. But pray, Ernest, don't stop. I delight in taking down from dictation. I have reached "absolute perfection." You can go on. I am quite ready for more. 15
- Algernon:* *[Somewhat taken aback.]* Ahem! Ahem!
- Cecily:* Oh, don't cough, Ernest. When one is dictating one should speak fluently and not cough. Besides, I don't know how to spell a cough.  
*[Writes as Algernon speaks.]* 20
- Algernon:* *[Speaking very rapidly.]* Cecily, ever since I first looked upon your wonderful and incomparable beauty, I have dared to love you wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly.
- Cecily:* I don't think that you should tell me that you love me wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly. Hopelessly doesn't seem to make much sense, does it? 25
- Algernon:* Cecily!  
*[Enter Merriman.]*
- Merriman:* The dog-cart is waiting, sir.
- Algernon:* Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour. 30
- Merriman:* *[Looks at Cecily, who makes no sign.]* Yes, sir.  
*[Merriman retires.]*
- Cecily:* Uncle Jack would be very much annoyed if he knew you were staying on till next week, at the same hour.
- Algernon:* Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you? 35
- Cecily:* You silly boy! Of course! Why, we have been engaged for the last three months.
- Algernon:* For the last three months?
- Cecily:* Yes, it will be exactly three months on Thursday. 40
- Algernon:* But how did we become engaged?
- Cecily:* Well, ever since dear Uncle Jack first confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you of course have formed

- the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him, after all. I dare say it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest. 45
- Algernon:* Darling! And when was the engagement actually settled?
- Cecily:* On the 14th of February last. Worn out by your entire ignorance of my existence, I determined to end the matter one way or the other, and after a long struggle with myself I accepted you under this dear old tree here. The next day I bought this little ring in your name, and this is the little bangle with the true lover's knot I promised you always to wear. 50
- Algernon:* Did I give you this? It's very pretty, isn't it?
- Cecily:* Yes, you've wonderfully good taste, Ernest. It's the excuse I've always given for your leading such a bad life. And this is the box in which I keep all your dear letters. 55
- [Kneels at table, opens box, and produces letters tied up with blue ribbon.]*
- Algernon:* My letters! But, my own sweet Cecily, I have never written you any letters.
- Cecily:* You need hardly remind me of that, Ernest. I remember only too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. I wrote always three times a week, and sometimes oftener. 60
- Algernon:* Oh, do let me read them, Cecily!
- Cecily:* Oh, I couldn't possibly. They would make you far too conceited. *[Replaces box.]* The three you wrote me after I had broken off the engagement are so beautiful, and so badly spelled, that even now I can hardly read them without crying a little. 65
- Algernon:* But was our engagement ever broken off?
- Cecily:* Of course it was. On the 22nd of last March. You can see the entry if you like. *[Shows diary.]* "To-day I broke off my engagement with Ernest. I feel it is better do so. The weather still continues charming." 70
- Algernon:* But why on earth did you break it off? What had I done? I had done nothing at all. Cecily, I am very much hurt indeed to hear you broke it off. Particularly when the weather was so charming.
- Cecily:* It would hardly have been a really serious engagement if it hadn't been broken off at least once. But I forgave you before the week was out. 75
- Algernon:* *[Crossing to her, and kneeling.]* What a perfect angel you are, Cecily!

*[from Act 2]*

How does Wilde make this proposal of marriage such a hilarious moment in the play?

**Or †11** How does Wilde make the way Jack Worthing has to live his life so comically complicated? Support your ideas with details from the writing.

**Or 12** You are Gwendolen. You are being taken home by your mother after she has rejected Jack Worthing as a possible son-in-law.

Write your thoughts.

## SECTION B: POETRY

THOMAS HARDY: *Selected Poems*

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

*The Convergence of the Twain*  
(Lines on the loss of the 'Titanic')

I  
In a solitude of the sea  
Deep from human vanity,  
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II  
Steel chambers, late the pyres  
Of her salamandrine fires, 5  
Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III  
Over the mirrors meant  
To glass the opulent  
The sea-worm crawls – grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV  
Jewels in joy designed 10  
To ravish the sensuous mind  
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V  
Dim moon-eyed fishes near  
Gaze at the gilded gear 15  
And query: 'What does this vaingloriousness down here?' ...

