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

Tuesday 7 November 2023

Morning (Time: 1 hour 45 minutes)

Paper reference **1EN0/01**

English Language

PAPER 1: Fiction and Imaginative Writing

Insert Booklet

Do not return this Insert with the question paper.

Advice

- Read the text before answering the questions in Section A of the question paper.

Turn over ▶

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

In this extract the narrator is travelling to the remote mining village of Pit End. As night approaches, he decides to take a short cut and to walk across the fields.

***Was it an Illusion? A Parson's Story*: Amelia B. Edwards**

It was a dull, raw afternoon of mid-November, growing duller and more raw as the day declined and the east wind blew sharper … 'How much further now, driver?' I asked, as we arrived at the foot of a longer and a stiffer hill than any we had yet passed over.

He turned a straw in his mouth, and grunted something about 'fewer than five mile by the road'.

And then I learned that by turning off and taking a certain footpath across the fields, this distance might be considerably shortened. I decided, therefore, to walk the rest of the way; and, setting off at a good pace, I soon left driver and cart behind. At the top of the hill I lost sight of them, and coming presently to a little road-side ruin, I found the footpath without difficulty.

It led me across a barren* slope divided by stone fences, with here and there a group of shattered sheds, a tall chimney, and a blackened cinder-mound, marking the site of a deserted mine. A light fog, meanwhile, was creeping up from the east, and the dusk was gathering fast.

Now, to lose one's way in such a place and at such an hour would be disagreeable enough, and the footpath – a trodden track already half obliterated – would be indistinguishable in the course of another ten minutes. Looking anxiously ahead, therefore, in the hope of seeing some sign of habitation**, I hastened on, scaling one stone stile after another, till I all at once found myself going around the edge of a line of fences. Following these, with bare boughs branching out overhead and dead leaves rustling underfoot, I came presently to a point where the path divided.

Which should I take?

There was no time to be lost in hesitation; so I chose the meadow, the further end of which was lost to sight in a fleecy bank of fog.

Up to this moment I had not met a living soul of whom to ask my way; it was, therefore, with no little sense of relief that I saw a man emerging from the fog and coming along the path. As we neared each other – I advancing rapidly; he slowly – I observed that he dragged the left foot, limping as he walked. It was, however, so dark and so misty, that not till we were within half a dozen yards of each other could I see that he wore a dark suit and a felt hat, and looked something like a church minister. As soon as we were within speaking distance, I addressed him.

'Can you tell me', I said, 'if I am right for Pit End, and how far I have to go?'

He came on, looking straight before him; taking no notice of my question; apparently not hearing it.

'I beg your pardon,' I said, raising my voice; 'but will this path take me to Pit End, and if so' … He had passed on without pausing; without looking at me; I could almost have believed, without seeing me!

I stopped, with the words on my lips; then turned to look after – perhaps, to follow – him.

But instead of following, I stood bewildered.

What had become of him?

And what lad was that going up the path by which I had just come – that tall lad, half-running, half-walking, with a fishing-rod over his shoulder? I could have taken my oath that I had neither met nor passed him. Where then had he come from? And where was the man to whom I had spoken not three seconds ago, and who, at his limping pace, could not have made more than a couple of yards in the time? My confusion was such that I stood quite still, looking after the lad with the fishing-rod till he disappeared in the gloom.

Was I dreaming?

* *barren* – bleak and lifeless

** *habitation* – a place where people live

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Source information:

Was it an Illusion? *A Parson's Story,* by Amelia B. Edwards, 1818, from https://americanliterature.com/author/amelia-b-edwards/short-story/was-it-an-illusion-a-parsons-story (Work is out of copyright.)