

# FICTION TEXTS

## A Revision Workbook for Paper 1 Section A



Instructions to candidates:

- Each task should take about 15 minutes to complete.
- You should complete **at least two tasks** each week.
- Your English teacher will make arrangements for you to submit the work.
- We will endeavour to return the work as rapidly as possible to support your revision.
- Remember this is an important part of your revision. You need to be as prepared as is possible for the two English exams on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011.
- Good luck.'

**This story is told by a young black American girl**

I was glad to hear that Manny had fallen off the roof and that I could come out of hiding now. My mother got the whole story out of my sister, Frankie. "It's bad enough you won't wear skirts and you hang around with boys," she said. "But to want to fight with them too! And you would pick the craziest one at that." Manny was supposed to be crazy. To say you were bad put some people off. But to say you were crazy, well, you were definitely not to be messed with. On the other hand, after what I called *him* and after saying a few choice things about *his mother*, his face did go through some strange expressions. And I did kind of wonder if maybe he was nuts. I didn't wait to find out. I got running. And then he waited for me, outside my house, all day and all night. I shouted to him out of the kitchen window. "You got no sense of humour, that's your trouble." I told him. He looked up, but he didn't say anything. All at once I was real sorry about the whole thing. I should've settled for teasing the little girls in the schoolyard, or waited for Frankie so we could raise some kind of trouble downtown.

I don't know how Manny got on the roof. Maybe some slates lost all their cement and anyway the roof always did kind of slant downward. So Manny fell off the roof, and for the first time in days I dared to go outside again.

**What impressions do you get of the girl who is telling the story?**

*You must use the text to support your answer*

After that, Manny stayed indoors for a long time. I almost forgot about him. Then one night I'm walking past the Douglas Street Park and there's Manny on the basketball court, perfecting his shots and talking to himself. Being me, I quite naturally walk right up and ask what he's doing playing in the dark. And he looks up and all around like the dark had crept up on him when he wasn't looking. So I knew right away that he'd been out there for a long time.

There was two seconds to go and we were one point behind," he said, shaking his head and staring at his trainers. "And I was in the clear. It was in the bag. They passed the ball and I slid the ball up nice and easy." And then he shook his head. "I muffed the goddamn shot. Ball bounced off the rim..." He stared at his hands. "The game of the season. Last game." And then he ignored me altogether, though he wasn't really talking to me anyway. He went back to his shots, always from the same spot with his arms crooked in the same way, other and over. I must've gotten hypnotized cause I probably stood there for at least an hour watching like a fool till I couldn't even see the damn ball much less the basket. But I stood there anyway for no reason I know of. He never missed. But he cursed himself all the time. It was torture.

**What do you learn about Manny in these lines? What are your feelings about him?**

Then a squad car pulled up and a short cop got out. He looked real hard at me, then at Manny. "What are you two doing?"

"He's practising shots. I'm watching. Ain't it obvious?" I said with my smart self.

The cop just stood there and finally turned to the other one who was just getting out of the car. "Who unlocked the park gate?" the big one snarled.

"It's always unlocked," I said. Then we three just stood there watching Manny go at it. "Is that true?" the big guy asked, tilting his hat back with the thumb the way tough guys do in the movies. "Hey you," he said, walking over to Manny. "I'm talking to you." He finally grabbed the ball to get Manny's attention. But that didn't work. Manny just stood there with his arms out waiting for the pass. He wasn't paying no attention to the cop. So, quite naturally, when the cop slapped his head it was a surprise.

"Gimme the ball, man." Manny's face was all tightened up and ready to pop.

"Did you hear what I said, black boy?"

Now, when somebody says that word like that I gets warm. And crazy or no crazy, Manny became like my brother at that moment and the cop became the enemy.

"You better give him back his ball," I said. "Manny don't take no mass from no cops. He ain't bothering nobody. He's gonna be Mister Basketball when he grows up. Just trying to get a little practice in."

"Look here, sister, we'll run you in too," the short cop said.

"I sure can't be your sister seeing as how I'm a black girl and you're a white cop. Boy, I sure will be glad when you run me in so I can tell everybody about that. You're just picking on us because we're black, mister."

The big guy screwed his mouth up and let out one of them hard-day sighs. "The park's closed, little girl, so why don't you and your boyfriend go on home."

That really got me. The 'little girl' was bad enough but that 'boyfriend' was too much. I kept cool, mostly because Manny looked so pitiful waiting there for the ball. But I kept my cool mostly cause there's no telling how frantic things can get what with a big-mouth like me, a couple of wise-guy cops, and a crazy boy too.

"The gates are open," I said real quiet-like, "and this here's a free country. So why don't you give him back his ball?"

**How does the writer show that the policemen's behaviour is unpleasant and threatening?**

*Track through these lines carefully, looking at what happens and the writer's choice of words.*



The big cop did another one of those sighs, and then he bounced the ball to Manny who went right into his gliding thing clear up to the backboard, damn near like he was some kind of very beautiful bird. And then he swooshed that ball in, even if there was no net, and you couldn't really hear the swoosh. Something happened to the bones in my chest. It was something.

