



St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Year 8 English Sample Entrance Examination

Time allowed: 60 minutes

Name: _____

INSTRUCTIONS :

- Answer all questions
- Dictionaries or reference materials are forbidden

Section A

Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow. Try to use your own words as far as possible and remember to write in full sentences except in question 8. You should spend about 40 minutes on Section A

At the beginning of this passage Kate dares her cousin Tomas: she wants to choose something for the challenge which she is sure he won't do.

Note: Meissen is a particularly fine and precious sort of china: a Meissen jar or vase would be very valuable.

'Go and break something that Aunt Anna is really fond of,' she said. 'Smash it to bits. I dare you. But you won't,' she added.

Tomas flushed deeply and bit his lip. Then he marched downstairs, Kate at his heels, into the sunlit drawing room. He moved like lightning. He went to the desk where his aunt wrote her letters in the afternoon, took from it two-handed a 5 Meissen painted jar, stupidly pretty with angels twined round lid and handles, carried it across to the hearth and threw it down hard. It shattered with a reverberant crash.

At once there were adults in the room. Ruza ran in, and behind her came Count Michael and the Countess Anna.

'What is it?' cried Ruza. 'What is broken?' She darted to the fireplace and 10 picked up a fragment of the jar. Kate saw, as if in slow motion, her aunt's collapse. The Countess subsided slowly onto the floor, knelt there and began to weep. She was saying, 'Oh no!' sobbing between syllables. And Tomas just stood there. Ruza picked up another piece. She sat down on the floor beside her mistress and put an arm round her shoulder. She said, 'We will mend it. I will sweep up every morsel and we 15 will get it mended.'

Kate was appalled at herself. She had willed this; she had directed Tomas to break precisely something that the Countess loved. She felt also hard-hearted scorn for grown people making such a fuss over a silly jar. It wasn't even nice – it was too 20 ornate.

'How did this happen?' asked Count Michael sternly.

'It was my fault,' said Kate. 'I broke it.'

- 1 Why, do you think, does Kate add, 'But you won't', to the end of her challenge in line 2? (2 marks)
- 2 Read the second paragraph again (lines 3-7). What does the description suggest about Tomas's attitude to the challenge? Does he find it a difficult dare to do? What evidence is there to support your view? (4 marks)
- 3 Compare the reactions of the different adults to the smashing of the jar. Make sure you use your own words. (3 marks)
- 4 What does it mean when Kate is 'appalled at herself'? Why is she appalled? (3 marks)
- 5 In your own words say what other feelings Kate felt for the adults, as described in lines 17-20. (2 marks)
- 6 Various details are given about the jar.

- (a) Describe it in your own words.
(b) What is Kate's opinion of it? Again remember to use your own words. (5 marks)
- 7 Why, do you think, does Kate say, 'It was my fault ... I broke it.' when Tomas was the one who dropped the jar? (2 marks)
- 8 Give the meanings of the following words as they are used in the passage. Also, for each one say whether it is a noun, adjective, verb or adverb. You do not need to answer this question in full sentences.
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|----------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| reverberant (line 7) | fragment (line 11) | |
| subsided (line 12) | precisely (line 18) | (6 marks) |
- 9 What is your opinion of Kate? Give reasons for your answer. (4 marks)
- 10 Imagine that Tomas is thinking as he watches the adults and hears Kate saying it was her fault. Write his thoughts. You should write 40-60 words. (4 marks)

Section B

Write an essay on one of the following.

You should spend about 20 minutes on this question.

Either (a) 'It's my fault.' Write a story or a description with this as your title. You could describe an occasion when you have had to admit to something you have done or you could make up a story.

Or (b) Write a description of a friend or relative, making clear what she or he is like in character as well as in appearance. Include in your essay an account of what you like (or don't like!) about the person.