

Extract 2*Poet*

We called him Poet. He was our teacher – more than teacher. He could motivate a cow to bark and we grew to love him for this – but not yet.

Poet had introduced jogging into our programme. He said it was good for the lungs. Every evening we jogged for an hour before speech practice.

Sam loved the physical exercise. He would wheel his chair on to the playing field and follow us around. I was glad when he came along because his pace was right for me and we circled the track together while Poet went on ahead like an experienced long distance runner.

That particular evening after we had done two laps or so, Poet waited for us to catch up with him at the hundred metre starting line.

He handed me a stopwatch and pointed down the track.

“Stand at the fifty metre line and time us,” he said. “I want to see how fast Sam is.”

Sam was eager for this; he loved to make his wheel chair run. Poet went back twenty paces around the track and lined up to start. Sam looked back with a big grin on his face. He was loving every moment of it.

“Set us off when you’re ready, Chris.”

I raised my T-shirt in the air in my most dramatic fashion. “Ready, steady, GO!”

Sam was off like a bullet and Poet was right behind him. Poet caught up to the chair quickly, but slowed down so that Sam would believe that he was having a problem passing. Sam was energized. He gritted his teeth and his huge chest bloated as he seemed to lift the wheels into motion – his strong arms pumping, shoving the wheels around, propelling the chair down the grassy track like an express train.

Disaster struck ten yards from where they stood. Sam was pumping
30 so hard that at one point he lifted the wheels halfway off the ground.
He touched down on a large grass root and the chair nose-dived.

The chair went east and Sam went west, but both kept on coming,
maintaining the forward motion. The chair stopped a few feet away
on its side. Sam rolled like a ragged bundle before the wind and
35 came to rest at my feet.

I was horrified.

Miraculously Sam was not injured at all, except for a small bruise
on his arm. The wheelchair was unscathed. Poet realized this
immediately and as I bent to help my shaken friend I felt his fingers
40 dig into my shoulder.

“Wait a minute,” he said.

I paused. “What?”

He ignored me. “Get up, Sam; let’s go.”

I was shocked. “What? What?”

45 “Get up, Sam!”

From ‘Flaming Hearts’, Garfield Ellis

Questions

- 1 We gather that at the beginning, the students’ overall attitude to Poet had changed from one of
A suspicion to surprise.
B uncertainty to love.
C like to dislike.
D opposition to acceptance.
 - 2 What quality in Poet is being described in the words ‘He could motivate a cow to bark’?
A He was highly inspiring.
B He was an expert with animals.
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- C People respected him greatly.
D His behaviour was an example to others.
- 3 Sam is in a wheelchair but what kind of person is he apparently?
A Exceptionally careless
B Highly motivated
C Brave but cautious
D Scared but competitive
- 4 What does the simile 'Sam was off like a bullet' (line 23) highlight MOST about Sam's start?
A Smoothness and focus
B Anxiety and lack of caution
C Speed and eagerness
D Recklessness and danger
- 5 The overall mood or atmosphere of the passage is BEST described as one of
A pleasant friendliness.
B nervous anxiety.
C intense competitiveness.
D rivalry and friction.
- 6 The style of writing is BEST described as
A simple and conversational.
B stiff and formal.
C academic and sophisticated.
D childlike and carefree.
- 7 The simile in 'Sam rolled like a ragged bundle' (line 34) conveys, at that point, an overall picture of Sam as seeming
A hurt and fearful.
B disappointed and bitter.
C dirty and uncomfortable.
D shabby and helpless.
- 8 Which of these is NOT a figure of speech as used in the passage?
A 'He lifted the wheels halfway off the ground' (line 30)
B 'Propelling ... like an express train' (line 28)

- C 'He touched down on a large grass root' (line 31)
 - D 'could motivate a cow to bark' (line 2)
- 9 What is the change in atmosphere in this scene?
- A From happy and careless to wicked and unkind
 - B From helpful and thoughtful to thoughtless and selfish
 - C From kind and encouraging to mean and discouraging
 - D From cheerful and friendly to frightened and uncertain
- 10 Which of these is NOT a major theme in the story as told here?
- A Determination
 - B Friendship
 - C Leadership
 - D Winning and losing

SECTION C – PROSE FICTION

3 Read the following extract carefully and answer ALL the questions that follow.

Mr Blade was sitting in his swivel chair, facing the sea. It was a hot afternoon and he had the window fully opened but the wind that came in was heavy and lifeless, as if the heat had taken all the spirit out of it.

Mr Blade was a kindly man newly arrived in the colony from England. He was a weak man, and he knew it. Sometimes Blade was afraid of life because he was weak and couldn't make decisions or face up to facts and circumstances. The palms of his hands were always wet when he was excited or couldn't find the answer to a problem.

As he sat and watched the sea sparkle, he was thinking in a general sort of way about his life, and when his wife burst into his office he started. 'Oh hello, dear, didn't expect to see you today.' Whenever Blade looked at his wife he saw the symbol of his weaknesses. All his faults were magnified and concentrated in her face, which was like a mirror in which he looked and shrank.

'Herbert.' She also had a most disquieting habit of getting to the point right away. 'I thought you had dismissed all the natives who were here before we came?'

'Of course, dear. As you can see, we only have Europeans and one or two whites who were born in the island.'

'I met a dirty one-legged man outside the office just as I was coming in – who's he?'

'Oh heavens, he's only the caretaker! Surely you didn't think he was on staff?'

Blade shifted his eyes and looked at an almanac on the wall above his wife's head.

'You'll have to get rid of him, you know.'

From 'Gussy and the Boss'
in *Ways of Sunlight*, Samuel Selvon

- a) Describe the situation that the writer has created in this extract. (3 marks)
- b) i) Describe the mood that is evoked in the opening paragraph.
ii) Identify the point at which this mood changes and state what is the nature of the change. (4 marks)
- c) Identify what features of i) Blade's personality, ii) the wife's personality, are brought out by the dialogue. Justify your choices. (6 marks)
- d) Quote ONE metaphor and ONE simile that describe the way Blade feels when he looks at his wife. Discuss their effectiveness. (4 marks)
- e) Explain why 'Blade shifted his eyes and looked at an almanac on the wall above his wife's head' (line 20). (3 marks)

(Total 20 marks)

END OF TEST