"Crazy kids anyhow," said the short cop and turned to go. But the big guy watched Manny for a while and I guess something must've snapped in his head, cause all of a sudden eh was hot for taking Manny to hail or court or somewhere and stated yelling at him and everything, which is a bad thing to do to Manny, I can tell you, when obviously he had just done about the most beautiful thing a man can do. No cop could swoosh without a net.

"Look out man," was all Manny said, but it was the way he pushed the cop that started the real yelling and threats. And then this dude was pulling Manny's clothes and I thought to myself, Oh God, now Manny gonna get run in or shot by these guys, I could see it all, and I'm practically crying too.

I wished Manny had fallen off the damn roof and died right then and there and saved me all this aggravation and him being killed by these bad-guy cops. But it didn't happen. They just took the ball, and Manny followed them real quiet-like out of the park, then into the squad car with his head dropping. And I went on home cause what the hell am I going to do on a basketball court and it getting to be nearly midnight?

*(from 'The Hammer Boy' by Toni Cade Bambara)*

**What happens in these lines? What are your thoughts and feelings as you read these lines?**

**This extract is about a young boy called Bertie who lives in Edinburgh. Irene is his mother.**

“Hurry up now Bertie,” said Irene. “It’s almost ten o’clock, and if we don’t get there in time you may not get your audition. Now, you wouldn’t want that, would you?”

Bertie signed. To miss the audition was exactly what he would want, but he realised that it was fruitless to protest. Once his mother had seen a notice about the Edinburgh Teenage Orchestra, she had immediately put his name down for an audition.

“Do you realise how exciting this is?” she said to Bertie. “This orchestra is planning to do a concert in Paris in a couple of weeks. Wouldn’t you just love that?”

Bertie frowned. The name of the orchestra suggested that it was for teenagers and he was barely six. “Couldn’t I just audition in seven years’ time?” he asked his mother. “I’ll be a teenager then.” “If you’re worried about being the youngest one there,” said Irene reassuringly, “then you shouldn’t! The fact that it’s call the Edinburgh Teenage Orchestra is neither here nor there. The word teenage is just to indicate what standard is required.”

“But I’m not a teenager.” protested Bertie helplessly, “They’ll all be teenagers. I promise you. I’ll be the only one in dungarees.”

“There may well be others in dungarees,” said Irene. “And anyway, once you’re sitting down behind your music stand, nobody will notice what you’re wearing.”

**What are your impressions of Bertie and Irene and the relationship between them in these lines?**

*You must refer to the text to support your answer.*

Bertie was silent. It was no use; he would be forced to go, just as she had forced him to go to yoga and to all the rest of it. There was no use protesting. If he was unable to persuade his mother not to subject him to the humiliation of being the youngest member, by far, of an orchestra, then he would have to find some other means to ensure he did not get in. He thought for a moment and then realised that there was an obvious solution. Irene saw Bertie's face break into a broad grin. He must have realised, she thought, what fun it would be to go to Paris. "Why are you smiling?" she asked. "Thinking of Paris? We'll have such fun in Paris." Bertie who had been smiling over the prospect of escape, now became grave. We? Had his mother said we'll have such fun in Paris?

His voice was tiny when he asked the question. "Are you coming too Mummy? Are you coming to Paris too?"

Irene laughed. "But of course, Bertie. Remember you're only six. Mummy will come to look after you."

"But the teenagers won't have their mothers with them. I'll be the only one." And it would be worse, he thought. The humiliation would be doubled by the fact that Irene was visibly pregnant. This would mean the other boys would know what she had been doing. It was just too embarrassing. The journey to Queen's Hall passed by mostly in silence, at least on Bertie's part, although Irene had various bits of advice for him.

"Don't feel nervous," she said. "Remind yourself that there are not only strangers there. I'll be there too. Keep that in mind."

Bertie reeled under the fresh blow. He had been hoping that his mother would wait outside. Now she was coming in! That would make his plan much more difficult to put into effect.

### **What is Bertie thinking and feeling in this part of the story?**

*You should track through the text carefully.*



The Queen's Hall was thronged with a large crowd of ambitious parents and children. Irene cast her eye about the room like a combatant assessing the field before joining the fray. Bertie observed her determined expression with dismay.

"You can sit here, Bertie," she said. "I shall go and get some coffee. But I won't get you a cup. We don't want you rushing off to the little boys' room in the middle of the audition, do we?" Bertie felt his heart stop with embarrassment. It was bad enough for his mother to say such things in any circumstances, but for her to say it here, in the middle of the Queen's Hall, with the eyes of the world upon him, was horror itself. His face burning red, he looked about him quickly. A girl at a neighbouring table had clearly heard, and was giggling. On the other side of the table was a boy who had also heard and was now staring at him. The boy, who looked barely thirteen, turned to face Bertie. "Is that your mother?" he asked. Bertie shook his head. "No", he said. "No, she's nothing to do with me."

"Who is she then?" asked the boy.

"She's just someone I met on the bus," he said. "I talked to her and she followed me in."

The boy looked surprised. "You have to be careful about talking to strangers."

Bertie nodded. "I know," he said. He racked his brains for a credible story and then continued, "She's just been let out of an asylum, you see. She had nobody to talk to her. So I did."

"Do you think she's dangerous?" asked the boy.

"Not really," said Bertie. "But she's very strange. She's pretending to be my mother. It's really sad."

