Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1)

Time 1 hour 45 minutes

Paper reference **1EN0/01**

English Language

PAPER 1: Fiction and Imaginative Writing
Section A: Reading Text Insert

Do not return this Reading Text Insert with the Question Paper.

Advice

- Read the text before answering the questions in Section A of the Question Paper.
- Good luck with your examination.

Turn over ▶

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Read the text below and answer Questions 1–4 on the Question Paper.

In this extract, Sir Michael Audley, a rich baronet, has just asked Lucy to marry him. He has fallen in love with her, despite the fact that she comes from a poorer background and is much younger than him. He wants her to marry him for love, not for his wealth and his place in society.*

***Lady Audley's Secret:* Mary Elizabeth Braddon**

She did not remove her gaze from the darkening countryside, but for some moments was quite silent. Then turning to him, with a sudden passion in her manner, that lighted up her face with a new and wonderful beauty which the baronet perceived even in the growing twilight, she fell on her knees at his feet.

"No, Lucy; no, no!" he cried, vehemently**, "not here, not here!"

"Yes, here, here," she said, the strange passion which agitated her making her voice sound shrill and piercing—not loud, but distinct; "here and nowhere else. How good you are—how noble and how generous! Love you! Why, there are women a hundred times my superiors in beauty and in goodness who might love you dearly; but you ask too much of me! Remember what my life has been; only remember that! From my very babyhood I have never seen anything but poverty. My father was a gentleman: clever, accomplished, handsome—but poor—and what a pitiful wretch poverty made of him! My mother—But do not let me speak of her. Poverty—poverty, trials, vexations***, humiliations, deprivations. You cannot tell; you, who are among those for whom life is so smooth and easy, you can never guess what is endured by such as we. Do not ask too much of me, then. I cannot be disinterested; I cannot be blind to the advantages of such a marriage. I cannot, I cannot!"

Beyond her agitation and her passionate vehemence, there is an undefined something in her manner which fills the baronet with a vague alarm. She is still on the ground at his feet, crouching rather than kneeling, her thin white dress clinging about her, her pale hair streaming over her shoulders, her great blue eyes glittering in the dusk, and her hands clutching at the black ribbon about her throat, as if it had been strangling her. "Don't ask too much of me," she kept repeating; "I have been selfish from my babyhood."

"Lucy—Lucy, speak plainly. Do you dislike me?"

"Dislike you? No—no!"

"But is there anyone else whom you love?"

She laughed aloud at his question. "I do not love anyone in the world," she answered.

He was glad of her reply; and yet that and the strange laugh jarred upon his feelings. He was silent for some moments, and then said, with a kind of effort:

"Well, Lucy, I will not ask too much of you. I dare say I am a romantic old fool; but if you do not dislike me, and if you do not love any one else, I see no reason why we should not make a very happy couple. Is it a bargain, Lucy?"

"Yes."

The baronet lifted her in his arms and kissed her once upon the forehead, then quietly bidding her good-night, he walked straight out of the house.

He walked straight out of the house, this foolish old man, because there was some strong emotion at work in his breast—neither joy nor triumph, but something almost akin to disappointment—some stifled and unsatisfied longing which lay heavy and dull at his heart, as if he had carried a corpse in his bosom. He carried the corpse of that hope which had died at the sound of Lucy's words. All the doubts and fears and timid aspirations were ended now. He must be contented, like other men of his age, to be married for his fortune and his position.

Lucy Graham went slowly up the stairs to her little room at the top of the house. She placed her dim candle on the chest of drawers, and seated herself on the edge of the white bed, still and white as the draperies hanging around her.

"No more dependence, no more drudgery, no more humiliations," she said; "every trace of the old life melted away—every clue to identity buried and forgotten—except these, except these."

She had never taken her left hand from the black ribbon at her throat. She drew it from her bosom, as she spoke, and looked at the object attached to it.

It was neither a locket, a miniature, nor a cross; it was a ring wrapped in an oblong piece of paper—the paper partly written, partly printed, yellow with age, and crumpled with much folding.

*baronet** – a title, like a lord, indicating he is rich and is a man with a high position in society
*vehemently*** – said with passion and intensity
*vexations**** – worries

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