BENENDEN

Lower School Scholarship Exam 2015

ENGLISH

11+

1 Hour

Name:	……..……..……
School:	……..……..…..……
Date:	……..……..……

Instructions to Candidates:

- Answer both questions, spending 30 minutes on each.
- Total marks for this exam = 100

Spend 10 minutes reading this passage carefully and then answer the questions below. The extract is from *Far from the Madding Crowd* by Thomas Hardy.

Casually glancing over the hedge, Gabriel saw coming down the incline before him an ornamental spring wagon, painted yellow and gaily marked, drawn by two horses, a wagoner walking alongside bearing a whip perpendicularly. The wagon was laden with house hold goods and window plants and on the apex of the whole sat a woman, young and attractive. Gabriel had not beheld the sight for more than half a minute, when the vehicle was brought to a standstill just beneath his eyes.

‘The tailboard of the wagon is gone, Miss,’ said the wagoner.

‘Then I heard it fall,’ said the girl, in a soft, though not particularly low voice. ‘I heard a noise I could not account for when we were coming up the hill.’

‘I’ll run back.’

‘Do,’ she answered.

The sensible horses stood perfectly still, and the wagoner’s steps sank fainter and fainter in the distance.

The girl on the summit of the load sat motionless, surrounded by table and chairs with their legs upwards, backed by an oak settle, and ornamented in front by pots of geraniums, myrtles and cactuses, together with a caged canary – all probably from the windows of the house just vacated. There was also a cat in a willow basket, from the partly-opened lid of which she gazed with half-closed eyes, and affectionately surveyed the small birds around.

The handsome girl waited for some time idly in her place, and the only sound heard in the stillness was the hopping of the canary up and down the perches of its prison. Then she looked attentively downwards. It was not at the bird, nor at the cat; it was at an oblong package tied in paper, and lying between them. She turned her head to learn if the wagoner were coming. He was not yet in sight; and her eyes crept back to the package, her thoughts seeming to run upon what was inside it. At length she drew the article into her lap, and untied the paper covering; a small swing looking-glass was disclosed, in which she proceeded to survey herself attentively. She parted her lips and smiled.

It was a fine morning, and the sun lighted up to a scarlet glow the crimson jacket she wore, and painted a soft lustre upon her bright face and dark hair. The myrtles, geraniums, and cactuses packed around her were fresh and green, and at such a leafless season they invested the whole concern of horses, wagon, furniture, and girl with a peculiar vernal charm. What possessed her to indulge in such a performance in the sight of the sparrows, blackbirds, and unperceived farmer who were alone its spectators – whether the smile began as a factitious one, to test her capacity in that art – nobody knows; it ended certainly in a real smile. She blushed at herself, and seeing her reflection blush, blushed the more.

There was no necessity whatever for her looking in the glass. She did not adjust her hat, or pat her hair, or press a dimple into shape, or do one thing to signify that any such intention had been her motive in taking up the glass. She simply observed herself as a fair product of Nature in the feminine kind, her thoughts seeming to glide into far-off though likely dramas in which men would play a part – vistas of probable triumphs – the smiles being of a phase suggesting that hearts were imagined as lost and won. Still, this was but conjecture, and the whole series of actions was so idly put forth as to make it rash to assert that intention had any part in them at all.

The wagoner's steps were heard returning. She put the glass in the paper, and the whole again into its place.

- A wagon is a horse-drawn cart, driven by a wagoner

Question 1

Looking closely at Thomas Hardy's description of the girl, what are your first impressions of her?

You may write about anything that is of interest to you, so long as you answer the question, but you would be wise to consider:

- Her behaviour.
- Her appearance.
- Her situation.
- The probable attitude of the farmer spying on her.
- The writer's choice of vocabulary and imagery (metaphors and similes).

(50 marks)

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Question 2

Continue the story. You can take the story in any direction you choose, but pick your words with care, use full sentences, and paragraph correctly.

(50 marks)

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END OF EXAM