"Look out, here she comes. I'm off. See you,"

Bertie looked at the ground in despair. "Mummy," he said. "Please take me home. That's all I'm asking you."

Irene said, "I'll take you home after the audition. And that's a promise."

**Bertie is really suffering in these lines. How does the writer show his suffering?**

**Look at:**

- **what happens;**
- **the writer's choice of words and phrases.**

There were at least one hundred young musicians assembled for the audition. They ranged from thirteen to eighteen, although there were one or two nineteen-year-olds and Bertie, of course, who was six. To his horror, Bertie found that his mother insisted on sitting next to him. Bertie sank down in his seat, trying to persuade himself that not only was she not there, but that neither was he.

At a signal from the woman who was helping the conductor, a small group of musicians made their way to the front. "You get up now, Bertie," said Irene.

Bertie did nothing. His mother was giving him no alternative. He did not want to put his plan into effect but she really left him no choice.

"Come on," said Irene, pulling Bertie up by the straps of his dungarees. "I'll come with you."

"Please, Mummy," pleaded Bertie. "Please..." Virtually frogmarched to the front, Bertie approached the conductor.

"Tenor saxophone," said Irene, pushing Bertie forward. "Bertie Pollock."

The conductor exchanged a glance with the woman beside him, who was smiling. Irene shot the woman a warning glance. "He's a bit young, isn't he?" ventured the woman. "This is the Edinburgh Teenage Orchestra, after all."

Irene's eyes flashed. "That, if I may say so, is a somewhat unhelpful remark," she said coldly.

"Do you really want to stifle talent by discriminating against younger musicians?" The conductor looked at the woman, as if seeking moral support. She shrugged.

"Oh, very well then," said the conductor wearily. "Just play us this piece."

Bertie looked at the music. It was not at all difficult. It would be easy to play that piece.

But no, he would now have to put his plan into operation. He would not play what was before him. Instead, he would play something quite different, something defiant. That would surely lead to his rejection. He closed his eyes and was soon into a fine rendition of "As Time Goes By" from *Casablanca*. A fine rendition, perhaps, but a disobedient one, and one which would be bound to annoy the conductor. When he came to the end of the piece, he glanced quickly at his mother. She would be angry with him, he knew, but it would be better to face her anger than to be forced into a teenage orchestra. The conductor was silent for a moment. Then, rising to his feet, he clapped his hands together.

"Brilliant!" he exclaimed loudly. "What a brilliant performance, young man! You're in!"

*Alexander McCall Smith*

**What happens in these lines? How do you react to what happens?**

*The novel from which this extract is taken is set in Botswana, which is a country in southern Africa.*

I am Obed Ramotswe. I love my country and I am proud I was born in Botswana. There's no other country in Africa that can hold its head up as we can.

I had no desire to leave my country, but things were bad in the past. Before we built our country we had to go off to South Africa to work. We went to the mines. The mines sucked our men in and left the old men and the children at home. We dug for gold and diamonds and made those white men rich. They built their big houses. And we dug below them and brought out the rock on which they built it all.

I was eighteen when I went to the mines. My father said I should go, and his lands were not good enough to support me and a wife. We did not have many cattle, and we grew just enough crops to keep us through the year. So when the recruiting truck came from over the border I went to them and they put me on a scale and listened to my chest and made me run up and down a ladder for ten minutes. Then a man said that I would make a good miner and they made me write my name on a piece of paper. They asked me whether I had ever been in any trouble with the police. That was all.

**Explain carefully how and why Obed Ramotswe became a miner in South Africa.**

In Johannesburg they spent two weeks training us. We were all quite fit and strong, but nobody could be sent down the mines until he had been made even stronger. So they took us to a building which they had heated with steam and they made us jump up and down on the benches for four hours each day. They told us how we would be taken down into the mines and about the work we would be expected to do. They talked to us about safety, and how the rock could fall and crush us if we were careless. They carried in a man with no legs and put him on a table and made us listen to him as he told us what had happened to him. They taught us Funagalo, which is the language used for giving orders underground. It is a strange language. There are many words for push, shove, carry, load, and no words for love, or happiness, or the sounds which birds make in the morning.

Then we went down the shafts. They put us in cages, beneath great wheels, and these cages shot down as fast as hawks falling on their prey. They had small trains down there and they took us to the end of long, dark tunnels, which were filled with green rock and dust. My job was to load rock after it had been blasted and I did this for ten hours every day. I worked for years in those mines, and I saved all my money. Other men spent it on women, and drink and fancy clothes. I bought nothing. I sent the money home and then I bought cattle with it. Slowly my herd got bigger.

**What impressions do you get of work in the mines from these lines?**

*You must refer to the text to support your answer.*

I would have stayed in the mines, I suppose, had I not witnessed a terrible thing. It happened after I had been there fifteen years. I had been given a much better job, as an assistant to a blaster. They would not give us blasting jobs, as that was a job the white men kept for themselves, but I was given the job of carrying explosives for a blaster. This was a good job and I like the man I worked for.

He had left something in a tunnel once – his tin can in which he carried his sandwiches – and he had asked me to fetch it. So I set off down this tunnel where he had been working. The tunnel was lit by bulbs, but you still had to be careful because here and there were great galleries which had been blasted out of the rock. These could be two hundred feet deep and men fell into them from time to time.

