

READING PART 5

Exercise: Multiple choice text

Read the text and answer the questions.

Island Life

We live on the island of Hale. It's about four kilometres long and two kilometres wide at its broadest point, and it's joined to the mainland by a causeway called the Stand - a narrow road built across the mouth of the river which separates us from the rest of the country. Most of the time you wouldn't know we're on an island because the river mouth between us and the mainland is just a vast stretch of tall grasses and brown mud. But when there's a high tide and the water rises a half a metre or so above the road and nothing can pass until the tide goes out again a few hours later, then you know it's an island.

We were on our way back from the mainland. My older brother, Dominic, had just finished his first year at university in a town 150 km away. Dominic's train was due in at five and he'd asked for a lift back from the station. Now, Dad normally hates being disturbed when he's writing (which is just about all the time), and he also hates having to go anywhere, but despite the typical sighs and moans - why can't he get a taxi? what's wrong with the bus? - I could tell by the sparkle in his eyes that he was really looking forward to seeing Dominic.

So, anyway, Dad and I had driven to the mainland and picked up Dominic from the station. He had been talking non-stop from the moment he'd slung his rucksack in the boot and got in the car. University this, university that, writers, books, parties, people, money, gigsâ€¦. And when I say talking, I don't mean talking as in having a conversation, I mean talking as in jabbering like a mad thing. I didn't like it ... the way he spoke and waved his hands around as if he was some kind of intellectual or something. It was embarrassing. It made me feel uncomfortable - that kind of discomfort you feel when someone you like, someone close to you, suddenly starts acting like a complete idiot. And I didn't like the way he was ignoring me, either. For all the attention I was getting I might as well not have been there. I felt a stranger in my own car.

As we approached the island on that Friday afternoon, the tide was low and the Stand welcomed us home, stretched out before us, clear and dry, beautifully hazy in the heat - a raised strip of grey concrete bound by white railings and a low footpath on either side, with rough cobbled banks leading down to the water.

Beyond the railings, the water was glinting with that wonderful silver light we sometimes get here in the late afternoon which lazies through to the early evening.

We were about halfway across when I saw the boy. My first thought was how odd it was to see someone walking on the Stand. You don't often see people walking around here. Between Hale and Moulton (the nearest town about thirty kilometres away on the mainland), there's nothing but small cottages, farmland, heathland and a couple of hills. So islanders don't walk because of that. If they're going to Moulton they tend to take the bus. So the only pedestrians you're likely to see around here are walkers or bird-watchers. But even from a distance I could tell that the figure ahead didn't fit into either of these categories. I wasn't sure how I knew, I just did.

As we drew closer, he became clearer. He was actually a young man rather than a boy. Although he was on the small side, he wasn't as slight as I'd first thought. He wasn't exactly muscular, but he wasn't weedy-looking either. It's hard to explain. There was a sense of strength about him, a graceful strength that showed in his balance, the way he held himself, the way he walked.

Questions

- 1) In the first paragraph, what is Caitlin's main point about the island?
 - ? It can be dangerous to try to cross from the mainland.
 - ? It is much smaller than it looks from the mainland.
 - ? It is only completely cut off at certain times.
 - ? It can be a difficult place for people to live in.
- 2) What does Caitlin suggest about her father?
 - ? His writing prevents him from doing things he wants to do with his family.
 - ? His initial reaction to his son's request is different from usual.
 - ? His true feelings are easily hidden from his daughter.
 - ? His son's arrival is one event he will take time off for.
- 3) Caitlin emphasises her feelings of discomfort because she
 - ? is embarrassed that she doesn't understand what her brother is talking about.
 - ? feels confused about why she can't relate to her brother any more.
 - ? is upset by the unexpected change in her brother's behaviour.
 - ? feels foolish that her brother's attention is so important to her.
- 4) In the fourth paragraph, what is Caitlin's purpose in describing the island?
 - ? to express her positive feelings about it.
 - ? to explain how the road was built.
 - ? to illustrate what kind of weather was usual.
 - ? to describe her journey home.

- 5) In 'because of that' in the forth paragraph, 'that' refers to the fact that
- ? locals think it is odd to walk anywhere.
 - ? it is easier for people to take the bus than walk.
 - ? people have everything they need on the island.
 - ? there is nowhere in particular to walk to from the island.

- 6) What do we learn about Caitlin's reactions to the boy?
- ? She felt his air of confidence contrasted with his physical appearance.
 - ? She was able to come up with a reason for him being there.
 - ? She realised her first impression of him was inaccurate.
 - ? She thought she had seen him somewhere before.

READING PART 6

Exercise: Gapped text

You are going to read an article about the making of an unusual television commercial. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-G the one which fits each gap. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

The Making of 'Tipping Point'

Many of the most expensive commercials ever made are those in which an A-list celebrity flashes a beautiful smile at the cameras. Their recent television advertisement, the most expensive in British history, cost ten million pounds, and it features, not the rich and famous, but villagers from the mountains of Argentina.

