



Cambridge Primary Checkpoint

ENGLISH

0058/02

Paper 2 Fiction

October 2025

INSERT

1 hour

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.



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

Text for **Section A**, an extract from *Monstrous Devices* by Damien Love

Snow is falling on the city of Prague.

Soft white against a sharp black skyline, it dances around the castle spires and wisps past the patient statues of the church of St. Nicholas. It flurries over fast-food restaurants' glowing signs, drifts down on cobblestones, tarmac and tramlines. Old women in headscarves shiver and street vendors selling hot sausages stamp their feet in Wenceslas Square. 5

A tall man and a small girl stalk through the snow. The man wears a long black coat and a homburg¹ hat. He clutches a cane. The girl's black coat reaches her ankles, where purple-and-black-striped socks disappear inside heavy black boots. She looks nine or ten, with a pale, round face framed by long black hair. 10

They cut briskly across the Old Town Square: past grumbling workmen; past the house where a famous writer lived an unhappy life long ago; past an ancient cemetery crammed with graves like a mouth filled with broken teeth.

For each of the man's long strides, the girl must take three, yet she easily matches his angry pace. The city grows older around them as they walk. The light is fading, the day turning blue beneath a heavy slate sky. The snow is beginning to lie². It crumps under their feet. It frosts her hair like icing sugar. It gathers in the nooks and crannies of the strange metal straps that encase each of his boot-heels. 15 20

They come eventually to a narrow street, barely more than an alley between ageing buildings, dark, save for a single yellowy light burning in a shop window bearing a sign painted in cheerful red:

B E C K M A N ' S T O Y S

Behind the words, heavy red curtains frame a dusty display. Monkeys brandish cymbals. Ventriloquists' dummies³ leer secret smiles at blushing Victorian dolls. Black bats hang from black threads alongside ducks with propellers on their heads and wooden policemen with bright red noses. 25

A line of robots marches through this chaos.

The man in the long black coat pushes open the door, ushering the girl in ahead. A bell rings, a pleasing old sound of polished brass in the musty dim as they step inside. Around them, the little shop is a cluttered cosmos of toys. Squadrons of fighter planes and hot air balloons swarm the ceiling. Sailboats and rocket ships patrol shelves. Teddy bears are crammed into corners with rocking horses and dogs on wheels. 30 35

When they are certain there is no one else in the shop, the girl flips the sign from OPEN to CLOSED. Snapping the lock, she stands with her back to the door and folds her arms.

The man strides to the counter, heading on towards the back room, when a figure emerges, pushing through the rattling hanging beads holding scissors and a roll of brown tape. A small man with cropped grey hair and big, round glasses, thick lenses reflecting the light, shabbily dressed but for a bright-yellow-with-black-polka-dots silk scarf knotted at his throat. A torn-off strip of brown tape hangs from the end of his nose.

40

Looking up to blink happily at his visitors, he stops abruptly.

45

‘Eh ...’

Glossary

¹homburg hat: a type of men’s hat

²lie: form a layer on the ground

³ventriloquists’ dummies: special kinds of puppets

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