

## YEAR 3 ENGLISH PLACEMENT EXAM SPECIMEN

### SECTION A

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions which follow. Give evidence.

### 20 QUESTIONS FOR GLORIA: THE NEW BOY

Mr Brunt clapped his hands, as he always does ahead of class announcements. As usual, he followed the clap with, "Right then, 10GB, listen up."

He barely got started on his announcements that morning before the door opened and a boy let himself into the room. Tall and thin, with very black, very fine, very straight hair down to his shoulders. Dusky, in a Mediterranean-meets-the-Indian subcontinent kind of way. But for his height, his boy-sized nose and the scruffy stubble on his chin and upper lip, he might have passed for a girl. It wasn't just the long hair; there was something feminine in his manner and the way he moved. A kind of grace. His school uniform was way too small for him, exposing two stripes of hairy shin and an air of knobby wrists encircled in numerous multi-coloured bangles.

He hadn't knocked before coming in. Mr Brunt wouldn't like that. He was tall enough to be Year 12 or 13, but he wouldn't have been in uniform if that was the case. I didn't recognise him, anyway, and I'm sure I'd have remembered him if I'd seen him around school. The boy showed no trace of self-consciousness. Head held high, he surveyed the room with an easy confidence.

"Shall we try that again, young man?" Mr Brunt said.

I thought he was going to ignore the question. At least, with a half-smile, he turned to the teacher. "Try what again, sir?"

Posh-spoken, polite. If he had any idea of what he'd done wrong, he didn't show it.

Mr Brunt was a few centimetres shorter and seemed displeased by having to look up at him, as if the boy was to blame for it. The teacher pointed. "The door."

The new arrival looked genuinely perplexed. "What about it?"

"I'd like you to knock on it before entering my class room."

"But I'm already in your class room."

"Then could you please go back out, knock on the door, and come in when I say so."

"I could very easily do all of those things, but – if you don't mind me saying so, sir – it would be a poor use of my time. And yours, for that matter."

An odd sound escaped Mr Brunt's mouth. The rest of us were utterly silent and still.

The boy continued. "You've already established that you prefer people to knock before entering – fine, point made, I'll know for next time – so what you're doing now is attempting to assert your authority over me through a process of ridicule."

He shrugged. "So, no."

Just like that: No.

I didn't dare breathe or so much as glance at Tierney, sure if I caught her eye I'd burst out laughing. In any case, I couldn't tear my gaze from the two figures at the front, face-to-face like boxers at the start of a fight. Or lovers in a TV drama. That was it: there was no aggression in the boy's tone or body language; he was relaxed, almost seductive.

Unlike some teachers, Mr Brunt doesn't tend to lose his temper with us, individually or as a group; I don't think I've heard him shout. Not properly. But we know where he draws the line and there's no doubt when we've crossed it. That morning, though, he seemed bewildered. A confused old man who'd gone walkabout from a care home and somehow found himself in a room full of teenagers.

“you're, you ..... what did you ..... this is totally ..... Young man, I want you to....”

He must have started the sentence ten times. Then he gave up trying to get the words out and simply stood there – shoulders sagging, head tilted to look up into the boy's face – as if awaiting further instructions. It was shocking to see him like that.

The boy rescued him.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Describe the boy's appearance. 15 marks

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2. Trace Mr Brunt's feelings. Give evidence to support your answer. 10 marks

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