



**ENTRANCE EXAMINATION
FOR YEAR 7 ENTRY**

SAMPLE PAPER

ENGLISH

50 MINUTES

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions which follow.

Balloons Over London

As the start of World War Two approaches, Tally's father plans to send her away from London.

'I don't think you ought to be crying at your age. People of fifty-two don't cry,' said Aunt Hester sternly.

'I'm not crying,' said her sister May. 'Not really. And anyway, I heard you blowing your nose three times last night when you went to the bathroom.'

'Anyone can blow their nose,' said Hester.

'Not three times. And you're older than me.'

But then they stopped arguing and clung to each other because the news their brother had given them the night before was so awful that they could only bear it if they were standing side by side. 'The house is going to be a tomb without her,' said May. 'She's far too young to go away.'

'Of course we knew she'd go away to get married,' said Hester.

'But people don't marry when they're eleven years old.'

'Except in the olden days, perhaps. And in very hot countries.'

But England was not a hot country. Now, on a fine spring day in 1939, it was pleasantly warm. The men digging trenches in the little park opposite had not removed their shirts, and a fresh breeze stirred the silver barrage balloons that floated over the houses. The government was trying them out to protect the people of London against enemy aircraft if the war, which everyone was expecting, really came.

Tally loved the barrage balloons.

'They're like really kind great-uncles,' she said, 'only a nicer colour.'

All the children of Stanford Street walked home with their heads turned to the sky when the balloons went up.

The war against Hitler seemed likely to come; no-one really thought now it could be prevented – the poor man could be heard raving on the wireless, his mad eyes and loathsome moustache appeared each day in the newspaper stall. But it was not the thought of war that was upsetting May and Hester now. They had been quite excited when they were issued with a stirrup pump to put out the flames from incendiary bombs – and the air-raid shelters delivered in sections to the houses in the street were a great comfort, though nobody could quite work out how to put them up. Hitler was nasty; if there had to be a war, they would put up with it. But this was different...

'Help me to make her see what a chance this is for her,' their brother James had begged them. 'Help me to keep her cheerful.'

The aunts had kept house for their younger brother since his wife had died, leaving him with a baby less than a week old. For nearly twelve years now that baby had been the centre of their world.

'We'd better do something about our faces,' said Hester, looking in the mirror.

'She mustn't see we're upset. She'll be home from school soon and James wants to tell her himself.'

But the only powder they could find was the talc that May used on her feet in hot weather, and once they had covered their faces with it they returned to the bathroom to wash it off. It would not help Tally to stand up under the blow that awaited her only to be greeted by two white-faced clowns.

Write short answers to the following questions:

1. How old is Tally? (1)
2. In which year is the passage set? (1)
3. Who is the older of Tally's aunts? (1)
4. What is the name of the street opposite the little park? (1)

Write the meaning of each of the following words as it is used in the passage. (The words have been underlined to help you.)

5. sternly (2)
6. prevented (2)
7. loathsome (2)
8. raving (2)
9. issued (2)

Write longer answers to the following questions. Use your own words as far as possible.

10. Why were Tally's aunts upset? (4)
11. According to Aunt Hester, when and where would girls of eleven become wives? (4)
12. How did people feel about the air-raid shelters? (4)

Answer the following questions using as much detail as possible. Try to use short quotations from the passage as part of your answer.

13. What signs are given in the passage that there is going to be a war? (4)
14. What did the people of London think about Hitler? (3)
15. What is your impression of Tally's aunts? For this answer you need to write a longer, detailed account, referring closely to the ways they are presented in this passage and using at least two quotations. Remember to write about their relationship with Tally and with each other. (7)

NOW TURN OVER

16. Write about a relationship you have with someone who means a lot to you. Describe their personality and physical appearance and explain what they mean to you. Remember to write in paragraphs, paying special attention to spelling and punctuation. Try to use an interesting, varied vocabulary.

Remember to plan your response before you begin to write. (10)