VI  
Well: while was fashioning  
This creature of cleaving wing,  
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

VII  
Prepared a sinister mate 20  
For her – so gaily great –  
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

VIII  
And as the smart ship grew  
In stature, grace, and hue,  
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

IX 25  
Alien they seemed to be:  
No mortal eye could see  
The intimate welding of their later history,

13

X

Or sign that they were bent  
By paths coincident  
On being anon twin halves of one august event,

30

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years  
Said 'Now!' And each one hears,  
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

How does Hardy make this poem so powerfully dramatic?

- Or †14 Explore the ways in which Hardy portrays hopeless love in *The Pine Planters*.
- Or †15 How does Hardy make the situations of **either** Drummer Hodge in *Drummer Hodge* or the people in *No Buyers: A Street Scene* so moving?

**SONGS OF OURSELVES: from Part 4**

**Either \*16** Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

*The City Planners*

Cruising these residential Sunday  
streets in dry August sunlight:  
what offends us is  
the sanities:  
the houses in pedantic rows, the planted 5  
sanitary trees, assert  
levelness of surface like a rebuke  
to the dent in our car door.  
No shouting here, or  
shatter of glass; nothing more abrupt 10  
than the rational whine of a power mower  
cutting a straight swath in the discouraged grass.

But though the driveways neatly  
sidestep hysteria  
by being even, the roofs all display 15  
the same slant of avoidance to the hot sky,  
certain things:  
the smell of spilt oil a faint  
sickness lingering in the garages,  
a splash of paint on brick surprising as a bruise, 20  
a plastic hose poised in a vicious  
coil; even the too-fixed stare of the wide windows

give momentary access to  
the landscape behind or under  
the future cracks in the plaster 25

when the houses, capsized, will slide  
obliquely into the clay seas, gradual as glaciers  
that right now nobody notices.

That is where the City Planners  
with the insane faces of political conspirators 30  
are scattered over unsurveyed  
territories, concealed from each other,  
each in his own private blizzard;

guessing directions, they sketch  
transitory lines rigid as wooden borders 35  
on a wall in the white vanishing air

tracing the panic of suburb  
order in a bland madness of snows.

(by Margaret Atwood)

Explore how Atwood makes this poem so disturbing.

- Or †17 How does Edwin Muir vividly convey memories of childhood in *Horses*?
- Or †18 Explore the ways in which the poets use words and phrases to create striking effects in *Pied Beauty* (by Gerard Manley Hopkins) **and** *A Birthday* (by Christina Rossetti).

## SECTION C: PROSE

TSITSI DANGAREMBGA: *Nervous Conditions*

Either \*19 Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

Yes, I was very irritable on that occasion, the occasion of my uncle's return, which should have been for me, as it was for everyone else, a sublime occasion. It was spoiled for me because I could not help thinking that had I been allowed, had I been able to welcome Babamukuru at the airport, I would have been there too, with Nhamo and my cousins, rejoicing, re-establishing the relationship that had been cut off when my cousins went away. Not going to the airport, not being able to resume my relationships with my cousins, these events coalesced formlessly in my mind to an incipient understanding of the burdens my mother had talked of. Whereas before I had believed with childish confidence that burdens were only burdens in so far as you chose to bear them, now I began to see that the disappointing events surrounding Babamukuru's return were serious consequences of the same general laws that had almost brought my education to an abrupt, predictable end. It was frightening. I did not want my life to be predicted by such improper relations. I decided I would just have to make up my mind not to let it happen. Curling my lip at Nhamo and my cousins, I departed, flouncing surlily, pointedly, out of the house to the kitchen; there, thrusting a log into the hearth so viciously that the three-legged pot that on normal days contained *sadza*, but today was full of meat, splashed half its juices into the embers. 5