I turned a corner in this tunnel and found myself in a round chamber. There was a gallery at the end of this and a warning sign. Four men were standing at the edge of this gallery and they were holding another man by his arms and legs. As I came around the corner, they threw him over the edge and into the dark. The man screamed something about a child. Then he was gone.

I stood where I was. The men had not seen me yet, but one turned around and shouted out in Zulu. Then they began to run towards me. I turned and ran back down the tunnel. I knew that if they caught me I would follow their victim into the gallery. It was not a race I could let myself lose.

**How does the writer make these lines tense and dramatic?**

Although I got away, I knew that those men had seen me and that I would be killed. I had seen their murder and could be a witness, and so I knew I could not stay in the mines. I spoke to the blaster. He was a good man and he listened to me carefully when I told him I would have to go. There was no other white man I could have spoken to like that, but he understood.

Still, he tried to persuade me to go to the police.

“Tell them what you saw,” he said. “Tell them. They can catch those Zulus and hang them.”

“I don’t know who those men are. They’ll catch me first. I am going home.”

He looked at me and nodded. Then he took my hand and shook it, which is the first time a white man had done that to me. So I called him my brother, which is the first time I had done that to a white man.

“You go back home to your wife,” he said. “If a man leaves his wife too long, she starts to make trouble for him. Believe me.”

So I left the mines, secretly, like a thief, and came back to Botswana in 1960. I cannot tell you how full my heart was when I crossed the border. In that place I had felt every day that I might die. Danger and sorrow hung over Johannesburg like a cloud. In Botswana it was different. There were no policemen with dogs; you did not wake up every morning to a wailing siren calling you down into the hot earth. There were not great crowds of men, all from some different place, all sickening for home. I had left a prison – a great, groaning prison, under the sunlight.

Alexander McCall Smith

### **What are your thoughts and feelings as you read these lines?**

*You should include your thoughts and feelings about:*

- *what happens in these lines;*
- *the character of the blaster;*
- *Obed Ramotswe;*
- *the way the passage ends.*

***This story is set in Botswana, in Africa. Mma Ramotswe and Mr J L B Matekoni are a middle-aged couple who have just become engaged.***

“I think that people know about our engagement,” said Mma Ramotswe. “My maid said that she had heard people talking about it in the town. Some of them even asked to see the ring you had bought me.” She held her breath. Mr J L B Matekoni was looking at the ground, as he often did when he felt uncertain. He knew a ring could be very expensive indeed.

“A ring?” he said at last, his voice strained. “What kind of ring?”

“A diamond ring,” she said. “That is what engaged ladies are wearing these days.”

Mr J L B Matekoni continued to look glumly at the ground. “Diamonds?” he said weakly.

“Are you sure this is the most modern thing?”

“Yes,” said Mma Ramotswe firmly. “All engaged ladies in modern circles receive diamond rings these days. It is a sign that they are appreciated.”

Mr J L B Matekoni looked up sharply. If this was true, then he would have no alternative but to buy a diamond ring. He would not wish Mma Ramotswe to imagine that she was not appreciated. He appreciated her greatly; he was immensely, humbly grateful to her for agreeing to marry him, and if a diamond were necessary to announce that to the world, then that was a small price to pay. He halted as the word “price” crossed his mind.

“Diamonds are very expensive,” he ventured. “I hope that I shall have enough money.”

**At the beginning of this extract Mma Ramotswe suggests buying an engagement ring.**

**How does Mr. Matekoni react?**

*You should refer to what he does, what he feels, what he says, and what he thinks.*

“But of course you will,” said Mma Ramotswe. “They have some very inexpensive ones. Or you can get terms. They have expensive ones, of course, but they also have very good ones that do not cost too much. We can go and take a look, Judgment-day Jewellers, for example. They have a good selection.” The decision was mad.

The premises of Judgment-day Jewellers were tucked away at the end of a dusty street.

Inside the shop, standing behind the counter, was the jeweller. He smiled at them. “I saw you outside,” he said. “You parked your car under that three.”

Mr. J L B Matekoni introduced himself, as was polite, and then he turned to Mma Ramotswe.

“This lady is now engaged to me,” he said. “She is Mma Ramotswe, and I wish to buy her a ring for this engagement.” He paused. “A diamond ring.”

The jeweller looked at him through shifty eyes, and then glanced sideways at Mma Ramotswe. She looked back at him, and thought: *There is intelligence here. This is a clever man who cannot be trusted.*

“You are a fortunate man,” said the jeweller. “Not every man can find such a cheerful, fat woman to marry. There are many thin, complaining women around today. This one will make you very happy.”

Mr J L B Matekoni acknowledged the compliment. “Yes,” he said. “I am a lucky man.”

“And now you must buy here a very big ring,” went on the jeweller. “A fat woman cannot wear a tiny ring.”

Mr J L B Matekoni looked down at his shoes. “I was thinking of a medium-sized ring,” he said. “I am not a rich man.”

“I know who you are,” said the jeweller. “You can afford a good ring.”

