



Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint

ENGLISH

1111/02

Paper 2 Fiction

April 2022

INSERT

1 hour 10 minutes

INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading passages.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.



This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Text for Section A, an extract from 'Gullstruck Island' by Francis Hardinge

Arilou and her younger sister live in a village on a remote island. Arilou is a member of the Lace tribe, and she has special powers. Two men have travelled to her isolated village to test those special powers.

She would have been very pretty if there were not a certain *softness* in the motions of her face. Her tongue pushed her lower lip forward and glistened between her lips, and her cheeks puckered and bulged without purpose as though she was rolling invisible cherries about her mouth.

As her smaller sister carefully guided her to sit on a straw mat, her mother ran a fingertip down Arilou's temple alongside one grey, unfocussed eye. 'Pirate eyes,' Mother Govrie said proudly. Prox never understood why the Lace seemed to regard a trace of pirate in their ancestry as a reason to boast.

5

The village's pride in this girl could be seen just by looking at her mouth. Nearly every tooth had been studded with a perfect little round of lazuli* into which a spiral had been etched. In contrast the girl next to her had only a few of her front teeth studded in a cloudy quartz that was almost invisible against the enamel.

10

'Please,' said the Inspector, speaking over Govrie's enthusiasm. 'If you will let us talk to the girl in private.'

At last the Inspector and Prox were left alone with Arilou. Alone, that is, except for the younger child, who seemed to be Arilou's designated attendant. When asked to leave she stared at them unmoving, her smile baffled but intact, and eventually they relented and let her stay.

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'Miss Arilou.' The Inspector settled himself to kneel in front of Arilou. A warm and wandering breeze crept into the cave so that the feathers in her hair trembled. She gave no other motion, nor acknowledgement of his presence. 'My name is Raglan Skein. My body is sitting before yours at the moment. Where are you?'

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Unbidden, the younger girl took Arilou's long, golden hand in her smaller, darker one and whispered into her ear. There was a small pause, and then Arilou's lids drooped a little, darkening her grey eyes like a sudden cloud shadowing the land. She hesitated, as though in contemplation, and then her jaw fell open and she began to speak.

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But these were not words! Prox listened dumbstruck to the sounds falling from Arilou's drooping mouth. It was as if some words had been washed out to sea and rounded smooth and meaningless by the waves. And then he was just as startled to hear the stream of noise give way to ordinary speech, clearly spoken in a young girl's voice.

'I am running an errand for the village, Mr Skein. At the moment I am storm-spotting many miles further up the coast. It would take me hours to get back.'

30

It was a moment or two before Prox realised that it was not Arilou who had spoken. It was her little attendant, and now he realised why she had not left the room. However nimble her mind, it seemed Arilou did not yet have full mastery of her tongue. Her attendant was probably a younger sister, able to understand and translate Arilou's ill-formed sounds through long practice. Though the words had been spoken with such a clear, cold authority, Prox wondered for a moment if Arilou's true voice was forcing its way out through her meek little interpreter, her personality overwhelming the other like a silver river's torrent rushing down a meagre stream

35

bed.

'Then we will not call you back immediately.' Skein had responded to the confidence in Arilou's voice, and now his tone was that of one addressing an adult rather than a child. 40

'Do you see the storm? Where are you?'

'I am watching from the Pericold Heights, and I can see storm clouds tangled in Mother Tooth's hair,' came the response. 'I must watch longer to be sure, but I believe that it will reach tomorrow night.' 45

Pericold Heights was a promontory* some fifty miles up the coast from which one could look out to sea and see a great column of steam, and at its base the outline of Mother Tooth's island like a trodden pie. Mother Tooth was the most belligerent of the volcanoes, and nobody but the birds lived in her reeking, juddering jungles. Storm clouds seemed to form around and above her, as if drawn by her ill-temper. 50

So much for testing the girl quickly and getting out of here, thought Prox despondently. The cliff walks that had brought them to this part of the coast were treacherous enough in the dry. In wet weather the red rock melted like chocolate, and slewed and slithered off the precipices*. It was starting to sound like they might find themselves stranded in this backwater.

'You understand I have come to test your use of your powers ...?'

 Skein asked. 55

Glossary

lazuli: a precious stone

promontory: a high ridge of land

precipices: high cliffs

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