

Read **Text C**, and then answer **Questions 2(a)–(d)** and **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text C: The Gift

This text is taken from a longer narrative. At this point in the story, it is the night of Natalia's sixteenth birthday. Her grandfather, a doctor, has arrived back late at night from visiting patients. He has woken Natalia and asked her to follow him quietly through the streets of their city.

We were nearing the end of our side street and I assumed the silence of our walk would be shattered by the bustle along the tramway. But when we got there, nothing, not even a single passing car. Every window was dark. The hazy moon seemed to gather the silence up around it like a net. Not a sound: no sirens, no rats in the bins that lined the street. My grandfather stopped, looked up and down the street, then turned left. 5

'It's not far now,' he said.

I caught up with him long enough to see that he was smiling. 'Not far to where?' I said, out of breath, angry. I drew myself up and stopped. 'I'm not going any further until you tell me.'

He turned to look at me, indignant. 'Lower your voice you fool,' he hissed. Suddenly his arms went over his head in a wide arc. 'Can't you feel it? No one in the world awake but us.' And off he went again. 10

We passed empty windows of shops that had gone out of business; lightless buildings; a beggar sleeping so soundly that I would have thought him dead if I hadn't realised that the moment had closed around us, making everything still.

Suddenly grandfather stopped ahead of me and stood, pointing into the distance, his hand shaking with excitement. 15

'There,' he said. 'Look!'

I peered out into the street. On the other side, there was a street lamp with a dying bulb. I was opening my mouth to say 'What?' and then I saw it. Half a block from us, an enormous shadow was moving along the street. 20

At first I thought it was a tram, but its shape was too organic, too lumpy, and it was going far too slowly for that, making almost no noise. It was swaying, swaying up the street with an even momentum in a rolling motion that was drawing it away from us like a tide, and every time it rocked forward, something about it made a soft dragging sound on the rails. As we watched, the thing sucked in air and then let out a deep groan. 25

'That's an elephant!' I said.

My grandfather said nothing. His glasses had fogged up during the walk, but he wasn't taking them off to wipe them. He took my hand; we watched the animal.

Its ears were folded back against the domed, bouldered head with big-lidded eyes; the arched roll of the spine fell away into the hips; dry folds of skin shook around the shoulders and knees as it shifted its weight. It seemed to take up the whole street. It dragged its curled trunk like a fist along the ground. 30

Several metres in front of it, holding a bag of something that must have been enormously tempting, a short young man was walking slowly backward, drawing it forward with whispers.

'I saw them at the train station as I was coming home,' my grandfather said. 35

The elephant passed: slow, graceful, enchanted by the food in the young man's hand.

'No one will ever believe this,' I said.

My grandfather looked at me like he'd never seen me before. 'You must be joking,' he said.

'Look around. Think for a moment – do you think anybody would understand? Do you think it will matter to them?'

40

Later that year, we would read about how some soldiers had found an elephant near death at the site of an abandoned circus; about how, despite everything, despite closure and bankruptcy, the zoo director had said, 'Bring him in – eventually the kids will see him.' The newspapers ran a picture of him, standing stark-ribbed in his new pen at the zoo, an advert of better times to come, hope for the future and the end of the war.

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Read **Text C**, *The Gift*, in the insert and then answer **Questions 2(a)–(d)** on this question paper.

Question 2

(a) **Identify a word or phrase from the text** which suggests the same idea as the words underlined:

(i) Natalia was expecting the quietness of their walk to be broken suddenly.

..... [1]

(ii) Natalia slowed herself down and made herself as tall as possible before refusing to go any further.

..... [1]

(iii) Her grandfather spoke to her in a low, angry voice.

..... [1]

(iv) The homeless person was fast asleep.

..... [1]

(b) **Using your own words**, explain what the writer means by each of the words underlined:

I peered out into the street. On the other side, there was a street lamp with a dying bulb. I was opening my mouth to say 'What?' and then I saw it. Half a block from us, an enormous shadow was moving along the street.

(i) peered [1]

(ii) dying [1]

(iii) enormous [1]