



Name:
Date:

Duration: 30 min
Marks Obtained: /25

SECTION ONE - READING COMPREHENSION

(15 marks)

Read the given passage and answer all the questions that follows it.

The Hitchhiker

As Andrea turned off the motorway onto the road to Brockbourne, the small village in which she lived, it was four o'clock in the afternoon, but already the sun was falling behind the horizon. At this time in December, it would be completely dark by five o'clock. Andrea shivered. The interior of the car was not cold, but the trees bending in the harsh wind and the patches of the last day's snow still heaped in the fields made her feel chilly inside.

It was another ten miles to the cottage where she lived with her husband Michael, and the dim light and **frigid** wintry weather made her feel a little lonely. She would have liked to listen to the radio, but it had been **burgled** from her car when it was parked outside her office in London, two weeks ago. She had not gotten an opportunity to replace it yet. She was a busy Londoner with a long list of pending chores like most people.

She was just driving out of the little village of Mickley when she spotted an elderly lady, standing by the road, with a **crude** hand-written sign saying "Brockbourne" in her hand. Andrea was surprised. She had never seen an old lady hitchhiking before. However, the weather and the coming darkness made her feel sorry for the lady, waiting hopefully on a country road like this with **scant** traffic. What were the odds that someone would give her a ride?

Under normal circumstances, Andrea would never pick up a hitchhiker, a complete stranger, when she was alone, thinking it was too dangerous. Michael had given her strict orders never to do so.

'But what was the harm in doing a favor for a little old lady like this?' she wondered. She pulled up her red sedan a little way down the road, and the woman, holding a big shopping bag, hobbled over to climb through the front door, which Andrea held open for her.

When the stranger got in, Andrea noticed that she was not, in fact, so little. Broad and muscular, the elderly lady had some difficulty climbing in through the car door, with her enormous bag. Once seated, she more than filled the front seat next to Andrea. **Donning** a long, shabby old dress she had a yellow hat pulled down low over her eyes. Panting and exhaling noisily from effort, she pushed her canvas shopping bag down onto the floor under her feet, and said in a voice which was almost a whisper, "Thank you dearie -- I'm just going to Brockbourne." "Do you live there?" asked Andrea, thinking that she had never seen the old lady in the village in the four years she had lived there herself.

"No, dearie," answered the passenger, in her soft voice, "I'm just going to visit a friend. He was supposed to meet me back there at Mickley, but his car won't start, so I decided to hitchhike; there isn't a bus until seven, and I didn't want to wait. I knew some kind soul would give me a lift."

Something in the way the old lady spoke, and the way she never turned her head, but stared continuously into the darkness ahead from under her old yellow hat, made Andrea feel uneasy. She didn't know why, but she felt instinctively that there was something wrong, something odd, something .... dangerous and **sinister**. Something was surely absurd, Andrea thought. Careful not to turn her head, Andrea looked sideways at her passenger. She studied the hat, the dirty collar of the dress, the shapeless body, the arms with their thick black hair .... Thick black hair? Hairy arms? Andrea's blood froze. She hit a realization. This wasn't a woman. It was a man!

At first, Andrea didn't know what to do. Then suddenly, an idea came into her racing, terrified brain. Swinging the wheel suddenly, she threw the car into a skid, and brought it to a halt.

"My God!" she shouted, "A child! Did you see the child? I think I hit her!"

The "old lady" was clearly shaken by the sudden skid. "I didn't see anything dearie," she said. "I don't think you hit anything."

Andrea insisted: "I'm sure it was a child!"

"Could you just get out and have a look? Just see if there's anything on the road?" She held her breath. Would her plan work? Andrea hoped.

As soon as the strange passenger opened the car door and stepped out of the vehicle, Andrea gunned the engine and accelerated away madly. The car door swung shut as she rounded a bend, and soon she had put a good three miles between herself and the strange hitchhiker.

It was only then that she thought about the bag lying on the floor in front of her. Perhaps the bag would provide some information about the real identity of the old woman -who was really not an old woman.

Pulling into the side of the road, Andrea lifted the heavy bag onto her lap and opened it curiously. It contained only one item -- a small hand axe, with a razor-sharp blade. The axe, and the inside of the bag, were covered with the dark red stains of dried blood.

Andrea began to scream ...

1. How was Andrea feeling as she drove home? ( /1)

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2. Why didn't Andrea listen to the radio while driving? ( /1)

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3. Why did Andrea decide to give the stranger a lift even though she knew it was dangerous? ( /1)

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4. What did Andrea notice about the lady when she got inside the car? ( /1)

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5. What made Andrea feel uneasy and afraid? Write at least two reasons. ( /1)

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6. In your own words, describe how Andrea got rid of the hitchhiker. ( /2)

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7. *Andrea's blood froze.* What does this phrase mean? ( /1)

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8. Why did Andrea look inside the old lady's bag? ( /1)

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9. Who do you think the hitchhiker really was? ( /1)

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10. Write any two important lessons you learnt after reading this story?

( /2)

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11. Match the words to their correct meanings.

( /3)

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| 1. burgled  | _____ | little      |
| 2. scant    | _____ | wearing     |
| 3. donning  | _____ | robbed      |
| 4. crude    | _____ | frozen      |
| 5. frigid   | _____ | threatening |
| 6. sinister | _____ | rough       |

SAMPLE PAPER