Mma Ramotswe decided to intervene. “I do not want a big ring,” she said firmly. “I am not a lady to wear a big ring. I was hoping for a small ring,”

The jeweller threw her a glance. He seemed almost annoyed by her presence – as if this were a transaction between men and she was interfering.

“I’ll show you some rings,” he said, bending down to slide a drawer out of the counter below him. “Here are some good diamond rings.”

He placed the drawer on the top of the counter and pointed to a row of rings nestling in velvet slots. Mr J L B Matekoni caught his breath. The diamonds were set in the rings in clusters: a large stone in the middle surrounded by smaller ones.

“Don’t pay any attention to what the label says,” said the jeweller, lowering his voice, “I can offer very big discounts.”

### **What impressions do you get of the jeweller?**

*You must refer to the text to support your answer.*



Mma Ramotswe peered at the tray. Then she looked up and shook her head. "These are too big," she said. "I told you that I wanted a smaller ring. Perhaps we shall have to go to some other shop."

The jeweller sighed. "I have some others," he said. "I have small rings as well."

He slipped the tray back into its place and extracted another. The rings on this one were considerably smaller. Mma Ramotswe pointed to a ring in the middle of the tray.

"I like that one," she said. "Let us see that one."

"It is not very big," said the jeweller. "A diamond like that may easily be missed. People may not notice it."

"I don't care," said Mma Ramotswe. "The diamond is going to be for me. It is nothing to do with other people."

Mr J L B Matekoni felt a surge of pride as she spoke. This was the woman he admired, a woman who had no time for showiness.

"I like that ring too," he said. "Please let Mma Ramotswe try it on."

The ring was passed to Mma Ramotswe, who slipped it on her finger and held out her hand for Mr J L B Matekoni to examine.

"It suits you perfectly," he said.

She smiled. "If this is the ring you would like to buy me, then I would be very happy."

The jeweller picked up the price tag and passed it to Mr J L B Matekoni. "There can be no further discount on this one," he said. "It is already very cheap."

Mr J L B Matekoni was pleasantly surprised by the price. It was not expensive. Reaching into his pocket, he took out the wad of notes which he had drawn from the bank earlier that morning and paid the jeweller.

As they drove from the jeweller's shop Mma Ramotswe said, "You are a kind man, Mr J L B Matekoni."

*(from "Tears of the Giraffe" by Alexander McCall Smith)*

**What do you learn about Mma Ramotswe in these lines?**

***You should consider:***

- ***what she does;***
- ***what she says.***

## The Forgotten Enemy

The thick furs thudded softly to the ground as Professor Milward sat upright on the narrow bed. This time, he was sure, it had been no dream. The freezing air that rasped against his lungs seemed to echo with the sound that had come crashing out of the night.

All was quiet again. The world was utterly still. Even in the old days the city would have been silent on such a night, and it was doubly silent now. Professor Milward shuffled out of bed and made his way to the nearest window, pausing now and then to rest his hand lovingly on the books he had guarded all these years. He shielded his eyes from the brilliant moonlight and peered out into the night. The sky was cloudless: the sound had not been thunder, whatever it might have been. It had come from the north, and even as he waited it came again. Distance and the bulk of the hills that lay beyond London had softened it. It was like no natural sound that he had ever heard, and for a moment he dared to hope again. Only Man, he was sure could have made such a sound. Perhaps the dream that had kept him here for more than twenty years would soon be a dream no longer. Men were returning to England, blasting their way through the ice and snow with the weapons science had given them before the coming of the Dust. It was strange that they should come by land, and from the north, but he thrust aside any thoughts that would quench his flame of hope. Twenty years ago he had watched the last helicopters climbing heavily out of Hyde Park in the ceaselessly falling snow. Even then, when the silence had closed around him, he could not bring himself to believe that England had been abandoned forever. Yet already he had waiting a whole generation among the books, the treasures of civilisation to which he had dedicated his life.

Now that the dome of St Paul's had collapsed beneath the weight of snow, only Battersea Power Station, its tall stacks glimmering like ghosts against the night sky, challenged the supremacy of the University building in which Professor Milward lived. He left the University building only through sheer necessity. Over the past twenty years he had collected everything he needed from the ships in the area, for in the final exodus vast supplies of stock had been left behind.

**The setting of this story is London in the future. What evidence is there in these lines that it is in a future very different from now?**

The sun was blazing from a cloudless sky as he shouldered his rucksack and unlocked the massive gates. Even ten years ago, packs of starving dogs had hunted in this area, and though he had seen none for years, he was still cautious and always carried a revolver when he went into the open.

The sunlight was so brilliant that the reflected glare hurt his eyes; but it was almost wholly lacking in heat. The latest snowdrifts had packed hard and Professor Milward had little difficulty making the journey to Oxford Street. Sometimes it had taken him hours of floundering through snow, and one year he had been trapped in the University building for nine months.

He kept away from the houses with their dangerous burdens of snow and their dagger-like icicles and went north until he came to the shop he was seeking. The words above the shattered windows were still bright: "Jenkins and Sons. Electrical." Some snow had drifted through a broken section of roofing, but the little upstairs room had not altered since his last visit. The radio still stood on the table, and the empty tins on the floor reminded him of the lonely hours he had spent here before all hope died. He wondered if he must go through the same ordeal again. Slowly, with infinite patience, Professor Millward began to traverse the radio bands. As he listened, the faint hope that he had dared to cherish began to fade. The radio was as silent as the city. Soon after midnight the batteries faded out. He got what consolation he could from the thought that if he had not proved his theory, he had not disproved it either.

