

2e ENTRANCE TEST

Part 1: Reading (spend about 30 minutes on Part 1)

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The Tiredness of Rosabel - by Katherine Mansfield

This extract is from the beginning of a short story called The Tiredness of Rosabel, by Katherine Mansfield, who was a writer from New Zealand who lived in Avon, right next to Fontainebleau. The story is set in London the early 1900s and Rosabel, a lower class girl who works in a hat shop, is on her way home.

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At the corner of Oxford Circus Rosabel bought a bunch of violets, and that was practically the reason why she had so little tea—for a scone and a boiled egg and a cup of cocoa at Lyons are not ample sufficiency after a hard day's work in a millinery establishment. As she swung on to the step of the Atlas 'bus, grabbed her skirt with one hand and clung to the railing with the other, Rosabel thought she would have sacrificed her soul for a good dinner—roast duck and green peas, chestnut stuffing, pudding with brandy sauce—something hot and strong and filling.

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Rosabel looked out of the windows; the street was blurred and misty, but light striking on the panes turned their dullness to opal and silver, and the jewellers' shops seen through this, were fairy palaces. Her feet were horribly wet, and she knew the bottom of her skirt and petticoat would be coated with black, greasy mud. There was a sickening smell of warm humanity—it seemed to be oozing out of everybody in the 'bus—and everybody had the same expression, sitting so still, staring in front of them. Rosabel stirred suddenly and unfastened the two top buttons of her coat ... she felt almost stifled. Through her half-closed eyes the whole row of people on the opposite seat seemed to resolve into one fatuous, staring face.

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She began to think of all that had happened during the day. Would she ever forget that awful woman in the grey mackintosh who had wanted a trimmed motor-cap—"something purple with something rosy each side"—or the girl who had tried on every hat in the shop and then said she would "call in to-morrow and decide definitely." Rosabel could not help smiling; the excuse was worn so thin.

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But there had been one other—a girl with beautiful red hair and a white skin and eyes the colour of that green ribbon shot with gold they had got from Paris last week. Rosabel had seen her electric brougham at the door; a man had come in with her, quite a young man, and so well dressed.

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"What is it exactly that I want, Harry?" she had said, as Rosabel took the pins out of her hat, untied her veil, and gave her a hand-mirror.

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"You must have a black hat," he had answered, "a black hat with a feather that goes right round it and then round your neck and ties in a bow under your chin, and the ends tuck into your belt—a decent-sized feather."

The girl glanced at Rosabel laughingly. "Have you any hats like that?"

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They had been very hard to please; Harry would demand the impossible, and Rosabel was almost in despair. Then she remembered the big, untouched box upstairs.

50 “Oh, one moment, Madam,” she had said. “I think perhaps I can show you something that will please you better.” She had run up, breathlessly, cut the cords, scattered the tissue paper, and yes, there was the very hat—rather large, soft, with a great, curled feather, and a black velvet rose, nothing else. They had been charmed. The girl had put it on and then handed it to Rosabel.

“Let me see how it looks on you,” she said.

55 Rosabel turned to the mirror and placed it on her brown hair, then faced them.

“Oh, Harry, isn't it adorable,” the girl cried, “I must have that!” She smiled again at Rosabel. “It suits you, beautifully.”

60 A sudden, ridiculous feeling of anger had seized Rosabel. She longed to throw the lovely, perishable thing in the girl's face, and bent over the hat, flushing.

“It's exquisitely finished off inside, Madam,” she said. The girl swept out to her carriage, and left Harry to pay and bring the box with him.

65 “I shall go straight home and put it on before I come out to lunch with you,” Rosabel heard her say.

Questions

Question 1

Read again the first paragraph (starting, “At the corner of Oxford Circus...”) of the extract.

List four things about Rosabel from this part of the source. (4 marks)

Question 2

Read the following sentence **from the second paragraph** again:

Rosabel looked out of the windows; the street was blurred and misty, but light striking on the panes turned their dullness to opal and silver, and the jewellers' shops seen through this, were fairy palaces.

What impression of the area does the reader get of the setting from the underlined phrases here?

blurred and misty

turned their dullness to opal and silver

the jewellers' shops seen through this were fairy palaces

Question 3

Read the rest of the **second paragraph** again:

Her feet were horribly wet, and she knew the bottom of her skirt and petticoat would be coated with black, greasy mud. There was a sickening smell of warm humanity—it seemed to be oozing out of everybody in the 'bus—and everybody had the same expression, sitting so still, staring in front of them. Rosabel stirred suddenly and unfastened the two top buttons of her coat ... she felt almost stifled. Through her half-closed eyes the whole row of people on the opposite seat seemed to resolve into one fatuous, staring face.

What impression does the reader get of the mood of Rosabel from these sentences? Refer to the phrases from the text in your answer. (4 marks)

Question 4

You now need to think about the second part of the extract, from “But there had been one other – a girl with beautiful red hair...” to the end.

A student said, ‘This part of the story, set in the hat shop, show that the red-haired girl has many advantages in life, and I think Rosabel is right to be angry.’

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of the red-haired girl
- evaluate how the writer conveys Rosabel’s reactions to the red-haired girl
- support your response with references to the text

(6 marks)

Part 2. Writing (spend about 30 minutes on Part 2)

You are going to enter a creative writing competition.

- Your entry will be judged on your ability to use language expressively (imagery, evocative details etc.) and accuracy.

Complete only one task. Use the lined paper. You are not expected to go beyond the number of lines provided.

Either: Write a description in which you convey the mood suggested by this picture:



Or: Write the opening part of a story about a place (any place, not just this picture) that is severely affected by the weather. **You are not expected to finish the story.**

(20 marks – 12 marks for content and organisation, 8 marks for technical accuracy)
