

# Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint

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**ENGLISH**

**0861/02**

Paper 2 Fiction

**October 2025**

INSERT

**1 hour 10 minutes**

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**INFORMATION**

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



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

Text for **Section A**, an extract from *D (A Tale of Two Worlds)* by Michel Faber

*13-year-old Dhikilo was adopted when she was a baby by an English couple, Ruth and Malcolm Bentley. They live in the seaside town of Cawber.*

The first ray of light each morning always made her feel the sun was in the wrong place, or she was in the wrong place, or both. She would wake in her big soft bed, under a duvet decorated with smiling blonde princesses, and the cold English light would already be busy filling up the room, looking weird. 5

She told her friend Mariette about this, and Mariette said, ‘It must be because you’re missing the light back home.’

‘Home?’ said Dhikilo. 10

‘Where you’re from.’

‘I suppose so,’ said Dhikilo.

But she didn’t suppose so, really. She had no memories of where she was from, and she’d never been back there. It didn’t even exist.

Mariette, Dhikilo’s best friend, came from France. Dhikilo hadn’t been there either, but it existed for sure. People went there all the time. It was just across the Channel<sup>1</sup>. On clear days, peering out over the cliffs at Cawber, she could even see it. It was a subtle haze between the silvery grey of the water and the blue of the sky. 15

Fiona, one of Dhikilo’s other pals, came from Scotland, which was also a country, even though you didn’t have to cross the sea to get there. It was cool to come from Scotland. Everybody had heard of it, yet it was far away with magnificent ancient mountains and big modern cities and it was on TV quite often. A good combination. 20

The place Dhikilo came from was never on TV and nobody had heard of it. Sometimes people would say they’d heard of it, but after a while she would realise that they really meant another country whose name sounded similar but wasn’t it. 25

‘I’m not from Somalia,’ she would say. ‘I’m from Somaliland.’

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Cawber School for Girls was the second-best school in Cawber and was officially classified by government inspectors<sup>2</sup> as ‘Improving’. It had been ‘Excellent’ once upon a time and ‘Poor’ for a while and much better again recently. The whole town was a bit like that. Back in the nineteenth century it used to be a seaside resort where people from London would come for their holidays. Then the funfairs and ballrooms closed down, and the houses got shabby and crumbly. But Cawber had the sea and the cliffs and some handsome architecture and a high-speed train to the capital, so lots of rich people were moving there lately. And immigrants. People from all over the world, making a fresh start. 30

Only one person from Somaliland, though. 35

She could still remember the man in the school-uniform shop commenting on her colour. He was trying to be nice, saying how the pale green of the school blouse went very well with her 'black skin'. Her skin wasn't black, though, it was brown. Brown like cinnamon toast, or hazelnuts. And the other people in Cawber weren't really white, they were the colour of uncooked sausages. 40

Dhikilo liked food.

In fact, Dhikilo *loved* food. Not just eating it, but making it. She cooked as often as Ruth would allow her, and she made different things each time, which meant that sometimes it didn't work out and Ruth would sigh as if to say, 'Good parents are tolerant when their children try foolish things and fail,' and the leftovers would go into a plastic container at the back of the fridge and grow mould. 45

But on other occasions, she would make a delicious meal – maybe a lamb stew with ginger and basil, and cubes of potato all yellowy-orange from the tomato – and Malcolm's eyes would widen with pleasure when he ate his first mouthful and he'd say, 'Well, *this* makes a lovely change, doesn't it?' and Ruth would look at him strangely and Dhikilo would be proud of making the flavours all work together. 50

Frying onions was just about the best fun ever. If you fried them slow and used plenty of oil they would go soft and golden and caramelly, and if you fried them fast they would go crispy and brown with burnt curly bits that were actually the tastiest part. And if you had a mushroom you could make fried onions and mushroom on toast, which was as delicious as anything you'd get in a restaurant. 55

'You should be a chef when you grow up,' Ruth told her, while carefully picking out any bits of onion that were even slightly burnt, or while eating a totally different thing from the thing Dhikilo had prepared. Maybe she was just doing her grown-up best to give a clueless kid happy fantasies of something that was never really going to happen, like being an astronaut. 60

But Dhikilo truly did fancy being a chef when she grew up.

*Don't limit your dreams*, that's what the school Careers Advisor<sup>3</sup> said. *Within reason*.

## Glossary

<sup>1</sup>Channel: the sea between England and France

<sup>2</sup>government inspector: someone from the government who checks the quality of a school

<sup>3</sup>Careers Advisor: a person who helps students think about their future job

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