



Wellingborough
School

Founded 1595

Year 7 English Scholarship Examination

Specimen Paper A

Time allowed: 60 minutes, plus 10 minutes reading.

Answer all the questions.

Read the passage and questions (you must not write any answers during this time). Pay attention to how many marks are available for each question.

'White Fang' by Jack London

Part I: The Wild. Chapter 1: The Trail

1 Dark spruce forest frowned on either side the frozen waterway. The trees had been stripped by a recent wind of their white covering of frost, and they seemed to lean toward each other, black and ominous, in the fading light. A vast silence reigned over the land. The land itself was a desolation, lifeless, without movement, so lone and cold that the spirit of it was not even that of sadness. There was a hint in it of laughter, but of a laughter more terrible than any sadness -- a laughter that was mirthless as the smile of the Sphinx, a laughter cold as the frost and partaking of the grimness of infallibility. It was the masterful and incommunicable wisdom of eternity laughing at the futility of life and the effort of life. It was the Wild, the savage, frozen-hearted Northland Wild.

10 But there *was* life, abroad in the land and defiant. Down the frozen waterway toiled a string of wolfish dogs. Their bristly fur was rimed with frost. Their breath froze in the air as it left their mouths, spouting forth in spumes of vapor that settled upon the hair of their bodies and formed into crystals of frost. Leather harness was on the dogs, and leather traces attached them to a sled which dragged along behind. The sled was without runners. It was made of stout birch-bark, and its full surface rested on the snow. The front end of the sled was turned up, like a scroll, in order to force down and under the bore of soft snow that surged like a wave before it. On the sled, securely lashed, was a long and narrow oblong box. There were other things on the sled -- blankets, an axe, and a coffee-pot and frying-pan; but prominent, occupying most of the space, was the long and narrow oblong box.

20 In advance of the dogs, on wide snowshoes, toiled a man. At the rear of the sled toiled a second man. On the sled, in the box, lay a third man whose toil was over, -- a man whom the Wild had conquered and beaten down until he would never move nor struggle again. It is not the way of the Wild to like movement. Life is an offence to it, for life is movement; and the Wild aims always to destroy movement. It freezes the water to prevent it running to the sea; it drives the sap out of the trees till they are frozen to their mighty hearts; and most ferociously and terribly of all does the Wild harry and crush into submission man -- man, who is the most restless of life, ever in revolt against the dictum that all movement must in the end come to the cessation of movement.

30 But at front and rear, unawed and indomitable, toiled the two men who were not yet dead. Their bodies were covered with fur and soft-tanned leather. Eyelashes and cheeks and lips were so coated with the crystals from their frozen breath that their faces were not discernible. This gave them the seeming of ghostly masques, undertakers in a spectral world at the funeral of some ghost. But under it all they were men, penetrating the land of desolation and mockery and silence, puny adventurers bent on colossal adventure, pitting themselves against the might of a world as remote and alien and pulseless as the abysses of space.

40

Comprehension

30 minutes. 25 marks.

Read the passage then answer the following questions.

1. A) Find an example of personification from the first paragraph. 2
B) Explain why you think London used this to open his novel. 2
2. A) Find an example of pathetic fallacy. 2
B) What effect do you think this is meant to have on the reader? 2
3. London wrote "a laughter that was mirthless as the smile of the Sphinx". Which two literary devices is he using here, and what impression is he trying to build of the relationship of the Wild to the men? 4
4. Giving evidence from the text to back up your points, say which characters will be the most important in this book. 3
5. What is in the box? 1
6. A) Find an example of imagery in the final paragraph. 2
B) Explain its intended effect. 4
7. Do you think the men will survive? Refer to the text in supporting your idea. 3

Creative Writing

30 minutes. 25 marks.

Write a description of a landscape you know well. Try to create a distinct mood or atmosphere within your description. You must include two people in it.

You will be rewarded for the quality of your vocabulary and expression and the accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