A piece of meat fell out too. I picked it out of the ashes and ate it, and then felt sick because I was still thinking about Nhamo and the cousins, and being cross with Nhamo for excluding me from their circle in spite of the fact that I did not approve of any of them. I considered the situation. Had I approved of my cousins before they went to England? Most definitely I had; I had loved them. When they visited the homestead we had played long, exciting games. Why did I no longer like them? I could not be sure. Did I like anybody? What about Babamukuru? Had the change to do with me or had it to do with them? These were complex, dangerous thoughts that I was stirring up, not the kind that you can ponder safely but the kind that become autonomous and malignant if you let them. If I continued in this way, I would soon be itching to beat Nhamo up because his smirking had brought the matter to a head. But I could not have the satisfaction of indulging my frustration in this way. Nhamo and I had stopped beating each other up a long time ago, at the time that I went back to school, more because we had developed so differently that we no longer had enough common ground in which to fight, than out of mutual respect or affection. Besides, I was reluctantly aware that beating up Nhamo would not help; my discontent had to do with more than my brother's annoying manners. Sensing how unwise it was to think too deeply about these things in case I manoeuvred myself into a blind alley at the end of which I would have to confront unconfrontable issues, I busied myself with housework. 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

[from Chapter 3]

Explore the ways in which Dangarembga vividly conveys Tambu's conflicting feelings at this moment in the novel.

**Or** †20 How does Dangarembga vividly convey similarities between Tambu and Nyasha? Support your ideas with details from the writing.

**Or** 21 You are Jeremiah. Babamukuru has just praised you for mending the thatch over the kitchen.

Write your thoughts.

**ANITA DESAI: *Fasting, Feasting***

**Either \*22** Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

Then Mother Agnes came round the corner and down the passage, walking in long, rustling strides towards her.

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I always said don't send them to a convent school. Keep them at home, I said – but who listened? And now – !'

*[from Chapter 3]*

How does Desai make you sympathise with Uma at this moment in the novel?

**Or †23** Explore the ways in which Desai makes any **two** moments in the novel particularly amusing for you. (Do **not** use the extract printed in Question 22 in answering this question.)

**Or 24** You are Mrs Patton. Arun has just left to go back to the dorm.

Write your thoughts.

**KIRAN DESAI: *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard***

**Either \*25** Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

At this everyone nodded their heads.

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The spy thought late into the night.

*[from Chapter 10]*

In what ways does Desai make this moment in the novel both magical and ridiculous? Support your ideas with details from the writing.

**Or** †26 How do you think Desai makes Sampath so likeable even though he is so useless and lazy? Support your ideas with details from the writing.

**Or** 27 You are Pinky. You have just heard about Sampath's behaviour at the wedding party.

Write your thoughts.

GEORGE ELIOT: *Silas Marner*

Either \*28 Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

When Marner's sensibility returned, he continued the action which had been arrested, and closed his door, unaware of the chasm in his consciousness, unaware of any intermediate change, except that the light had grown dim, and that he was chilled and faint. He thought he had been too long standing at the door and looking out. Turning towards the hearth, where the two logs had fallen apart, and sent forth only a red uncertain glimmer, he seated himself on his fireside chair, and was stooping to push his logs together, when, to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold!—his own gold—brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls. In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knees and bent his head low to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child—a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head. Could this be his little sister come back to him in a dream—his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died, when he was a small boy without shoes or stockings? That was the first thought that darted across Silas's blank wonderment. *Was it a dream?* He rose to his feet again, pushed his logs together, and, throwing on some dried leaves and sticks, raised a flame; but the flame did not disperse the vision—it only lit up more distinctly the little round form of the child and its shabby clothing. It was very much like his little sister. Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of an inexplicable surprise and a hurrying influx of memories. How and when had the child come in without his knowledge? He had never been beyond the door. But along with that question, and almost thrusting it away, there was a vision of the old home and the old streets leading to Lantern Yard—and within that vision another, of the thoughts which had been present with him in those far-off scenes. The thoughts were strange to him now, like old friendships impossible to revive; and yet he had a dreamy feeling that this child was somehow a message come to him from that far-off life: it stirred fibres that had never been moved in Raveloe—old quiverings of tenderness—old impressions of awe at the presentiment of some Power presiding over his life; for his imagination had not yet extricated itself from the sense of mystery in the child's sudden presence, and had formed no conjectures of ordinary natural means by which the event could have been brought about.