As he began the journey home, the silence was broken by a distant rumble of thunder and little avalanches of snow went swishing into the wide street. Professor Milward stood motionless, considering, analysing. Perhaps it was an atomic bomb, burning and blasting away the snow. His hopes revived and his disappointments of the night began to fade.

**What are Professor Milward's thoughts and feelings in these lines?**

That momentary pause almost cost him his life. Out of a side street something huge and white moved suddenly into his field of vision. For a moment his mind refused to accept the reality of what he saw. Then the paralysis left him and he fumbled desperately for his futile revolver. Padding towards him, swinging its head from side to side, was a huge polar bear. He dropped his belongings and ran, floundering over the snow towards the nearest building. The entrance to an Underground station was only a few feet away. The temptation to look back was intolerable, for he could hear nothing to tell him how near his pursuer was. For one frightful moment the steel gates resisted his numbed fingers. Then they yielded reluctantly and he forced his way through a narrow gap. The monstrous shape reared in baffled fury against the gates but the metal did not yield. Then the bear dropped to the ground, grunted softly and padded away. It slashed once or twice at the fallen rucksack, scattering a few tins of food into the snow, and vanished as silently as it had come. A very shaken Professor Milward reached the University three hours later, after moving in short bounds from one refuge to the next.

**How does the writer make these lines tense and dramatic?**

By the end of the week he knew that the animals of the North were on the move. He saw a reindeer being pursued by a pack of silent wolves, and sometimes in the night there were sounds of deadly conflict. Something was driving them south. It could only be Man. The strain of waiting was beginning to affect the Professor and he dreamed of rescue and the way in which men might be returning to England. Whatever was approaching from the north was nearer, and several times a day that strange roar would thunder over the city. At times it was like listening to the clash of mighty armies, and a mad but dreadful thought came into his mind he would wake in the night and imagine he heard the sound of mountains moving into the sea. Every morning he would climb to the top of the building and scan the horizon, but all he ever saw was the stubborn snow above Hampstead. His ordeal ended one morning as he raised his binoculars to the northern sky. In that moment, Professor Milward knew the truth. Overnight, the enemy he had forgotten had conquered the last defences and was preparing for the final onslaught. As he saw the deadly glitter along the crest of the doomed hills, Professor Milward understood at last the sound he had heard advancing for so many months. Out of the North, their ancient home, returning in triumph to the lands they had once possessed, the glaciers had come again.

**What happens in these lines?**

**What do you think of this as an ending to the story?**

## **Almost Human**

One of the dogs, Chief, was stretched out on the settee; the other, Monty, sat opposite him. Neither moved as Frank helped himself to gin and water. He was smoking a cigarette and, as Monty caught a whiff of the smoke, he sneezed.

“Bless you,” said Frank.

Better smoke the rest of it in the kitchen while he was getting their supper. It wasn't fair on Monty to start him coughing at his age. There was nothing Frank wouldn't have done for Monty's comfort. Both dogs were a hundred times better than any human being he'd ever known. When it was time for dinner both dogs sat still and silent, watching while he filled the bowls with steak and vitamin supplement.

Frank watched them feed. Monty's appetite, at fourteen, was as good as ever, though his teeth weren't what they had been. When the old dog had finished he came over to Frank and laid his grey muzzle in the palm of the outstretched hand. Frank fondled his ears.

“Good old dog,” Frank said. “You're a cracker, you are. I've to go out now but I'll be back by ten, so you get a bit of shut eye and when I come back we'll all have a good walk OK?”

**What are your thoughts and feelings about Frank in these lines?**

Frank closed the door and drove down the street to the phone box. For business he never used his own phone. When he went into the box he only had to wait sixty seconds. The phone rang on the dot of a quarter to seven.

He'd never heard her voice before. It was nervous, upper class.

"Listen. I don't want you to know anything about – who we are, I mean. Agreed?" As if he cared who they were or what had brought her to this telephone, this conspiracy. He said contemptuously. "Just get on with it, will you?"

"All right. He'll walk through the West Heath path towards the Finchley Road. It'll be best to wait in one of the lonelier bits of the path."

"Leave all that to me. I know the area. How'll I know him?"

"He's fifty, well-built, silver hair. He'll have on a black overcoat. He ought to be there by ten to nine." The voice wavered slightly. "You won't fail m, will you? Tonight's the last chance and...."

"It'll be done. Goodbye!" said Frank, slamming down the receiver. He didn't want to know any of the circumstances. Not that he had any worries. He'd have killed a hundred men for what she was paying. He was interested only in the money.

Later, as he drove to West Heath, he thought of the money. It would be just enough to buy the house he'd got his eye on. It was in Scotland, miles from a village, and with enough grounds round it for Monty and Chief to run free all day. With luck he wouldn't hear a human voice from one month's end to the other.

**The writer makes you think differently about Frank in these 4 lines. How does she do this?**

***You should consider:***

- ***what we now learn about Frank;***
- ***the way he behaves in this section;***
- ***other ways the writer changes the way we think about Frank.***

So he had to kill a man to get the house? It wouldn't be the first time.

