

The Last Lamplighter

Category: Fiction - Historical Fantasy | Time Allowed: 45 Minutes | Total Marks: 35

Candidate Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____

READING EXTRACT - Read carefully before answering Section A questions

- 1 Of all the lamplighters left in the city of Oakhaven, Toby was the youngest by nearly forty years. Every evening at twilight he cycled his regular circuit through the cobbled lanes of the old quarter, reaching up with his long brass pole to ignite the gas lamps that the municipal council had never gotten around to replacing with electric bulbs. Most citizens considered his occupation a quaint
5 relic of the past, and Toby's friends teased him for it without mercy.

He didn't mind. There was something about the soft hiss of the gas catching flame, the small orange bloom pushing back the shadows one street at a time, that felt indispensable in a way his peers could not fathom. Tonight, however, the rhythm broke. The seventh lamp on Candle Row refused to kindle no matter how many times he struck the brass flint. Beneath its ornate iron post,
10 etched faintly into the curbstone, was a sequence of symbols he had never encountered before.

Toby crouched low, his lighting rod balanced against his shoulder. The etched markings seemed almost to hum in the faint amber glow from the neighbouring lane, as though the chiselled grooves were vibrating with dormant energy. Looking down the alleyway, he noticed something chilling: every other lamp on the row was shining brightly, but this single post stood wrapped in total,
15 unnatural darkness.

11+ EXAMINER GUIDANCE & STUDY TIPS FOR THIS EXTRACT

1. Active Reading: Read the extract twice. Underline key verbs, adjectives, and character reactions.
2. VIPERS Focus: Look for context clues around unfamiliar words to deduce meanings accurately.
3. Evidence: For 2-mark and 3-mark questions, always quote directly or paraphrase specific evidence.
4. Timing: Spend ~15 minutes reading, 15 minutes on Comprehension, and 15 minutes on Creative Writing.
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Section A: VIPERS Comprehension Questions

Answer all questions in full sentences using evidence from the extract. Total: 15 Marks

[V] VOCABULARY

Question 1

[2 marks]

What does the word "relic" mean in paragraph 1? What does this show about public opinion of Toby's job?

[I] INFERENCE

Question 2

[2 marks]

Why does Toby find satisfaction in his work despite the mockery of his friends?

[R] RETRIEVAL

Question 3

[1 mark]

Which specific lamp failed to ignite, and where was it located?

[I] INFERENCE

Question 4

[3 marks]

What evidence in paragraph 3 suggests the dark lamp post is affected by something supernatural?

[P] PREDICTION

Question 5

[2 marks]

Predict what Toby will do next with the symbols on the curbstone.

[E] EXPLAIN

Question 6

[3 marks]

How does the author shift the mood from peaceful routine to eerie suspense across the three paragraphs?

Focus on suspenseful pacing, atmospheric details, powerful verbs, and varied sentence structures.

Express character emotion, daily routines, and thoughts regarding modern technological change.

Section C: Examiner Mark Scheme & Model Answers

Comprehensive answers, acceptable variations, and 11+ mark allocation criteria.

Question 1 [V]

"Relic" means an object or tradition surviving from an earlier historical era. It reveals that the townspeople consider lamplighting obsolete and unnecessary.

Question 2 [I]

He feels a quiet pride and purposeful satisfaction in driving back the dark and keeping the historic city streets safe and comforting.

Question 3 [R]

The seventh lamp post located on Candle Row.

Question 4 [I]

1) The lamp stubbornly refuses to ignite despite working flints; 2) Unfamiliar symbols are chiselled into the curbstone; 3) The grooves hum and vibrate with dormant supernatural energy.

Question 5 [P]

Credit plausible predictions: Toby traces or decodes the symbols, investigates beneath the cobbles, or alerts a local historian or guild elder.

Question 6 [E]

Paragraph 1 establishes calm nostalgia; paragraph 2 introduces disruption (the failed lamp); paragraph 3 escalates tension with sensory mystery (humming stone, unnatural darkness).

CREATIVE WRITING BAND MARKING SCHEME (20 Marks Total):

- Band 1 (16-20 Marks): Exceptional atmosphere, compelling narrative voice, sophisticated vocabulary, diverse syntax.
- Band 2 (11-15 Marks): Clear narrative structure, good descriptive detail, accurate paragraphs and punctuation.
- Band 3 (6-10 Marks): Basic story progression, simple adjectives, occasional punctuation errors.
- SPaG (5 Marks): Award up to 5 additional marks for spelling accuracy, ambitious vocabulary, and neat handwriting.

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