But there was a cry on the hearth: the child had awaked, and Marner stooped to lift it on his knee. It clung round his neck, and burst louder and louder into that mingling of inarticulate cries with 'mammy' by which little children express the bewilderment of waking. Silas pressed it to him, and almost unconsciously uttered sounds of hushing tenderness, while he bethought himself that some of his porridge, which had got cool by the dying fire, would do to feed the child with if it were only warmed up a little.

He had plenty to do through the next hour. The porridge, sweetened with some dry brown sugar from an old store which he had refrained from using for himself, stopped the cries of the little one, and made her lift her blue eyes with a wide gaze at Silas, as he put the spoon into her mouth. Presently she slipped from his knee and began to toddle about, but with a

pretty stagger that made Silas jump up and follow her lest she should fall against anything that would hurt her. But she only fell in a sitting posture on the ground, and began to pull at her boots, looking up at him with a crying face as if the boots hurt her. He took her on his knee again, but it was some time before it occurred to Silas's dull bachelor mind that the wet boots were the grievance, pressing on her warm ankles. He got them off with difficulty, and baby was at once happily occupied with the primary mystery of her own toes, inviting Silas, with much chuckling, to consider the mystery too.

55

60

[from Chapter 12]

How does Eliot make this passage so moving?

**Or** †29 'I don't pretend to be a good fellow ... but I'm not a scoundrel.'

How far does Eliot make you agree with Godfrey's opinion of himself? Support your ideas with details from the novel.

**Or** 30 You are Dolly. You are on your way home after your first visit to Silas with Aaron and the lard-cakes.

Write your thoughts.

**SUSAN HILL: *I'm the King of the Castle***

**Either \*31** Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

Kingshaw stood on the gate for a long time, looking up the ploughed field ahead. But there was nothing happening, nothing to see. It was too hot, as well. He decided to go inside the church, partly because of that, and also because he had never seen it, it was something to do.

The edges of the grass were clipped very short and neat around the gravestones, and the hedge was straight. There were gargoyles on the tower, opening their cold stone mouths at him. Kingshaw stuck out his tongue, craning back his head. He would not be afraid of them in the daylight.

Inside the church, it smelled as though no living, breathing person had ever been there, the air was damp and musty and dead. Kingshaw walked slowly down between the pews. The hymn books were in two piles on a chair, with some of the spines and backs hanging off. His footsteps rang on the stone, and then were muffled as he came on to the red carpet by the altar rail.

He thought, this is church, this is God and Jesus and the Holy Ghost. After a moment, he dared himself to go and stand on the uneven tiles just inside the chancel. On either side of him, the wood smelled of oldness and polish. He remembered what he had thought and said about Hooper, how he had wished him to be dead. Now, he was afraid of what would happen, because of that. Things came back on you. You were never safe. There were the warts, still on his left hand.

He knelt down, abruptly, where he was, and began to say, O God, I didn't mean it – yes, I did, I did mean it, only now I don't mean it, I want to take it back and never to have thought and said it, and if I'm sorry, make nothing happen to me, make it all be forgotten about. I am trying to be sorry.

But he did not think it likely that he could ever be believed, nothing could change, because he had meant what he thought and said about Hooper, and still meant it. It was only being afraid of this empty church, and of the white marble warrior lying on his tombstone in the side chapel, that made him kneel down and tell lies. It was no good. He had wanted Hooper to be dead, because then things would have been better. His punishment was that Hooper was not dead, that everything was the same, and the thought of that was worse than anything. He acknowledged that he feared Hooper more than he feared anything in the world.

Please make nothing happen, please make it all right and I will never, never want anything else again, O God ...

His knees were hurting from the hard tiles. He wanted to get out into the sunlight.

'What's the matter with you?'

Kingshaw spun round in alarm, and at once began to struggle to his feet.

'You're not supposed to go inside those railings.'

[from Chapter 14]

Explore the ways in which Hill makes Kingshaw's situation at this moment in the novel seem so distressing. Support your ideas with details from the writing.

**Or** †32 How do you think Warings contributes to the power of the novel? Support your ideas with details from Hill's writing.

**Or** 33 You are Hooper after your first encounter with Kingshaw.

Write your thoughts.

