



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1115/02, 1120/02

1123/02, 1125/02

Paper 2 Comprehension

October/November 2007

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This insert contains the passage for comprehension.

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.



Grandfather's Party

- 1 'Yusuf!' he exclaimed. 'It is you, isn't it?' There was no mistaking my cousin Ali, standing there in the shopping mall. He was older, certainly, but he retained the cheeky grin of his childhood. We hadn't seen each other for years, as his family had emigrated to Australia when he was ten years old. This had pleased me enormously, because the very mention of his name was a source of embarrassment to me. Recently I had heard that he was back, as a teacher in my home town. 'Yes, it's me,' I stammered, trying to regain my composure. However, standing face to face with Ali, my cheeks burned with shame because, since I had last seen Ali, the events of Grandfather's eightieth birthday party had, in my mind, replayed like an old, familiar movie... 5
- 2 Grandfather lived in our house and rarely left it, preferring instead to sit quietly in a chair looking out of the window – always the same chair – watching family members come and go, listening to their conversations but seldom volunteering to join in. He was a quiet, contented old man, whose habits never varied. He had deep lines on his face which, he often told me, were signs of experience and wisdom. When my mother announced that she would give a party to celebrate his forthcoming eightieth birthday, he seemed quite pleased. 10 15
- 3 The big day arrived. Beads of perspiration stood on my mother's brow as she busied herself energetically in the kitchen, putting the final touches to her preparations for the occasion. Back and forth she went, carrying serving dishes to the table, stirring the contents of cooking pots, and taking from the cupboards the huge supply of plates and glasses needed. The pots on the stove simmered and bubbled, sending clouds of hot steam around the kitchen. 20
- 4 Suddenly, our house was full of people, as guests arrived at the appointed time. Greetings were exchanged and people embraced, eager to catch up on news. Elderly aunts and uncles chatted to children, who were terribly bored by the routine exclamations about how much taller they had become. My cousin Ali arrived with his mother, who dashed into the kitchen to offer her services to my mother, while he boasted to me about his new sandals as he stepped out of them on the doorstep. 25
- 5 Ali never lost an opportunity to show what he perceived as his superiority over me. Smirking, he boasted, 'I've got a new bicycle. I bet it's much better than yours.' We went outside together, where Ali inspected my bicycle. He hooted with laughter. 'That little blue bag on the saddle looks so silly!' he screamed. Because I was trying to compensate for my inferior bicycle, I blurted out, 'Well, I've got a watch now, and you haven't.' Pleased to see the envious glint in Ali's eyes, I led him to my room, took my watch from the drawer and handed it to him. Then I snatched it back and returned it to its place, feeling extremely self-satisfied. 'That's just a kid's watch,' he said. 30
- 6 It was time that rude boy learned a lesson, I thought. As soon as I was sure that Ali had gone, I took the watch out of the drawer again. Clutching it carefully, I sneaked outside without – or so I thought at the time – drawing attention to myself. By now, the house was packed, the noise levels were rising, and my mother and the other women were clattering about in the kitchen. The party was in full swing, and this was a good time for revenge. I found Ali's new sandals among the pile lying outside the door – glad that he had already pointed them out to me so that they were easily recognisable – and hid the watch under them. Trying to look relaxed and innocent, I skipped past Grandfather's chair and, almost as if I were trying to convince myself that the lie I was about to tell was true, I returned to my room. Opening the drawer, I saw that, indeed, the watch was not there. My heart racing, I shot from my room to raise the alarm, this time hoping to be conspicuous. I was pleased at the way things were turning out and silently congratulated myself on my cleverness. 'Mother!' I wept, dashing into the kitchen. 'My watch is missing. The last person to touch it was Ali. He must have stolen it!' 35 40 45

- 7 My mother went outside, where Ali, unaware of the accusations I had made, was cheerfully riding my bicycle at great speed, demonstrating his skills to my two brothers, who were clearly impressed. When my mother explained to them that my watch was missing, my brothers rushed to my room to begin the search; I think they were glad to escape from Ali's showing off, and an opportunity to please their mother was no doubt a welcome diversion for them. Meanwhile, my aunt had come from the kitchen and, taking Ali roughly by the arm, led him back to the house. He looked so confused by events that I almost felt sorry for him. But there was no turning back, I told myself, and, after all, Ali deserved to be humiliated. 50 55
- 8 By the time I got back to my room, my brothers had emptied out the contents of my drawers; shirts and trousers made an untidy pile in the centre of the floor. My brothers looked through the cupboard and even shook my school books, in case the watch had slipped inside one of them. My mother arrived on the scene and joined in the search, looking under my bed and my pillow, and further adding to the chaos in the small room. Gradually we became aware of a smell wafting in our direction, not the appetising aromas which had greeted our guests on their arrival, but the unmistakable smell of burning food. Simultaneously, in the room next door, my baby sister awoke. Troubled by the noise coming from my room, the banging of cupboard doors and things being thrown on the floor, she started to cry, a whimper at first but soon a pathetic wailing sound. 60 65
- 9 What exactly happened next I can't remember – probably remorse and apprehension have combined to blot it from my memory. But what I do remember is this. When I went back to the party, Grandfather quietly called me over to his chair. 'Your mother told me your story, Yusuf. But I wonder if your watch has really been stolen.' He got up slowly from his chair, took my hand and led me outside. Stooping down, he took my watch from under Ali's sandal. We were alone outside; from inside the house, we were aware of loud conversation, the smell of burning, the screaming of the baby, the raised voices of my mother and brothers. My eyes met Grandfather's and I knew that he knew the truth. Without saying a word, he put my watch into the little blue saddlebag of my bicycle. 70
- 10 Then he whispered in my ear: 'Now I think you should put a stop to all the trouble you're causing for Ali. Yes, he is quite annoying but, like you, he's only a child.' Running indoors, I told my mother that my watch had been found and that I had forgotten putting it into the saddlebag of my bicycle. Both Ali and his mother glared at me, but this was Grandfather's birthday and enough damage had been done; I knew that nothing more would be said. 75
- 11 I realised at the time that Grandfather wanted me to confess my lie but I had neither the courage nor the humility to do so. However, Ali and I were only kids then, and now, fifteen years later, here we were, two young adults, more experienced and, I hope, wiser. 'Yes, it's me,' I repeated. 'And I have something to tell you.' It was impossible not to think of Grandfather. Smiling, I resolved to look in the mirror later for at least the beginnings of lines of experience and wisdom. 80 85

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