

SECTION A

Answer **one** question from this section.

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

BERTOLT BRECHT: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*

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

- Simon:* There you are at last, Grusha! What are you going to do?
- Grusha:* Nothing. If the worst comes to the worst, I've a brother with a farm in the mountains. But what about you?
- Simon:* Don't worry about me. [*Polite again.*] Grusha Vachnadze, your desire to know my plans fills me with satisfaction. I've been ordered to accompany Madam Natella Abashvili as her guard. 5
- Grusha:* But hasn't the Palace Guard mutinied?
- Simon* [*serious*]: That they have.
- Grusha:* But isn't it dangerous to accompany the woman?
- Simon:* In Tiflis they say: how can stabbing harm the knife? 10
- Grusha:* You're not a knife. You're a man, Simon Chachava. What has this woman to do with you?
- Simon:* The woman has nothing to do with me. But I have my orders, and so I go.
- Grusha:* The soldier is a pig-headed man; he gets himself into danger for nothing—nothing at all. [*As she is called from the palace*]: Now I must go into the third courtyard. I'm in a hurry. 15
- Simon:* As there's a hurry we oughtn't to quarrel. For a good quarrel one needs time. May I ask if the young lady still has parents?
- Grusha:* No, only a brother. 20
- Simon:* As time is short—the second question would be: Is the young lady as healthy as a fish in water?
- Grusha:* Perhaps once in a while a pain in the right shoulder; but otherwise strong enough for any work. So far no one has complained.
- Simon:* Everyone knows that. Even if it's Easter Sunday and there's the question who shall fetch the goose, then it's she. The third question is this: Is the young lady impatient? Does she want cherries in winter? 25
- Grusha:* Impatient, no. But if a man goes to war without any reason, and no message comes, that's bad.
- Simon:* A message will come. [*GRUSHA is again called from the palace.*] And finally the main question ... 30
- Grusha:* Simon Chachava, because I've got to go to the third courtyard and I'm in a hurry, the answer is 'Yes'.
- Simon* [*very embarrassed*]: Hurry, they say, is the wind that blows down the scaffolding. But they also say: The rich don't know what hurry is.—I come from ... 35
- Grusha:* Kutsk.

- Simon:* So the young lady has already made inquiries? Am healthy, have no dependents, earn ten piastres a month, as a paymaster twenty, and am asking honourably for your hand. 40
- Grusha:* Simon Chachava, that suits me.
- Simon* [*taking from his neck a thin chain from which hangs a little cross*]: This cross belonged to my mother, Grusha Vachnadze. The chain is silver. Please wear it.
- Grusha:* I thank you, Simon. [*He fastens it round her neck.*] 45
- Simon:* Now I must harness the horses. The young lady will understand that. It would be better for the young lady to go into the third courtyard. Otherwise there'll be trouble.
- Grusha:* Yes, Simon.
[*They stand together undecided.*] 50
- Simon:* I'll just take the woman to the troops who've remained loyal. When the war's over, I'll come back. In two weeks. Or three. I hope my intended won't get tired waiting for my return.
- Grusha:* Simon Chachava, I shall wait for you.

In what ways does Brecht make this conversation between Grusha and Simon such a memorable moment in the play?

TSITSI DANGAREMBGA: *Nervous Conditions*

2 Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

With this knowledge disturbing my mind, I was not unhappy when Babamukuru took me straight to the homestead. I did not want to stay at the mission, where there was too much that reminded me of Nyasha, and where she was. It was difficult to accept that this thing had happened, particularly difficult because I had no explanation. If you had asked me before it all began, I would have said it was impossible. I would have said it was impossible for people who had everything to suffer so extremely. 5

I may have had no explanation, but my mother had. She was very definite.