**from *Stories of Ourselves***

**Either \*34** Read this extract from *Sandpiper* (by Ahdaf Soueif), and then answer the question that follows it:

Yes, I am sick – but not just for home. I am sick for a time, a time that was and that I can never have again. A lover I had and can never have again.

I watched him vanish – well, not vanish, slip away, recede. He did not want to go. He did not go quietly. He asked me to hold him, but he couldn't tell me how. A fairy godmother, robbed for an instant of our belief in her magic, turns into a sad old woman, her wand into a useless stick. I suppose I should have seen it coming. My foreignness, which had been so charming, began to irritate him. My inability to remember names, or follow the minutiae of politics, my struggles with his language, my need to be protected from the sun, the mosquitoes, the salads, the drinking water. He was back home, and he needed someone he could be at home with, at home. It took perhaps a year. His heart was broken in two, mine was simply broken. 5

I never see my lover now. Sometimes, as he romps with Lucy on the beach, or bends over her grazed elbow, or sits across our long table from me at a dinner-party, I see a man I could yet fall in love with, and I turn away. 10

I told him too about my first mirage, the one I saw on that long road to Maiduguri. And on the desert road to Alexandria the first summer, I saw it again. 'It's hard to believe it isn't there when I can see it so clearly,' I complained. 15

'You only think you see it,' he said.

'Isn't that the same thing?' I asked. 'My brain tells me there's water there. Isn't that enough?' 20

'Yes,' he said, and shrugged. 'If all you want to do is sit in the car and see it. But if you want to go and put your hands in it and drink, then it isn't enough, surely?' He gave me a sidelong glance and smiled.

Soon, I should hear Lucy's high, clear voice, chattering to her father as they walk hand in hand up the gravel drive to the back door. Behind them will come the heavy tread of Um Sabir. I will go out smiling to meet them and he will deliver a wet, sandy Lucy into my care, and ask if I'm OK with a slightly anxious look. I will take Lucy into my bathroom while he goes into his. Later, when the rest of the family have all drifted back and showered and changed, everyone will sit around the barbecue and eat and drink and talk politics and crack jokes of hopeless, helpless irony and laugh. I should take up embroidery and start on those *Aubusson* tapestries we all, at the moment, imagine will be necessary for Lucy's trousseau. 25

Yesterday when I had dressed her after the shower she examined herself intently in my mirror and asked for a french plait. I sat behind her at the dressing-table blow-drying her black hair, brushing it and plaiting it. When Lucy was born Um Sabir covered all the mirrors. His sister said, 'They say if a baby looks in the mirror she will see her own grave.' We laughed but we did not remove the covers; they stayed in place till she was one. 30

I looked at Lucy's serious face in the mirror. I had seen my grave once, or thought I had. That was part of my Africa story. The plane out of Nigeria circled Cairo airport. Three times I heard the landing-gear come down, and three times it was raised again. Sitting next to me were two Finnish businessmen. When the announcement came that we were re-routing to 35

Luxor they shook their heads and ordered another drink. At dawn, above Luxor airport, we were told there was trouble with the undercarriage and that the pilot was going to attempt a crash-landing. I thought, so this is why they've sent us to Luxor, to burn up discreetly and not clog Cairo airport. We were asked to fasten our seat belts, take off our shoes and watches, put the cushions from the backs of our seats on our laps and bend double over them with our arms around our heads. I slung my handbag with my passport, tickets and money around my neck and shoulder before I did these things. My Finnish neighbours formally shook each other's hands. On the plane there was perfect silence as we dropped out of the sky. And then a terrible, agonised, protracted screeching of machinery as we hit the tarmac. And in that moment, not only my head, but all of me, my whole being, seemed to tilt into a blank, an empty radiance, but lucid. Then three giant thoughts. One was of him – his name, over and over again. The other was of the children I would never have. The third was that the pattern was now complete: this is what my life amounted to.

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What striking impressions of the narrator does Soueif create for you at this moment in the story?

**Or †35** Explore how the writers make the endings of *Her First Ball* (by Katherine Mansfield) and *At Hiruhamara* (by Penelope Fitzgerald) so effective for you.

**Or 36** You are Muni in *A Horse and Two Goats*. You are on your way home to tell your wife that you have sold your goats to the American.

Write your thoughts.

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