



Cambridge IGCSE™

WORLD LITERATURE

0408/21

Paper 2 Unseen

October/November 2021

1 hour 15 minutes

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **one** question: **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 25.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

4010955033

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

EITHER

1 Read carefully the poem on the opposite page.

How does the poet vividly portray the abandoned farmhouse?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the way the poet describes the farmhouse and its surroundings
- the words and images the poet uses to describe the people who lived on the farm
- the way the poet creates a sense of mystery.

Abandoned Farmhouse

He was a big man, says the size of his shoes
on a pile of broken dishes by the house;
a tall man too, says the length of the bed
in an upstairs room; and a good, God-fearing man,
says the Bible with a broken back
on the floor below the window, dusty with sun;
but not a man for farming, say the fields
cluttered with boulders and the leaky barn.

A woman lived with him, says the bedroom wall
papered with lilacs and the kitchen shelves
covered with oilcloth, and they had a child,
says the sandbox made from a tractor tire.
Money was scarce, say the jars of plum preserves
and canned tomatoes sealed in the cellar hole.
And the winters cold, say the rags in the window frames.
It was lonely here, says the narrow country road.

Something went wrong, says the empty house
in the weed-choked yard. Stones in the fields
say he was not a farmer; the still-sealed jars
in the cellar say she left in a nervous haste.
And the child? Its toys are strewn in the yard
like branches after a storm—a rubber cow,
a rusty tractor with a broken plow,
a doll in overalls. Something went wrong, they say.

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following extract. Avtar wants to buy a visa so that he can go overseas to work to help his parents who are having financial problems.

Explore the ways in which the writer strikingly creates tension in this extract.

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- the descriptions of where they live
- the way the writer presents relationships within Avtar's family
- how the writer conveys Avtar's thoughts and feelings.

The money that lawyer was asking: Avtar didn't know how he'd ever earn that much, even if they did remortgage the shop¹. And Navjoht's school fees were coming up. And the rent and bills. He reached a window in the stairwell, traffic glowering below. Nothing in their lives was working and the city lay there roaring its indifference. What a world.

Trudging up the final steps, he had to flatten himself against the wall so two men carrying a large TV could pass by. Avtar's neighbour, Mr Lal, stood at the top.

'I'll call my son. I'm sure there's been a mistake,' he said, voice quivering.

The men looked up from their squatting position. It was a big TV. 'Tell him to cough up or we'll be back for the rest.'

Avtar ventured up a few steps. 'Is everything alright, Uncle?'

Mr Lal frowned, probably annoyed that Avtar had witnessed this, wondering who else in the building would find out. 'Fine,' he said, snapped, and disappeared into his flat.

During the evening, Avtar sat with his family around the small fold-out table, eating the plain rice and wet potatoes his mother had prepared. It was a pitiful meal.

'The lady with the red bangles came again,' his father said. 'I think she'll soon be placing a sizeable order. Didn't you think so?'

Afterwards, his father lay on the settee and Navjoht opened the English newspaper they bought at half price from a man who passed by the shop each evening. Avtar stepped through the shower curtain and onto the warm concrete of the balcony. He crossed his arms on the railing, his knee nosing familiarly into the fretwork. It was a greasy, airless night. Crickets scratched in the hot spaces and leaves from the amrood tree hung drily by his face. He could hear Mr and Mrs Lal arguing next door. He reached up and closed his hand around a gnarled branch, right where branch met trunk, and ripped at it and ripped at it until all that was left was the white wound.

His mother called him to take the empty gas cylinder to Karthik's, and to make sure he got a fair price this time.

'Tell Navjoht.'

'He's emptying the bucket.'

Avtar pushed off the balcony, throwing the branch aside, and lifted the gas cylinder to his shoulder. When he got back, his brother still wasn't there.

'Downstairs. Teaching. Earning.'

'I thought I was his only student.'

'You were his first,' his mother said.

He told them he'd been to see a lawyer. A good one. An honest one who said he'd help. He explained about the student visa and when his father asked how much Avtar told him a figure that was less than half of what the lawyer had said.

His father looked concerned. 'We'll sell the shop.'

Avtar laughed. It was typical, reassuring even, of his father to go straight for the big and obvious answer. 'We could just take out a loan against it. And I'll start paying that back as soon as I find work over there.'

'A loan. Yes. So we can keep the shop?'

'Yes.'

'And do you think they will lend us that much?'

'I think so, Papa. I'll find out.'

'Yes. Find out.'

'Do you have to go? Can you not find work here?' It was his mother speaking from the kitchen, her back to them.

'It's been over six months, Mamma. And I'll be back in a year. Maybe two. And you can get me married and I can try again for work here. But at least we'll have money.'

'And Navjoht will be working by then,' his father said.

'How will you pay for his college fees if you're paying for this loanshoan²?'

'I don't know. I'll do two jobs. Maybe he'll have to wait a year. But at least there's a chance it can work. There's nothing for me if I stay here.'

'There's us,' his mother said, turning sharply. Her sari had snagged on a nail in the counter and strained almost indecently across her body. 'There's your family.'

Avtar was silent. She turned back round and after a while her hand hovered over the two small mangoes ripening on the windowsill, wondering which to choose for a dessert.

¹ *remortgage the shop*: add to an existing loan

² *loanshoan*: someone who loans money

BLANK PAGE

BLANK PAGE

BLANK PAGE

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

To avoid the issue of disclosure of answer-related information to candidates, all copyright acknowledgements are reproduced online in the Cambridge Assessment International Education Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at www.cambridgeinternational.org after the live examination series.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which itself is a department of the University of Cambridge.