

READING PASSAGE

On returning to his sitting-room, John pulled the large wicker chair in front of the fire, and sat there looking at the glowing coals. The night promised to be very cold, and the wind whistled down the chimney, increasing the comfortable sensation of the clear fire. He sat watching the ruddy reflection of the firelight dancing on the panelled wall, when he noticed that a picture placed where the end of the bookcase
5 formerly stood was not truly hung, and needed adjustment. A picture hung askew that was particularly offensive to his eyes, and he got up at once to alter it. He remembered as he went up to it that it was at this precise spot four months ago that he had lost sight of the man's figure which he saw rise from the same wicker chair he
10 had just been sitting on, and at this memory he felt an involuntary shudder.

He put one hand behind the picture to steady it, and as he did so his finger struck a very slight projection in the wall. He pulled the picture a little to one side, and saw that what he had touched was the back of a small hinge sunk in the wall, and almost obliterated with many coats of paint. His curiosity was excited, and he
15 took a candle from the table and examined the wall carefully. Inspection soon showed him another hinge a little further up, and by degrees he perceived that one of the panels had been made at some time in the past to open, and serve probably as the door of a cupboard. At this point a feverish anxiety to re-open this cupboard door took possession of him, and an intense excitement filled his mind. It was an
20 excitement that we experience on the event of a discovery which we fancy may produce important results. He loosened the paint in the cracks with a penknife, and attempted to press open the door; but his instrument was not adequate to such a purpose, and all his efforts remained ineffective. His excitement had now reached an overmastering pitch; for he anticipated, though he knew not why, some strange
25 discovery to be made in this sealed cupboard. He looked round the room for some weapon with which to force the door, and at length with his penknife cut away sufficient wood at the joint to enable him to insert the end of the poker in the hole. The clock in the New College Tower struck one at the exact moment when with a sharp effort he thus forced open the door. It appeared never to have had a fastening,
30 but merely to have been stuck fast by the accumulation of paint. As he bent it slowly back upon the rusted hinges his heart beat so fast that he could scarcely catch his breath, though he was conscious all the while of a ludicrous aspect of his position, knowing that it was most probable that the cavity within would be found empty.

The cupboard was small but very deep, and in the obscure light seemed at
35 first to contain nothing except a small heap of dust and cobwebs. His sense of disappointment was keen as he thrust his hand into it, but changed again in a moment to breathless interest on feeling something solid in what he had imagined to be only an accumulation of mould and dirt. He snatched up a candle, and holding this in one hand, with the other pulled out an object from the cupboard and put it on the

40 table, covered as it was with the curious drapery of black and clinging cobwebs which I
have seen adhering to bottles of old wine. It lay there between the dish of fruit and
the decanter, veiled indeed with thick dust as with a mantle, but revealing beneath it
the shape and contour of a violin.

John was excited at his discovery, and felt his thoughts confused. Yet at the
45 same time he was half amused at his own excitement, feeling that it was childish to
be moved over an event so simple as the finding of a violin in an old cupboard. He
soon collected himself and took up the instrument, using great care, as he feared lest
age should have rendered the wood brittle or rotten. With some vigorous puffs of
breath and a little dusting with a handkerchief he removed the heavy outer coating
50 of cobwebs, and began to see more clearly the delicate curves of the body and of the
scroll. A few minutes more gentle handling left the instrument sufficiently clean to
enable him to appreciate its chief points. Its seclusion from the outer world, which
the heavy accumulation of dust proved to have been for many years, did not seem to
have damaged it in the least; and the fact of a chimney-flue passing through the wall
55 at no great distance had no doubt conduced to maintain the air in the cupboard at an
equable temperature. So far as he was able to judge, the wood was as sound as
when it left the maker's hands; but the strings were of course broken, and curled up
in little tangled knots. The body was of a light-red colour, with a varnish of peculiar
lustre and softness. The neck seemed rather longer than ordinary, and the scroll was
60 remarkably bold and free.

