

One

Until he was four years old, James Henry Trotter had a happy life. He lived peacefully with his mother and father in a beautiful house beside the sea. There were always plenty of other children for him to play with, and there was the sandy beach for him to run about on, and the ocean to paddle in. It was the perfect life for a small boy.

Then, one day, James's mother and father went to London to do some shopping, and there a terrible thing happened. Both of them suddenly got eaten up (in full daylight, mind you, and on a crowded street) by an enormous angry rhinoceros which had escaped from the London Zoo.

Now this, as you can well imagine, was a rather nasty experience for two such gentle parents. But in the long run it was far nastier for James than it was for them. *Their* troubles were all over in a jiffy. They were dead and gone in thirty-five seconds flat. Poor James, on the other hand, was still very much alive, and all at once he found himself alone and frightened in a vast unfriendly world. The lovely house by the seaside had to be sold immediately, and the little boy, carrying nothing but a small suitcase containing a pair of pyjamas and a toothbrush, was sent away to live with his two aunts.

Their names were Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker, and I am sorry to say that they were both really horrible people. They were selfish and lazy and

James and the Giant Peach



1. Select three adjectives to show James had a good life (V – 1 mark)
2. What does the word “vast” mean? (V – 1 mark)
3. Predict what other adjective could finish off the last sentences (P – 1 mark)
4. What animal killed James’ parents? (R – 1 mark)
5. Do you think the narrator likes Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker? Explain (I/E – 2 marks)

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He was out there now, no doubt rescuing some small child from a rampaging robot, or catching a falling plane, or rounding up some criminal kingpin and his henchmen.

There was a distant rumble and the horizon burst into light, the explosion sending bright-orange flames into the sky to silhouette the rooftops of our home town of Bromley.

Had to be Zack.

I might learn the details of tonight's adventure when he returned later, but in all likelihood the only thing I'd get from him would be a grunt as he pushed past me to the fridge for a snack. He was always hungry after a mission. That was his style: peckish after, and reluctant before. He'd never wanted the responsibility of being a superhero, not from that first moment when a purple-caped, egg-headed alien called Zorbon the Decider had chosen him to save the world. Zack couldn't see the point of having powers and it was never far from his thoughts. Earlier that evening he'd brought it up for the gazillionth time.

"And another thing," he'd said as we washed up the dinner dishes together. "Superheroes are expensive."

"But you don't get paid," I reminded him.

My Cousin is a Time Traveller

by David Solomons



JAMES SMITH & SONS
UMBRELLA SHOP, LONDON, 1944

The grandfather clock had just struck five when Pip Hanway saw Mr and Mrs Smith for the last time. Watching them closely, with her whiskers twitching on her cheeks, she peered out from under her umbrella canopy and tightened her tail around the end of one of its metal ribs, hoping more customers would soon visit the shop to tell more stories of the far-flung places she dreamed to see.

Mr Smith was standing behind the long mahogany counter, smiling at his wife as she dusted the umbrellas in the shop window. She fluttered from one umbrella to the next as the June sunlight poured inside, all the time having no idea that a small family of mice were secretly living inside her precious antique umbrella, occupying pride of place at the front of the display.

The Umbrella Mouse

by Anna Fargher



1. What time is it? What time of year is it? (R – 2 marks)
2. Select two phrases which shows you Pip is not human (R – 2 mark)
3. What does “pride of place” mean? (V – 1 mark)
4. What did Pip want to see? (R – 1 mark)
5. What does the verb “fluttered” tell you about how she moved? (I/E – 2 marks)
6. Finish off the next sentence: “It had once belonged to the first man who...” (P/I – 1 mark)

INTRODUCTION

When: 9th October 2012

Where: Mingora, Swat Valley, Pakistan

Malala was in a good mood travelling home from school. She was pretty sure she'd aced the morning's exam and was looking forward to a chilled-out afternoon at home.

She was having a giggle with her best friend, Moniba, when **the school bus stopped suddenly**. A young man was standing in the road in front of it. He wore long white robes and a baseball cap. 'Is this the Khushal School bus?' he asked.

Another young man jumped onto the back of the bus and leaned in. A hush fell over the girls as both men glared at them. Her heart hammering in her chest, Malala found Moniba's hand and gave it a squeeze. Around twenty girls were crammed onto the hard plastic benches and they stared back, stunned, as the men scanned the bus.

'Who is Malala?' the second man asked gruffly. No one answered his question, but a few of the girls glanced in Malala's direction before they could stop themselves. Then the same man **raised a pistol** for all the girls to see.

Malala froze with fear.

Malala Yousafzai

by Lisa Williamson



1. Where is Malala from? (R – 1 mark)
2. "...she was pretty sure she'd aced the morning's exam". What does this mean? (E – 1 mark)
3. How was Malala feeling? Explain (I – 2 marks)
4. "A hush fell over the girls..." What does this mean? (E – 1 mark)
5. Find a synonym in the text for "searched" (V – 1 mark)

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I HAVE A LITTLE present for you, Rose,' said Papa.

He handed me a rectangular package tied with string that looked promisingly like a book. I love reading more than anything else, especially the books in Papa's studio. He doesn't know that I borrow them. I don't bother with the ones in the cabinet in the drawing room – they are Mama's silly romantic tosh.

I opened my package eagerly, though I feared it would be a Mrs Molesworth or a Miss Yonge, the sort of authors considered suitable for a girl of thirteen.

'I thought this would be a good time for you to start sketching seriously, sweetheart. I know you've been feeling rather mokey since Rupert left for school,' said Papa.

I didn't know what to say. He was trying so hard to cheer me up. And it's not as if I don't like drawing. I've spent half my childhood drawing witches and dragons and mermaids and tigers and goblins. Goblins are fun because I give them the faces of people I particularly detest. When my brother Algie crayoned all over the pages of my book of Tennyson's poetry, I created an entire community of grotesque goblins with his features.

I also like drawing girls. Not pretty girls with long brushed hair and demure dresses. Wild girls who have cut off their curls and tucked up their skirts or borrowed boy's breeches. They climb trees and leap streams and teeter on the very edge of cliffs. Sometimes I draw them being chastised. They are sent away in disgrace. They don't care!

Mama always tuts when she sees my drawings.

Rose Rivers
by Jacqueline Wilson



1. Which word show Rose was hoping for the package to be a book? (V – 1 mark)
2. "...they are Mama's silly romantic tosh" What do you think this means? Does Rose like her mother's books? (I – 2 marks)
3. What does "mopey" means? (V – 1 mark)
4. List three things that Rose draws (R – 1 mark)
5. "Mama always tuts when she sees them." What does this suggest about Rose's mother? (I – 2 marks)

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