'It's the Englishness,' she said. 'It'll kill them all if they aren't careful,' and she snorted. 'Look at them. That boy Chido can hardly speak a word of his own mother's tongue and, you'll see, his children will be worse. Running around with that white one, isn't he, the missionary's daughter? His children will disgrace us. You'll see. And himself, to look at him he may look all right, but there's no telling what price he's paying.' She wouldn't say much about Nyasha. 'About that one we don't even speak. It's speaking for itself. Both of them, it's the Englishness. It's a wonder it hasn't affected the parents too.' 10

She went on like this for quite a while, going on about how you couldn't expect the ancestors to stomach so much Englishness. She didn't mention Nhamo, but I was beginning to follow her trend of thought. I knew she was thinking about him and I could see she considered me a victim too: 'The problem is the Englishness, so you just be careful!' 15

It was a warning, a threat that would have had disastrous effects if I had let it. When you're afraid of something it doesn't help to have people who know more than you do come out and tell you you're quite right. Mother knew a lot of things and I had regard for her knowledge. Be careful, she had said, and I thought about Nyasha and Chido and Nhamo, who had all succumbed, and of my own creeping feelings of doom. Was I being careful enough? I wondered. For I was beginning to have a suspicion, no more than the seed of a suspicion, that I had been too eager to leave the homestead and embrace the 'Englishness' of the mission; and after that the more concentrated 'Englishness' of Sacred Heart. The suspicion remained for a few days, during which time it transformed itself into guilt, and then I had nightmares about Nhamo and Chido and Nyasha two nights in a row. That should tell you how much my mother's words disturbed me: I had not had a nightmare since the first time I went to the mission. But term-time was fast approaching and the thought of returning to Sacred Heart filled me with pleasure. The books, the games, the films, the debates – all these things were things that I wanted. I told myself I was a much more sensible person than Nyasha, because I knew what could or couldn't be done. In this way, I banished the suspicion, buried it in the depths of my subconscious, and happily went back to Sacred Heart. 20 25 30

I was young then and able to banish things, but seeds do grow. Although I was not aware of it then, no longer could I accept Sacred Heart and what it represented as a sunrise on my horizon. Quietly, unobtrusively and extremely fitfully, something in my mind began to assert itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed, bringing me to this time when I can set down this story. It was a long and painful process for me, that process of expansion. It was a process whose events stretched over many years and would fill another volume, but the story I have told here, is my own story, the story of four women whom I loved, and our men, this story is how it all began. 35 40

In what ways do you think Dangarembga makes this such a satisfying ending to the novel?

MILES FRANKLIN: *My Brilliant Career*

3 Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

I was alone in the schoolroom next afternoon when Mr M'Swat sidled in, and after stuttering and hawing a little, delivered himself of: 'I want to tell ye that I don't hold with a gu-r-r-r-l going out of nights for to meet young men: if ye want to do any coortin' yuz can do it inside, if it's a decent young man. I have no objections to yer hangin' yer cap up to our Peter, only that ye have no prawperty—in yerself I like ye well enough, but we have other views for Peter. He's almost as good as made it sure with Susie Duffy, an' as ole Duffy will have a bit ev prawperty I want him to git her, an' wouldn't like ye to spoil the fun.'

5

Peter was "tall and freckled and sandy, face of a country lout," and, like Middleton's rouse-about, "hadn't any opinions, hadn't any ideas," but possessed sufficient instinct and common bushcraft with which, by hard slogging, to amass money. He was developing a mustache, and had a "gu-r-r-r-l"; he wore tight trousers and long spurs; he walked with a sidling swagger that was a cross between shyness and flashness, and took as much pride in his necktie as any man; he had a kind heart, honest principles, and would not hurt a fly; he worked away from morning till night, and contentedly did his duty like a bullock in the sphere in which God had placed him; he never had a bath while I knew him, and was a man according to his lights. He knew there was such a thing as the outside world, as I know there is such a thing as algebra; but it troubled him no more than algebra troubles me.

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This was my estimation of Peter M'Swat, junior. I respected him right enough in his place, as I trust he respected me in mine, but though fate thought fit for the present to place us in the one groove, yet our lives were unmixable commodities as oil and water, which lay apart and would never meet until taken in hand by the omnipotent leveller—death.

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Marriage with Peter M'Swat!

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Consternation and disgust held me speechless, and yet I was half inclined to laugh at the preposterousness of the thing, when Peter's father continued, 'I'm sorry if you've got smitten on Peter, but I know you'll be sensible. Ye see I have a lot of children, and when the place is divided among 'em it won't be much. I tell ye wot, old Duffy has a good bit of money and only two children, Susie and Mick. I could get you to meet Mick—he mayn't be so personable as our Peter,' he reflected, with evident pride in his weedy firstborn, and he got no further, for I had been as a yeast bottle bubbling up, and now went off bang!

