

0860/29/11

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS
2013

MONDAY, 29 APRIL
1.00 PM – 1.50 PM

ENGLISH
STANDARD GRADE
General Level
Reading
Text

Read carefully the passage overleaf. It will help if you read it twice. When you have done so, answer the questions. Use the spaces provided in the Question/Answer booklet.



Evie, the narrator, describes the arrival of a long lost letter.

- 1 **I**t started with a letter. A letter that had been lost a long time, waiting out half a century in a forgotten postal bag in the dim attic of an ordinary house. I think about it sometimes, that mailbag: of the hundreds of love letters, grocery bills, birthday cards, notes from children to their parents, that lay together, swelling and sighing as their thwarted messages whispered in the dark. Waiting, waiting, for someone to realise they were there. For it is said, you know, that a letter will always seek a reader; that sooner or later, like it or not, words have a way of finding the light, of making their secrets known.
- 2 Forgive me, I'm being romantic—a habit acquired from the years spent reading nineteenth-century novels with a torch when my parents thought I was asleep. What I mean to say is that it's odd to think that if Arthur Tyrell had been a little more responsible, if he hadn't fallen into a slumber that Christmas Eve in 1941 instead of finishing his mail round, if the bag hadn't been tucked in his attic and hidden until his death some fifty years later when one of his daughters unearthed it and called a national newspaper, the whole thing might have turned out differently.
- 3 You probably heard about it when it happened; it was in all the newspapers, and on the TV news. A TV channel even ran a special where they invited some of the recipients to talk about their letter from fifty years ago. There was a woman whose sweetheart had been in the RAF, and the man with the birthday card his evacuated son had sent, the little boy who was killed by a piece of falling shrapnel a week or so later. It was a very good programme, I thought: moving in parts, happy and sad stories mixed with old film of the war. I cried a couple of times, but that's not saying much: I cry rather a lot.
- 4 Mum didn't go on the show, though. The producers contacted her and asked whether there was anything special in her letter that she'd like to share with the nation, but she said no, that it was just an ordinary old clothing order from a shop that had long ago gone out of business. But that wasn't the truth. I know this because I was there when the letter arrived. I saw her reaction to that lost letter and it was anything but ordinary.
- 5 It was a morning in late February, winter still had us by the throat, the flowerbeds were icy, and I'd come over to help with the Sunday roast. I was peeling potatoes in the sink when the letter dropped through the slot in the door. The post doesn't usually come on Sundays so that should have tipped us off, but it didn't.
- 6 "Evie, can you get that?" Evie is me: I'm sorry, I should have said so earlier. My mother gestured towards the hallway.
- 7 I put down the potato, wiped my hands on a tea towel and went to fetch the post. There was only one letter lying on the welcome mat: an official Post Office envelope declaring the contents to be "redirected mail". I read the label to Mum as I brought it into the kitchen.
- 8 She'd finished preparing the roast by then and was drying her own hands. Frowning a little, from habit rather than what she expected to be in the letter, she took it from me and lifted her reading glasses from on top of the pineapple in the fruit bowl. She skimmed the post office notice and with a flicker of her eyebrows began to open the outer envelope.
- 9 I'd turned back to the potatoes by now, a task that was arguably more engaging than watching my mum open mail, so I didn't see her face as she fished the smaller envelope from inside, as she noticed the old stamp, as she turned it over and read the name written on the back.

- 10 I've imagined it many times since, though, the colour draining instantly from her cheeks, her fingers beginning to tremble so that it took minutes before she was able to slit the envelope open. What I don't have to imagine is the sound. The horrid, guttural gasp, followed quickly by a series of rasping sobs that swamped the air and made me slip with the peeler so that I cut my finger.
- 11 "Mum?" I went to her, draping my arm around her shoulders. But she didn't say anything. She couldn't, she told me later, not then. She stood rigidly as tears spilled down her cheeks and she clutched the strange little envelope, its paper so thin I could make out the corner of the folded letter inside, hard against her chest. Then she disappeared upstairs to her bedroom leaving instructions about the roast and the oven and the potatoes.
- 12 The kitchen settled in a bruised silence around her absence and I stayed very quiet, moved very slowly so as not to disturb it further. My mother is not a crier, but this moment—her upset and the shock of it—felt oddly familiar, as if we'd been here before. After fifteen minutes in which I peeled potatoes, turned over possibilities as to whom the letter might be from, and wondered how to proceed, I finally knocked on her door and asked whether she'd like a cup of tea. She'd composed herself by then and we sat opposite one another at the small table in the kitchen. As I pretended not to notice she'd been crying, she began to talk about the envelope's contents.
- 13 "A letter", she said, "from someone I used to know a long time ago. When I was just a girl, twelve, thirteen."

