1.6 Literature: Drama and Tragedy: Test Pack

AQA 7712 · about 5 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

The Last Harvest

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THE LAST HARVEST

Act Two, Scene Three (extract)

1 (The yard of Fenwick Farm. An October afternoon; the sky is the colour of a bruise. Above the valley, crows lift from the elms in a black, wheeling cloud and do not return.)

2

3 (EDMUND VANE, fifty-eight, stands at the yard gate, a lantern unlit in his hand. ROSALIND, his daughter, watches from the porch. WILL COAKLEY, the farmhand, leans on a hurdle, chewing a stem of grass.)

4

5 ROSALIND: Father, the river's over Marsh Bottom already. Enoch Prewitt rode down to say the sluice at Yardley broke at noon.

6

7 EDMUND: Enoch Prewitt would ride down to say the sky had fallen, if he thought I'd give him supper for the telling of it.

8

9 ROSALIND: The cattle are still in the low meadow.

10

11 EDMUND: Then the low meadow is where they'll stand till I say otherwise. I have brought thirty harvests off this land, and not one flood has had the cheek to cross my fences while I watched them.

12

13 WILL: Beggin' pardon, master, but the old dyke's not held since your father's time. Widow Cole says the crows haven't roosted on the elms these forty year, not till this morning.

14

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15 EDMUND: Widow Cole. (He laughs, short and hard.) A woman who reads doom in a kettle's whistle. Will Coakley, take the lantern and see the gate is barred. I'll not have Fenwick land run by the fright of old women and the flapping of birds.

16

17 ROSALIND: (Quietly, to herself) It is not the birds I am afraid of, Father. It is you, who will not hear them.

18

19 EDMUND: What's that?

20

21 ROSALIND: Nothing. (She comes down into the yard.) Move the herd tonight, and lose an evening's grazing. Leave them, and you may lose the herd, the meadow, and the name of a man who was warned.

22

23 EDMUND: I built this farm out of clay and stubbornness, girl, and I'll not be told my judgement by a slip of a daughter who has read too many of her mother's storybooks. The river has tried Fenwick before. Fenwick has always won.

24

25 WILL: (Aside, to Rosalind, as EDMUND turns to go) Every farmer who ever drowned said much the same, miss, the night before the water came up over his boots.

26

27 ROSALIND: Will. Fetch the men from the bottom field, quietly, and bring the herd up by the top track. Do it without asking him.

28

29 WILL: And if he asks me why the beasts are moved?

30

31 ROSALIND: Tell him a daughter's fear weighed more than his pride. He may forgive you for it. He will not forgive the river.

32

33 (WILL exits. Thunder, distant. EDMUND stands alone at the gate, looking out over the darkening fields, the unlit lantern still in his hand.)

34

35 EDMUND: (To himself, half in wonder, half defiance) Thirty years the river has crept to my fences and crept away again, like a dog that knows its master's boot. Let it come tonight, if it dares. Let it see what Edmund Vane will yield, and what he will not.

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36

37 (He does not light the lantern. Behind him, unseen, the first crow returns to the elms, alone, and is silent. Blackout.)

1 Read again the extract from The Last Harvest, Act Two, Scene Three, printed above.

(a) Identify four separate words or phrases from the extract that create a sense of foreboding or hint at approaching disaster. Write each on a separate line. **(4)**

(b) State whether Edmund's dialogue is written mainly in a heightened, rhythmic register or in plain, functional prose, and give one reason a playwright might choose this register for a tragic protagonist. **(2)**

(Total for Question 1 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.6 Literature: Drama and Tragedy: Test Pack

Question 1

(a) any one relevant word/phrase creditable, e.g. 'the sky is the colour of a bruise' (l.1) **B1**

(a) any second relevant word/phrase, e.g. 'crows lift...and do not return' (l.1) **B1**

(a) any third relevant word/phrase, e.g. 'the old dyke's not held' / 'the crows haven't roosted...these forty year' (l.13) **B1**

(a) any fourth relevant word/phrase, e.g. the unlit lantern (l.3, l.37); the returning, silent crow (l.37); distant thunder (l.33); accept other valid textual evidence of foreboding oe **B1**

(a) Answer: Any four of: the bruised sky (l.1); the crows that lift and do not return (l.1); the failing dyke and the sluice that broke (l.5, l.13); the crows not roosting for forty years (l.13); the unlit lantern (l.3, l.37); distant thunder (l.33); the single silent crow returning at the close (l.37).

(b) correctly identifies Edmund's speech (e.g. l.11, l.23, l.35) as heightened/rhythmic and image-rich, in contrast to the plainer prose of Rosalind and Will oe **B1**

(b) valid reason, e.g. elevated language marks him out by status/stature from the other characters oe; heightens the sense of his pride and self-importance oe **B1**

(b) Answer: Edmund's speech (e.g. lines 11, 23, 35) is rhythmic, balanced and image-laden, more heightened than the plainer, practical prose of Rosalind and Will; this register marks him as a figure of stature and reinforces his pride, a key convention of the tragic protagonist.

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