The violin which John was in the habit of using was a good make –a *Pressenda*,
given to him on his fifteenth birthday by Mr. Thoresby, his guardian. It was of that
maker's later and best period, and a copy of the Stradivarius model. John took this
from its case and laid it side by side with his new discovery, meaning to compare
65 them for size and form. He perceived at once that while the model of both was
identical, the superiority of the older violin in every detail was so marked as to
convince him that it was undoubtedly an instrument of exceptional value. The
extreme beauty of its varnish impressed him vividly, and though he had never seen a
genuine Stradivarius, he felt a conviction gradually gaining on him that he stood in
70 the presence of a masterpiece of that great maker. On looking into the interior he
found that surprisingly little dust had penetrated into it, and by blowing through the
sound-holes he soon cleared it sufficiently to enable him to discern a label. He put
the candle close to him, and held the violin up so that a little patch of light fell
through the sound-hole on to the label. His heart leapt with a violent pulsation as he
75 read the characters, "*Antonius Stradiuarius Cremonensis faciebat, 1704.*" Under
ordinary circumstances it would naturally be concluded that such a label was a
forgery, but the conditions were entirely altered in the case of a violin found in a
forgotten cupboard, with proof so evident of its having remained there for a very
long period.

From *The Lost Stradivarius* by J Meade Falkner

CITY OF LONDON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



CITY OF LONDON
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

YEAR 7

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

ENGLISH

SAMPLE PAPER

Time allowed: 1 hour 20 minutes

First Name:

Surname:



INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE ANSWER BOTH PARTS OF THE PAPER

Part A: Reading (40 minutes)

- Spend 10 minutes reading the passage on the insert and the questions in this booklet.
- You may mark the passage by underlining words and phrases.
- Do not write anything in your booklet during this time.
- You will be told when the 10 minutes are over.

Spend 30 minutes writing your answers in this answer booklet.

- You will be told when 40 minutes are up, but you may start Part B when you are ready.

Part B: Writing (40 minutes)

- Spend 40 minutes writing on the lined paper provided.
- Put your first name and surname at the top of each page.
- If you have time, you may go back to Part A.
- Both questions must be attempted.

YOU MAY WRITE IN EITHER INK OR PENCIL

- You will be told when you have 5 minutes left.

GOOD LUCK!

PART A: READING (40 minutes)

After you have spent about 10 minutes reading the passage, spend about 30 minutes answering the questions.

The mark at the end of each question is an indication of how much you should write for each answer.

1. Lines 1–4.

Why did John find it comfortable to sit by the fire?

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.....

1 mark

2. Lines 1-10.

What two things disturb John in the first paragraph?

(i)
.....
(ii)
.....

2 marks

3. Lines 19–21.

Explain what is meant by the following sentence: *'It was an excitement that we experience on the event of a discovery which we fancy may produce important results.'*

.....
.....
.....

2 marks

4. Lines 21-30.

In your own words, explain how John gets the cupboard to open.

(i)

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(ii)

.....

2 marks

5. Lines 22-24.

In your own words, explain the meanings of these phrases:

a) 'But his instrument was not adequate to such a purpose' (Lines 22-23)

a)

.....

2 marks

b) 'His excitement had now reached an overmastering pitch' (Lines 23-24)

b)

.....

2 marks

6. Lines 32-38.

In your own words explain why John's feelings change from excitement to disappointment on opening the cupboard.

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2 marks

7. Line 44.

At line 44 it says 'John was excited at his discovery, and felt his thoughts confused.' In your own words, explain what this could mean.

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3 marks

8a. Lines 48-58.

How do we know that the violin has survived in good condition? Looking at lines 48-58, find two phrases that tell you this.

i).....

.....

2 marks

ii).....

.....

2 marks

8b.Lines 57-67

Between lines 57 and 67, what physical feature of the newly found violin seemed different to him?

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.....

.....

2 marks

9. Lines 58-70.

Using lines 58-70, give three examples of how you know the violin has made a positive impression on John.

i).....

1 mark

ii).....

1 mark

iii).....

1 mark

10. Lines 75-77

At lines 75-77 it says ‘Under ordinary circumstances it would naturally be concluded that such a label was a forgery.’ What does this mean?

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.....
.....

2 marks

11. Using the whole passage, explain how the writer uses language to make the discovery of the violin exciting. Use short quotations to support your answer.

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8 marks

Please turn over the page for the Writing Section

PART B: WRITING SECTION

There are two tasks in this section. You must attempt both of them. Spend 20 minutes on each. The quality of your writing is more important than the length. Aim to write about 1 side.

- 1. What do you think happens next? Write the next part of the story.**

20 marks

- 2. Some people say learning a musical instrument is a good thing to do when you are young. Do you agree with this statement? Give your personal opinion, backing up your points with examples.**

20 marks