



Cambridge International AS & A Level

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9695/71

Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation

May/June 2020

2 hours



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

This document has **4** pages. Blank pages are indicated.

1 Write a critical commentary on the following extract from the short story 'Somewhere Else' (published in 1992) by Rachel Ingalls.

The temperature dropped as they boarded the plane. Beth wondered if she should have brought an extra sweater with her; she'd had her shopping-spree clothes sent back home.

'Cold,' Alan said, lifting his head. 'Scandinavia, here we come.' He settled down to read, while Beth shut her eyes and tried to doze. She didn't like flying. What she used to tell her clients was that it was exactly like a bus ride, only safer; but, naturally, that wasn't quite true: even if you could adjust the air-conditioning nozzles so that they didn't shoot jets of air straight on to your head, the pressure made a difference. It did something to the fluid in all the sinus passages. It gave you a headache. That was funny, she thought: the travel agent who didn't like to travel. 5 10

She went right under for a few minutes. Alan had to touch her shoulder to wake her up. They were beginning the descent.

She got her handbag from under the seat in front of her, redid her lipstick and combed her hair. She pulled her seat belt tighter. At the same instant the plane braked suddenly, unnaturally; everyone was tossed forward. A steward's voice, omitting the usual, 'Ladies and gentlemen', spoke loudly over the address system, saying, 'Fasten your safety belts, please. We're experiencing some turbulence.' Although there was no indication of what it could be, everyone knew: something had gone seriously wrong. This wasn't a small or incidental disturbance. There were murmurs of distress among the passengers. Several people had been thrown against the seats and had hurt their heads or broken the glasses they were wearing. And they were frightened. 15 20

The engines of the plane began to roar. Beth wanted to reach for Alan's hand, but she knew he wouldn't like it. She was relieved and pleased when, without saying anything, he placed his hand lightly over hers.

The noise stopped, but they seemed to be falling fast. All at once they were plunging, rushing. A man's voice, abruptly, announced, 'Attention, all passengers. Prepare for an emergency landing.' The rest of the message was cut off as the plane screamed. Many of the passengers too were shrieking, crying, moaning. Beth and Alan looked at each other. His hand gripped hers. Her lips moved. She said, into the uproar, that she loved him. He said something back, which she couldn't lip-read; it might have been *Thanks for everything, Happy landings, or We should have drunk our duty-free bottle*. The plane crashed. 25 30

She was still trying to undo her belt while he was up from his seat and out into the aisle, pushing a space clear for both of them. The air was bitter with smoke. Everyone was yelling and fighting. Fire fanned towards them from the rear of the aircraft. She kicked herself free of the seat in front of her. She scrambled to her feet. Alan had gone. The thrashing crowd had carried him away from her. She could just see him, a long way off. He turned back. He was shouting. She tried to get into the aisle, but it was no use. She held her arms out to him. There was an explosion. High flames shot up from the seats near the front exits. Across a wave of fire she saw him, looking back at her. A fierce heat blasted the left side of her face, her shoulder and hand. She jumped back. She couldn't protect herself: the flames were everywhere. She knew it was too late. 35 40

She woke up. Alan was standing in the aisle. He was getting the coats down from the overhead locker. They had landed. The other passengers were collecting their belongings. 45

'Okay?' he said. She nodded, unbuckling her seat belt. She was too shaken to speak. She never wanted to talk about the dream. She didn't even want to go over it in her mind. It had made her feel sick in a way that was worse than anything she could remember, even the nightmares of childhood. She kept herself busy with her flight bag and shoulder bag until everyone began to move down the aisle. Alan said, 'All we have to do now is find that other plane.' 50

2 Write a critical commentary on the following poem (published in 1997) by Shimmer Chinodya.

African Grass

Grass grows here, enough
 To thatch a thousand roofs.
 Tall khaki African grass
 Two heads taller than I, laden
 With beads of dew 5
 In the early morning. Shove armfuls aside
 To pass.

Grass caressing my bare thighs
 Sweeping past me, rustling softly
 like lovers. 10
 Adam and Eve once walked here
 Naked and innocent in this wild savannah¹;
 When the world was young
 And there was no one else to watch.

It's hard to think that this tall crop 15
 Coarse in its maturity
 Burst out of October's black burnt plains
 Green and succulent, and savouring the mellow sun
 Green to this height.

But it's harder yet to think 20
 That this crop will crumple
 To veld² fire ashes;
 Fruitless growth!

This whispering 25
 Shall be
 Gone.

¹ *savannah* – bare grassy plain

² *veld* – open and uncultivated grassland

- 3 Write a critical commentary on the following poem (published in 1988) by A. H. Magagula.

It's Over Now

I remember those days when we used to

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And love was our day and night dish.

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