

150/05

ENGLISH
HIGHER TIER
PAPER 1

A.M. MONDAY, 6 November 2006

(2 Hours)

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

A 12 page answer book.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Answer **all** questions in Section A and **two** questions in Section B.

Write your answers in the separate answer book provided.

You are advised to spend your time as follows:

Section A – about 55 minutes

Section B

Q. B1 – about 25 minutes

Q. B2 – about 40 minutes

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Section A (Reading): 40 marks.

Section B (Writing): 40 marks.

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question or part-question.

SECTION A: 40 marks

Read carefully the story below. Then answer all the questions which follow it.

The Last Night of the World

“What would you do if you knew that this was the last night of the world?” he said.

“What would I do? You mean seriously?” his wife replied.

“Yes, seriously.”

“I don’t know. I hadn’t thought.”

5 He poured some coffee. In the background the two girls were playing on the parlour rug in the light of the green hurricane lamps. There was an aroma of the brewed coffee in the evening air.

“Well, better start thinking about it,” he said.

“You don’t mean it!”

He nodded.

10 “A war?”

He shook his head.

“Not the hydrogen or atom bomb?”

“No.”

“Or germ warfare?”

15 “None of those at all,” he said, stirring his coffee slowly. “But just, let’s say, the closing of a book.”

“I don’t think I understand.”

“No, nor do I, really. It’s just a feeling. Sometimes it frightens me, sometimes I’m not frightened at all but at peace.” He glanced in at the girls and their yellow hair shining in the lamplight. “I didn’t say anything to you. It first happened about four nights ago.”

20 “What?”

“What?”

“A dream I had. I dreamed that it was all going to be over, and a voice said it was. Not any kind of voice I can remember, but a voice anyway, and it said things would stop here on Earth. I didn’t think too much about it the next day, but then I went to the office and caught Stan Willis looking out of the window in the middle of the afternoon, and I said, ‘A penny for your thoughts, Stan,’ and he said, ‘I had a dream last night,’ and before he even told me the dream, I knew what it was. I could have told him, but he told me and I listened to him.”

25

“It was the same dream?”

“The same. I told Stan I had dreamed it too. He didn’t seem surprised. He relaxed in fact. Then we started walking through the office, for the hell of it. It wasn’t planned. We didn’t say, ‘Let’s walk around.’ We just walked on our own, and everywhere we saw people looking at their desks or their hands or out of windows. I talked to a few. So did Stan.”

30

“And they had all dreamed?”

“All of them. The same dream, with no difference.”

35 “Do you believe in it?”

“Yes. I’ve never been more certain.”

“And when will it stop? The world, I mean.”

“Some time during the night for us, and then as the night goes on around the world, that’ll go too. It’ll take twenty-four hours for it all to go.”

40 They sat for a while not touching their coffee. Then they lifted it slowly and drank, looking at each other.

“Do we deserve this?” she said.

“It’s not a matter of deserving. It’s just that things didn’t work out. I notice you didn’t even argue about this. Why not?”

45 “I guess I’ve a reason,” she said.

“The same one everyone at the office had?”

She nodded slowly. "I didn't want to say anything. It happened last night. And the women on the block talked about it, among themselves, today. They dreamed. I thought it was only a coincidence." She picked up the evening paper. "There's nothing in the paper about it."

50 "Everyone knows, so there's no need."

He sat back in his chair, watching her. "Are you afraid?"

"No. I always thought I would be, but I'm not," she replied.

"Where's that spirit called self-preservation they talk so much about?"

55 "I don't know. You don't get too excited when you feel things are logical. This is logical. Nothing else but this could have happened from the way we've lived."

"We haven't been too bad, have we?" he asked.

"No, nor enormously good. I suppose that's the trouble - we haven't been very much of anything except us, while a big part of the world was busy being lots of quite awful things."

The girls were laughing in the parlour.

60 "I always thought people would be screaming in the streets at a time like this," he said.