30

'Silence, you ignorant old creature! How dare you have the incomparable impertinence to mention my name in conjunction with that of your boor of a son. Though he were a millionaire I would think his touch contamination. You have fallen through for once if you imagine I go out at night to meet anyone—I merely go away to be free for a few minutes from the suffocating atmosphere of your odious home. You must not think that because you have grasped and slaved and got a little money that it makes a gentleman of you; and never you *dare* to again mention my name in regard to matrimony with anyone about here.' And with my head high and shoulders thrown back I marched to my room, where I wept till I was weak and ill.

35

This monotonous, sordid life was unhinging me, and there was no legitimate way of escape from it. I formed wild plans of running away, to do what I did not care so long as it brought a little action, anything but this torturing, maddening monotony; but my love for my little brothers and sisters held me back. I could not do anything that would put me forever beyond the pale of their society.

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How does Franklin vividly convey Sybylla's thoughts and feelings at this moment in the novel?

HENRIK IBSEN: *A Doll's House*

4 Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

- Helmer:* Nora, what is all this? Why so grim?
- Nora:* Sit down. It'll take some time. I have a lot to say to you.
- Helmer* [*sits down at the table opposite her*]: You frighten me, Nora. I don't understand you.
- Nora:* Exactly. You don't understand me. And I have never understood you, 5
either—until tonight. No, don't interrupt. I just want you to listen to what I have to say. We are going to have things out, Torvald.
- Helmer:* What do you mean?
- Nora:* Isn't there anything that strikes you about the way we two are sitting here? 10
- Helmer:* What's that?
- Nora:* We have now been married eight years. Hasn't it struck you this is the first time you and I, man and wife, have had a serious talk together?
- Helmer:* Depends what you mean by 'serious'.
- Nora:* Eight whole years—no, more, ever since we first knew each other—and 15
never have we exchanged one serious word about serious things.
- Helmer:* What did you want me to do? Get you involved in worries that you couldn't possibly help me to bear?
- Nora:* I'm not talking about worries. I say we've never once sat down together and seriously tried to get to the bottom of anything. 20
- Helmer:* But, my dear Nora, would that have been a thing for you?
- Nora:* That's just it. You have never understood me ... I've been greatly wronged, Torvald. First by my father, and then by you.
- Helmer:* What! Us two! The two people who loved you more than anybody?
- Nora* [*shakes her head*]: You two never loved me. You only thought how nice it was to be in love with me. 25
- Helmer:* But, Nora, what's this you are saying?
- Nora:* It's right, you know, Torvald. At home, Daddy used to tell me what he thought, then I thought the same. And if I thought differently, I kept quiet about it, because he wouldn't have liked it. He used to call me his baby doll, and he played with me as I used to play with my dolls. Then I came to live in your house ... 30
- Helmer:* What way is that to talk about our marriage?
- Nora* [*imperturbably*]: What I mean is: I passed out of Daddy's hands into yours. You arranged everything to your tastes, and I acquired the same tastes. Or I pretended to ... I don't really know ... I think it was a bit of both, sometimes one thing and sometimes the other. When I look back, it seems to me I have been living here like a beggar, from hand to mouth. I lived by doing tricks for you, Torvald. But that's the way you wanted it. You and Daddy did me a great wrong. It's your fault that I've never made anything of my life. 40
- Helmer:* Nora, how unreasonable ... how ungrateful you are! Haven't you been happy here?
- Nora:* No, never. I thought I was, but I wasn't really.

Helmer: Not ... not happy!

45

Nora: No, just gay. And you've always been so kind to me. But our house has never been anything but a play-room. I have been your doll wife, just as at home I was Daddy's doll child. And the children in turn have been my dolls.

Explore the ways in which Ibsen makes this such a dramatic and significant moment in the play.

Selection from *Songs of Ourselves Volume 2: from Part 3*

5 Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

The Bus

the tarpaulin flaps are buttoned down
on the windows of the state transport bus.
all the way up to jejuri.

a cold wind keeps whipping
and slapping a corner of tarpaulin at your elbow. 5

you look down to the roaring road.
you search for the signs of daybreak in what little light spills out of bus.

your own divided face in the pair of glasses
on an old man's nose
is all the countryside you get to see. 10

you seem to move continually forward.
toward a destination
just beyond the castemark beyond his eyebrows.

outside, the sun has risen quietly
it aims through an eyelet in the tarpaulin. 15
and shoots at the old man's glasses.

a sawed off sunbeam comes to rest gently against the driver's right temple.
the bus seems to change direction.

at the end of bumpy ride with your own face on the either side
when you get off the bus. 20

you dont step inside the old man's head.