Adapted from "The Distant Hours" by Kate Morton

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Text is taken from “*The Distant Hours*” by Kate Morton, ISBN 9 78033 047 7581. Published by Pan Publishing. Permission is being sought from Pan Macmillan.

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0860/29/01

NATIONAL MONDAY, 29 APRIL
 QUALIFICATIONS 1.00 PM – 1.50 PM
 2013

ENGLISH
 STANDARD GRADE
 General Level
 Reading
 Questions

Fill in these boxes and read what is printed below.

Full name of centre

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Town

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Forename(s)

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Surname

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Date of birth

Day Month Year

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Scottish candidate number

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Number of seat

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**NB Before leaving the examination room you must give this booklet to the Invigilator.
 If you do not, you may lose all the marks for this paper.**



QUESTIONS

Marks

Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Look at Paragraph 1.

1. “A letter that had been lost a long time . . .” (Paragraph 1)

Where exactly had the letter been for half a century?

2 1 0

2. Why does the writer use a list after “that mailbag: . . .” in Paragraph 1?

2 1 0

3. “. . . thwarted messages . . .” (Paragraph 1)

What do you think “thwarted” means in this expression? Tick (✓) **one** box.

Unreadable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carefully hand-written	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindered and delayed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendly and chatty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2 0 0

Look at Paragraph 2.

4. “I’m being romantic . . .” (Paragraph 2)

Explain fully how Evie had become romantic.

2 1 0

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5. (a) What was Arthur Tyrell’s job?

2 ■ 0

(b) **Using your own words as far as possible**, explain what he did on Christmas Eve 1941.

2 1 0

6. “. . . one of his daughters unearthed it . . .” (Paragraph 2)

What does the word “unearthed” tell the reader about the bag?

2 1 0

Look at Paragraphs 3 and 4.

7. “You probably heard about it when it happened . . .” (Paragraph 3)

How does the writer continue this idea?

2 1 0

8. “A TV channel even ran a special . . .” (Paragraph 3)

Using your own words as far as possible, explain what the special was about.

2 1 0

9. “It was a very good programme . . .” (Paragraph 3)

Why did Evie think it was a very good programme?

2 1 0

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10. (a) “Mum didn’t go on the show, though.” (Paragraph 4)
 What reason did Evie’s mum give for not going on the show?

2 ■ 0

(b) Explain fully why Evie knew that her mum was not telling the truth.

2 1 0

Look at Paragraphs 5 to 7.

11. “. . . winter still had us by the throat . . .” (Paragraph 5)
 Identify the technique used here.

2 ■ 0

12. “It was a morning in late February, . . .” (Paragraph 5)
 Write down **one** thing that was **normal** and **one** thing that was **unusual** about that morning.

normal

unusual

2 1 0

13. Why are the words “redirected mail” in inverted commas? (Paragraph 7)

2 ■ 0

Look at Paragraphs 8 to 10.

14. “. . . from habit rather than what she expected . . .” (Paragraph 8)
Using your own words explain what Evie means by this.

2 1 0

15. What did Evie not see her mother doing in Paragraph 9?

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

2 1 0

16. "I've imagined it many times since . . ." (Paragraph 10)

Using your own words as far as possible describe **two** things Evie has imagined.

(i) _____

(ii) _____

2 1 0

17. "What I don't have to imagine is the sound." (Paragraph 10)

Write down **two** expressions which show that the sound was memorable for Evie.

(i) _____

(ii) _____

2 1 0

Look at Paragraph 11 to the end of the passage.

18. ". . . she didn't say anything." (Paragraph 11)

What did Evie's mum do in Paragraph 11 after she opened the envelope?

2 1 0

19. ". . . a bruised silence . . ." (Paragraph 12)

Explain fully what the writer means by this.

2 1 0

[Turn over

20. Explain the use of dashes in the expression “—her upset and the shock of it—” (Paragraph 12)

2 1 0

21. **In your own words** explain fully what Evie thought about for fifteen minutes after her mum left the kitchen. (Paragraph 12)

2 1 0

22. Give **one** reason why Paragraph 13 is an effective ending for the passage.

2 ■ 0

Think about the passage as a whole.

23. This passage is the opening of a novel. Write down **two** pieces of evidence which show that it is the opening of a novel.

(i)

(ii)

2 1 0

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

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p2

p3

p4

p5

p6

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