He parked in Templewood Avenue close to the path; it was always as well to ensure a quick getaway. He strolled on to West Heath path. At the summit was a street lamp and there was another lamp fifty yards further on. Between the lights was a dark area dotted with trees and shrubs. He'd do it here, Frank decided. He'd stand amongst the trees and catch him on the darkest part of the path. His hands tightened on the padded metal bar and the cord in his pocket.

Footsteps. Yes, it was time. Frank kept perfectly still. Her description had been precise. The man walked casually and confidently and the dark space received him. Frank stepped out from among the trees, raised his arm and struck. The man gave one little grunt and fell heavily. Frank put his cosh back in his pocket and brought out the cord. A slip-knot here, slide it round here, a quick tightening of pressure on the neck and....

**What clues are there to suggest that Frank is well organised and experienced as a hired killer?**



A soft sound stopped him. He turned sharply. Along the path came a dog. It was one of the handsomest dogs Frank had ever seen, but he didn't want to see it now. It advanced, waving its tail.

"Good dog," he whispered. "You're a fine dog but go off home." But the dog wouldn't go. It looked at Frank and back at the man and began to make a cry half-way between a whimper and a whistle. A terrible feeling came over Frank. He felt in the man's coat and brought out what he was afraid to find there – a leather dog's lead. He was filled with hatred for the woman. She knew the dog would see its owner murdered and would then have to make its own way home across busy main roads. Or maybe she thought he'd kill the dog too! If he killed the man now, what could he do with the dog? Tie him up to a lamp-post? He'd never tied a dog up and he wasn't going to start now.

A cold despair took hold of him. Slowly he put away the cord and lifted the man's head roughly. The man groaned.

"Where.....where am I? Wha.....what happened?" Frank didn't bother to answer him. "I had a.....a bang on the head. I was mugged, was I?" He felt in his pocket and scabbled with a wallet. "Not touched. Where's Bruce? Oh, there he is. Good boy, Bruce."

"He's a fine dog," Frank said remotely. "Come on, you'd better hang on to me. I've got a car."

The house he was directed to was a big one. Frank hauled the man out and propelled him to the front door. He rang the bell. A tall young woman in an evening dress answered it.

"Father! What happened?" But her voice was sick with dismay. It was the same voice. He recognised it, just as she recognised his when he said, "I'll be off now."

The man said, "I was mugged, dear, but I'm all right now." He put out his hand to Frank.

"You must come in. You probably saved my life. I could have died out there."

"Not you," said Frank. "Not with that dog of yours."

"A lot of use he was! Not much of a bodyguard, are you, Bruce?"

Frank smiled. He bet down and patted the dog. As he turned away from the man, he said, "You'll never know how much use he was."

*(Adapted from "Almost Human" by Ruth Rendell)*

**What happens in these lines? What do you think about this as an ending to the story?**

*Make sure that you answer both parts of the question.*

***In this story, Henry suggests to his wife Jenny that she needs some help around the house.***

Henry said, "You'll have to get some help." He said it in a tone that meant there was to be no discussion, the matter was decided. But none the less Jenny said, "What?" She said it not because she had not heard but, like a child, because she did not want to hear.

"You'll have to get some help. I'm tired of this mess."

Guiltily, Jenny followed his glance across the smeared table, the children's coats tumbled behind the sofa, and the clutter of toys and newspapers in the corner.

"I'd feel awkward having someone polishing my floors and things, Henry, I honestly would."

He brushed that objection aside with a snort.

Jenny's main worry could not be stated. It was the thought of someone else seeing her household disasters: her failures with the children, her frantic trips to the shops because there was no milk for the baby, no bread, nothing for dinner again.

Henry said, more kindly, "She could do the worst chores. Give, you time for the rest."

And perhaps that was true. Perhaps if there were someone to wash and Hoover and do nappies and all that, perhaps then she would be able to keep the shiny things polished as Henry liked, make nicer food, and have ironed shirts ready and available. She said, "What do I do?"

He put the paper down and said in a slow and careful voice that meant: listen because I am not going to repeat this, "You write out a card saying that you want a domestic help, take it along to the corner shop and ask them to put it in the window."

**What do you learn about Henry and the way he treats Jenny in these lines?**

*You must use the text to support your answer.*

Two days after Jenny's trip to the corner shop, the telephone rang. The caller said she was Mrs Porch, and she would like to call that afternoon. She arrived precisely at the time she had suggested. Jenny opened the door and Mrs Porch said, "Mrs Taylor? I'm Mrs Porch – about the job."

Jenny, confused, found herself blushing and talking too much, and it was Mrs Porch who led the way into the sitting-room. She looked round for somewhere to put her coat, sat down after a moment and said, "They're nice, these houses, aren't they? Have you been here long, Mrs Taylor?"