(Arun Kolatkar)

In what ways does Kolatkar strikingly convey the journey on the bus?

Selection from *Stories of Ourselves*

- 6 Read this extract from *On Her Knees* (by Tim Winton), and then answer the question that follows it:

I was sixteen when the old man shot through. A year later we moved back to the city where my mother cleaned houses to pay off his debts and keep us afloat and get me through university. She wouldn't let me get a part-time job to pay my way. The study, she said, was too important. Cleaning was a come-down from her previous job, eighteen years before, as a receptionist in a doctor's surgery, but it was all she could get. She told me there was more honour in scrubbing other people's floors than in having strangers scrub your own. But I wasn't convinced. The only thing worse than knowing she knelt every day in someone else's grotty shower recess was having to help her do it. Some days, between lectures, I did go with her. I hated it. There were many other times when I could have gone and didn't. I stayed home and stewed with guilt. She never said a word. 5

My mother had a kind of stiff-necked working class pride. After the old man bolted she became a stickler for order. She believed in hygiene, insisted upon rigour. She was discreet and deadly honest, and those lofty standards, that very rigidity, set her apart. Carol Lang went through a house like a dose of salts. She earned a reputation in the riverside suburbs where, in time, she became the domestic benchmark. She probably cleaned the houses of some of my wealthy classmates without any of us being the wiser. 10

She was proud of her good name and the way people bragged about her and passed her around like a hot tip, but I resented how quickly they took her for granted. I'd seen their patronising notes on floral paper, their attempts to chip her rate down. The householders who thought most highly of themselves were invariably the worst payers and the biggest slobes. It was as though having someone pick up after them had either encouraged them to be careless or made them increasingly determined to extort more work for their money. Through it all, my mother maintained her dignity *and* her hourly rate. She left jobs, she did not lose them. 15

In twenty years she was only ever sacked once, and that was over a pair of missing earrings. She came home with a week's notice and wept under the lemon tree where she thought I wouldn't hear. I tried to convince her never to return but she wouldn't hear a word of it. We argued. It was awful, and it didn't let up all week. Since the old man's disappearance we'd never raised our voices at each other. It was as though we kept the peace at all costs for fear of driving each other away. And now we couldn't stop bickering. 20

The morning she was to return we were still at it. Then, even while I took a shower, she stood in the bathroom doorway to lecture me on the subject of personal pride. It was as though I was not a twenty-year-old law student but a little boy who needed his neck scrubbed. 25

I don't care what you say, I yelled. It's outrageous and I'm not coming. 35

I never asked you, she said. When did I ever ask you to come?

I groaned. There was nothing I could say to that. And I knew it was a four-hour job, two if I helped out. Given what the householder had accused her of, it would be the toughest four hours she'd ever put in. But I was convinced that it was a mistake for her to go back. It was unfair, ludicrous, impossible, and while she packed the Corolla in the driveway I told her so. She came back for the mop and bucket. I stood on the verandah with my arms folded. But she must have known I'd go. She knew before I did, and not even the chassis-bending slam I gave the door could wipe the look of vindication from her face as she reversed us out into the street. 40

How does Winton vividly convey the narrator's thoughts and feelings in this opening to the story?

SECTION B

Answer **one** question from this section.

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

BERTOLT BRECHT: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*

- 7 Explore the ways in which Brecht strikingly portrays corruption in the play.

TSITSI DANGAREMBGA: *Nervous Conditions*

- 8 How far does Dangarembga's portrayal of Babamukuru make you feel sorry for him?

MILES FRANKLIN: *My Brilliant Career*

- 9 What vivid impressions of Harold Beecham does Franklin's writing create for you?

HENRIK IBSEN: *A Doll's House*

- 10 To what extent do you think Ibsen's portrayal of Krogstad makes him a dislikeable character?

Selection from *Songs of Ourselves Volume 2: from Part 3*

- 11 In what ways do the poets powerfully convey ideas about change in *Touch and Go* (by Stevie Smith) **and** *Song* (by George Szirtes)?

Selection from *Stories of Ourselves*

- 12 How does Mansfield memorably capture Leila's changing emotions in *Her First Ball*?

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