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THE PERSE

UPPER SCHOOL

CAMBRIDGE

Year 9 Entrance Exams

English

Specimen Paper 1

Time allowed: 1 hour and 15 minutes

Instructions to candidates (**please read this information before the examination starts**):

1. There are **two** questions on this paper.
2. Answer both of them.
3. For the first question, read the passage and answer the questions which follow it.
4. For the second question, write about **one** of the subjects.
5. The number beside the question shows you how many marks there are for each question.
6. You are **strongly** advised to spend time reading and thinking before beginning your answers.
7. Write in full sentences wherever possible.
8. Remember to leave enough time to answer both questions properly.

QUESTION ONE

Out there in the cold water, far from land, we waited every night for the coming of the fog, and it

came, and we oiled the brass machinery and lit the fog light up in the stone tower. Feeling like two birds in the grey sky, McDunn and I sent the light touching out, red, then white, then red again, to eye the lonely ships. And if they did not see our light, then there was always our Voice, the great deep cry of our Fog Horn shuddering through the rags of mist to startle the gulls away like decks of scattered cards and make the waves turn high and foam.

“It's a lonely life, but you're used to it now, aren't you?” asked McDunn.

“Yes,” I said. “You're a good talker, thank the Lord.”

“Well, it's your turn on land tomorrow,” he said, smiling, “to dance the ladies and drink gin.”

“What do you think, McDunn, when I leave you out here alone?”

“On the mysteries of the sea.” McDunn lit his pipe. It was a quarter past seven of a cold November evening, the heat on, the light switching its tail in two hundred directions, the Fog Horn bumbling in the high throat of the tower. There wasn't a town for a hundred miles down the coast, just a road which came lonely through dead country to the sea, with few cars on it, a stretch of two miles of cold water out to rock, and rare few ships.

“The mysteries of the sea,” said McDunn thoughtfully. “You know, the ocean's the biggest damned snowflake ever? It rolls and swells a thousand shapes and colours, no two alike. Strange. One night, years ago, I was here alone, when all of the fish of the sea surfaced out there. Something made them swim in and lie in the bay, sort of trembling and staring up at the tower going red, white, red, white across them so I could see their fanny eyes. I turned cold. They were like a big peacock's tail, moving out there until midnight. Then, without so much as a sound, they slipped away, the million of them was gone. I kind of think maybe, in some sort of way, they came all those miles to worship. Strange. But think how the tower must look to them, standing seventy feet above the water, the God-light flashing out from it, and the tower declaring itself with a monster voice. They never came back, those fish, but don't you think for a while they thought they were in the Presence?”

- a.** Where, specifically, is the story set and what is the occupation of the two men described in the extract? [2]
- b.** What are the tasks required of the two men described in the story? [3]
- c.** Why does the narrator have good reason to look forward to the next day? [3]
- d.** Explain the different reasons why the location in which the story is set is quite so isolated. [4]
- e.** Explain, in your own words, what McDunn means when he says that “the ocean's the biggest damned snowflake ever”. [3]
- f.** What do you think McDunn is suggesting about the fish and their attitude to “the tower” when he tells the story at the end of the extract? [5]
- g.** Imagine you are doing the same job as the two men described in the extract. Write about what you might be thinking and feeling when you are working alone one night and something unusual happens. [10]

QUESTION TWO

Write on one of the following topics:

1. A Visitor from Overseas.
2. The Storm.
3. A New Destination.
4. The Travellers.
5. An Act of Kindness.
6. A Performance at the Theatre.

[30]

END OF TEST