"I guess not. You don't scream about the real thing."

"Do you know, I won't miss anything but you and the girls. I never liked cities or my work or anything except you three. I won't miss a thing except perhaps the change in the weather, and a glass of iced water when it's hot, and I might miss sleeping. How can we sit here and talk this way?"

65 "Because there's nothing else to do."

"That's it, of course. If there were, we'd be doing it. I suppose this is the first time in the history of the world that everyone has known just what they were going to do during the night."

"I wonder what everyone else will do now this evening, for the next few hours."

70 "Go to a show, listen to the radio, watch television, play cards, put the children to bed, go to bed themselves, like always," he said.

"In a way that's something to be proud of - like always," he said.

They sat a moment and then he poured himself another coffee. "Why do you suppose it's tonight? Why not some other night in the last century, or five centuries ago, or ten?"

75 "Maybe it's because this date means more than any other date ever meant; because it's the year when things are as they are all over the world and that's why it's the end."

"There are bombers on their schedules both ways across the ocean tonight that'll never see land," he said.

"That's part of the reason why."

80 "Well," he said, getting up, "what shall it be? Wash the dishes?"

They washed the dishes and stacked them away with special neatness. At eight-thirty the girls were put to bed and kissed goodnight and the little light by their beds turned on and the door left open just a trifle.

85 "I wonder," said the husband, coming from the bedroom and glancing back, standing there with his pipe for a moment.

"What?"

"I wonder if the children know."

"No, of course not."

90 They sat and read the papers and talked and listened to some music on the radio and then sat together by the fireplace watching the charcoal embers as the clock struck ten-thirty and eleven and eleven-thirty. They thought of all the other people in the world who had spent their evening, each in his own special way.

"Well," he said at last.

He kissed his wife for a long time.

95 "We've been good for each other, anyway."

“Do you want to cry?” he asked.

“I don’t think so.”

They moved through the house and turned out the lights and went into the bedroom and stood in the cool darkness undressing and pushing back the covers.

100 “I’m tired.”

“We’re *all* tired.”

They got into bed and lay back.

“Just a moment,” she said.

105 He heard her get out of bed and go into the kitchen. A moment later she returned. “I left the water running in the sink,” she said.

Something about this was so very funny that he had to laugh.

She laughed with him, knowing what it was that she had done that was funny.

They stopped laughing at last and lay in their cool bed, their hands clasped, their heads together.

“Good night,” he said, after a moment.

110 “Good night,” she said.

Ray Bradbury

A1. Look at lines 1-41.

How does the wife react to her husband’s suggestion that the world is about to end?

You should refer to what she says, what she does, what she thinks and what she feels. [10]

A2. Look at lines 42-79.

What possible explanations do the husband and wife consider for the end of the world and for the way they are reacting to it? [10]

A3. Look at lines 80-110.

In these lines the husband and wife are convinced that the world is about to end.

Explain what you find surprising about the way they behave. [10]

A4. Now think about the whole story.

How does the writer try to make this story interesting?

You should consider:

- the title;
- the way the story begins and develops;
- the way the writer presents the characters;
- the way the story ends.

[10]

SECTION B: 40 marks

Answer Question B1 and Question B2.

In this section you will be assessed for your writing skills, including the presentation of your work.

Take special care with handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

A guide to the amount you should write is given for each question.

- B1.** Imagine you are in a queue in a post office or a shop. Describe what you see and hear as you wait to be served. [20]

You should write about a page in your answer book.

Remember that this is a test of your ability to write descriptively.

- B2.** Choose **one** of the following titles for your writing. [20]

The quality of your writing is more important than its length. You should write about two pages in your answer book.

Either, (a) The Rebel.

Or, (b) Write about a time when you felt you were treated unfairly.

Or, (c) Continue the following:

I had been looking forward to a relaxing evening ...

Or, (d) Coming Home.

Or, (e) Write about an occasion when you had a narrow escape.