They talked. She was a pleasant woman and Jenny began to relax as they toured the house. In the kitchen, Mrs Porch hung the cloth up to dry, put away the basin. At the same time she rinsed out a couple of dirty milk bottles and emptied the sink basket. Jenny said, "Oh please ... You mustn't bother." And Mrs Porch, popping the milk bottles outside the back door, said that she believed in doing things as you went along, and then you didn't have everything piling up on you, did you? Upstairs, Jenny saw her look at three-year-old Emma's unmade bed and the dirty windows, and she grew confused again, hastily picking things up, trying to put clothes in piles. "You can't expect them to clear up, can you, at their again?" said Mrs Porch. "Bless them." When she left they had arranged that she should start on Monday. Jenny could hardly believe her luck.

Mrs Porch's first weeks were positively exciting. She transformed the house within three days. The bath and basins gleamed; mounds of dirty clothes disappeared and were found later in the airing-cupboard, washed and ironed.

It was such a nice relationship. There had never been any need to tell Mrs Porch what to do. She thought of everything. She made sure there were no household shortages, answered the telephone, and posted the letters that Jenny had forgotten. When the milkman rang the doorbell during the baby's bath, as he often did, Mrs Porch called up the stairs, "Don't you bother coming down dear. I'll settle up with him for you, shall I?"

"Oh, you are an angel, Mrs Porch. My purse is in the top drawer of the dresser."

### **How does Jenny react to Mrs Porch in these lines?**

*You should refer to what Jenny feels what she does, what she says and what she thinks.*

The only snag was that for some reason it was working out much more expensive than Jenny had thought. There always seemed to be less money than there should be. Twice she took out her purse in shops and found she had less than she'd thought.

And then one day Jenny found there was a five pound note missing from her purse.

A week later, it happened again. This time, she felt a little thud of shock in her stomach. She'd been trying to be more careful about money. There had been no one in the house all day except herself and Mrs Porch. Seven days later another five pound note went missing. It was a Friday, one of Mrs Porch's days.

She felt rather ill and shaky the next day. She tried to avoid Mrs Porch, but she seemed to be everywhere, talking loudly and cheerfully. Once or twice she looked at Jenny with an odd sharpness. "You feeling all right, dear? You don't look all that good – there's a tummy bug about."

Halfway through the morning the bell rang. Mrs Porch said, "It's the bread man – I'll just pay him, shall I? I can't seem to find your purse, though, Mrs Taylor - it's not in the usual place."

Jenny said in a strangled voice, "It's all right, Mrs Porch, I'll do it." She got up hastily, spilling the baby's milk as she did so.

"Don't you bother," said Mrs Porch. "Ah, there it is." She reached forward to take the purse from the table beside Jenny, adding, "Coming Mr Binns."

"No!" said Jenny shrilly. "Please LEAVE IT, Mrs Porch. I'll pay him myself." The baby was crying now, and the bread man ringing the bell again. She left the room hastily.

**What are Jenny's thoughts and feelings in these lines? How does the writer show these thoughts and feelings?**

She felt rather ill and shaky the next day. She tried to avoid Mrs Porch, but she seemed to be everywhere, talking loudly and cheerfully. Once or twice she looked at Jenny with an odd sharpness. "You feeling all right, dear? You don't look all that good – there's a tummy bug about."

Halfway through the morning the bell rang. Mrs Porch said, "It's the bread man – I'll just pay him, shall I? I can't seem to find your purse, though, Mrs Taylor - it's not in the usual place."

Jenny said in a strangled voice, "It's all right, Mrs Porch, I'll do it." She got up hastily, spilling the baby's milk as she did so.

"Don't you bother," said Mrs Porch. "Ah, there it is." She reached forward to take the purse from the table beside Jenny, adding, "Coming Mr Binns."

"No!" said Jenny shrilly. "Please LEAVE IT, Mrs Porch. I'll pay him myself." The baby was crying now, and the bread man ringing the bell again. She left the room hastily.

When she came back, Mrs Porch was soothing the baby, Jenny, her heart thumping horribly, sat down again. Mrs Porch was looking at her intently. She said slowly, "Is there something wrong with the purse, Mrs Taylor? Something bothering you?"

"No," said Jenny wildly. "At least I don't want .... I couldn't bear .... There's some sort of mistake, I'm sure. It's just that I felt certain I had ....."

"I see," said Mrs Porch. She sounded, for a moment, subdued, sad almost, but when she spoke again it was with her old briskness. "If it was anyone else I'd be angry, Mrs Taylor, but I've got fond of you, I really have, I like working here. We get on, I thought. So I'm not going to say anything more about it and pretend it never happened, and that's all there is to it. Unless, of course," said Mrs Porch, "you'd rather I didn't come any more?"

After a moment Jenny said, "No honestly, I .....I'm sorry, I expect there's been a mistake."

"Then we'll forget about it. Right?" Mrs Porch gathered up the dirty crockery from the table. As she was leaving the room she turned and said "and I'd put the purse back in the dresser, if I were you, Mrs Taylor, It'll be a nuisance if I can't find it, next time the milkman's wanting his money when you're not about, won't it?"

And Jenny thought about how life had been transformed for her; the house was always clean and dusted, she never ran out of food. Henry had been delighted by the changes, and the children loved Mrs Porch too; when she was around they played more and cried less. She said quietly, "Yes. Yes, all right, Mrs. Porch."

*(from "Help" by Penelope Lively)*

**These lines describe the events of one day. Imagine you are Jenny. Write your diary entry for that day.**

*Remember that this is a test of your understanding of the story.*