



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS  
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

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**FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH**

**0522/01**

Paper 1 Reading Passage (Core)

**October/November 2013**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

**1 hour 45 minutes**

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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passage for use with all questions on the Question Paper.

You may annotate this Insert and use the blank spaces for planning. This Insert is **not** assessed by the Examiner.

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This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.



Read the following passage carefully and then answer all the questions on the Question Paper.

*The narrator of this story is called Christopher Banks. This passage is about an incident from Christopher's childhood in China in the 1930s, which happened when he was nine years old.*

### Things Go Wrong

My father's study was on the uppermost floor of our house with a commanding view over the rear grounds. I was not usually permitted to enter the study, and in general was discouraged from playing anywhere near it. There was, however, a narrow corridor leading from the landing to the study door, along which a row of pictures hung in heavy gilt frames. These were each precise, draughtsman-like paintings of Shanghai harbour seen from the viewpoint of someone standing on the shore at Pootung; that is to say, all the numerous ships in the harbour were shown with the great buildings in the background. The pictures probably dated back at least to the 1880s and my guess is that like many of the ornaments and pictures in the house, they belonged to my father's employers. Now I do not actually remember this myself, but my mother often told me how, when I was very young, she and I would stand in front of these pictures and entertain ourselves giving amusing names to the various vessels in the water. According to my mother, I would quickly be in fits of laughter and would sometimes refuse to abandon the game until we had named every visible vessel. If this were so – if we were really in the habit of laughing boisterously throughout this game of ours – then almost certainly we would not have come up to amuse ourselves in this way while my father was working in his study. But when I thought further about my father's words earlier that day, I began to remember one occasion when my mother and I had indeed been standing together up on that attic floor, for all I know playing this game of ours, when she suddenly stopped and became very still.

My first thought was that I was about to be scolded, perhaps for something I had just said which had displeased her. It was not even unheard of for my mother to switch moods abruptly in the midst of a good-natured exchange and scold me for some suddenly remembered misdemeanour committed earlier in the day. But as I fell silent in readiness for just such an explosion, I realised she was listening to something. Then the next instant she had turned and pushed open with great suddenness the door to my father's study.

I caught a glimpse beyond my mother into the inside of the room. My abiding image is of my father slumped forward over his bureau, his face covered in perspiration and contorted with frustration. It is possible he was sobbing and it was this sound that had caught my mother's attention. In front of him, all over his desk, there were papers, ledgers, notebooks. I noticed – I believe I followed my mother's gaze – more papers and notebooks on the floor, as though he had hurled them there in a temper fit. He was looking up at us, startled, and then the next moment he said in a voice that rather shocked me: 'We can't do it! We'll never get back! We can't do it! You're asking too much, Diana. It's too much!'

My mother said something to him under her breath, no doubt some reprimand to make him pull himself together. My father did collect himself a little at this point and, glancing past my mother, looked at me for the first time. But almost instantly his face creased again with despair and, turning to my mother, he said again, shaking his head helplessly: 'We can't do it, Diana. It'll be the ruin of us. I've looked at everything. We'll never get back to England. We can't raise enough money. Without the company, we're simply stranded.'

Then he seemed to lose control again, and as my mother began to say something else – something in her quiet, angry voice – my father began to shout, not so much at her as at the walls of his study: ‘I won’t do it, Diana! Who do you take me for? It’s beyond me, you hear? Beyond me! I can’t do it!’ 45

Possibly at this point my mother closed the door on him and led me away. I have no further memory of the episode. And of course, I cannot be sure of the exact sentiments, let alone the exact words, my father was uttering that day. But this is how, with some hindsight, I have come to shape that memory. 50

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