The advertisement features a game of dominoes. It begins in a darkened room where several thousand ordinary dominoes are set up on a specially-designed table. Dominoes knock over books, which in turn knock bigger household objects such as suitcases, tyres, pots of paint, oil drums and even cars. The final piece in the chain reaction is a huge tower of books. These flutter open to reveal a structure in the shape of a pint of Guinness.

The location chosen for the commercial was Iruya, a village high up in the mountains of north-west Argentina. The journey there could take up to ten hours. Asked why this remote destination was chosen for the shoot, the director said that even though it was the most difficult location they could have picked, it was perfect.

For one month, the village, population thousand, increased in size by almost thirty percent. One hundred and forty crew members descended on the village. These included the world record holders in domino toppling, Weijers Domino productions from the Netherlands.

Creating this film was no easy task. Preparations for filming took well over a month. Twenty six truckloads of objects were brought in.

They included 10,000 books, 400 tyres, 75 mirrors, 50 fridges, 45 wardrobes and 6 cars. Setting the objects up took skill and patience. They needed to be arranged so they would fall over easily, and this involved balancing them on stones. Some of the sequences had to be reshot 15 times and 24 hours of footage was captured. However, the sequence in which six cars fell over was successfully shot in just one take.

Filming in this location was not without its difficulties. Firstly, being so isolated, it was hard to obtain resources at short notice. The second problem was the high altitude.

It was also hard working with the villagers who had no experience of film-making. Finally, setting and resetting the props caused a good deal of frustration.

Director Nicolai Fuglsig said about the project : 'Despite all the challenges, the cast was fantastic and it was a really amazing experience.' Whether or not the effort put into the advert pays off is another matter entirely.

A Then the falling dominoes head out of the room into the streets, causing progressively larger objects to tumble.

B These were all chosen to suit the town and fit in with the people's way of life.

C Getting there involved driving along 48 kilometres of dirt roads and crossing twelve rivers.

D Iruya is situated 3000 metres above sea level and the film crew was not used to working in such conditions.

E The prop department did construct a small version on site, but most of the work was done in a studio in London.

F Added to this was the total of one hundred and thirty 'actors' who were recruited from a five neighbouring towns.

G Not so with the famous Irish drink company Guinness.

READING PART 6

Exercise: Multiple matching text

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You are going to read an article in which four people comment on a book they have read recently. For questions 1-10, choose from the people A-D. The people may be chosen more than once.

A

Sundance by Teresa Wilson

Kerry:

I really don't know why this book is so popular. I mean, I suppose it is going to appeal to young girls who want danger and romance, but I found this book really tedious. For a start, the characters were really unconvincing. The author went out of her way to add lots of details about the characters, but I found these details really pointless. I thought that some of the facts she presented about the main characters would become significant in some way later in the novel, but they didn't. They were just worthless bits of information. I also was disappointed that, although this book is meant to be about kids at high school, the writer seems to have no recollection at all about what it's like to be 17. The main character thought and acted like a 32-year old. It just wasn't believable. I'm not saying Teresa Wilson is a bad writer. She can obviously string words together and come up with a story that is appealing to a large number of people, but she lacks anything original. There is no flair. It just uses the same sort of language as you can see in many other mediocre novels.

B

Wild Ways by Margery Emerson

Liz:

I have to say that I won't forget this book for a long time. I was hooked from the very first chapter. The devastating story affected me so much that I don't know if I'll ever feel the same again. I was close to tears on several occasions. I've got images in my brain now that I don't think will ever leave me. It's incredibly well-researched and, although it is fiction, is based on shocking real-life events. I learned an awful lot about things that went on that I never knew before. Margaret Emerson has a brilliant way with words and I really felt real empathy towards the characters, although I was sometimes irritated by the choices they made. However, the parallel story, the part that is set in the present, is not quite so good. I found myself just flicking through that part so that I could get back to 1940s Paris.

C

Orchid by Henry Rathbone

Imogen:

This is a delightful novel full of wonderful imagery, a paints a remarkable picture of life in a distant time and a far-away place. If you're looking to learn about Eastern culture in great detail, then this is probably not the book for you, as the writer skims over most of the more complicated aspects of the country's etiquette. The historical aspects are also not covered in much depth. However, I wonder whether this was the writer's intention. By doing this, he symbolise the superficiality of the girl's life. She, like the book, is beautiful and eager to please, but remains too distant from us, the readers, to teach us much. Although I loved the book and read it in one sitting, the ending was a bit of a disappointment. A story which involves so much turmoil, in a place where the future is uncertain, should not have a happy-ever-after fairy-tale ending.

D

High Hills by Mary Holland

Hannah:

I read this book for a literature class. I know it's a classic, and I did try to like it, but I just didn't get into it. I kept persevering, hoping that I'd start to enjoy it, but no such luck. The famous scene out on the moors was definitely the best bit of the book, but even that I found ridiculous when it is clearly supposed to be passionate. As I approached the end of the book, I figured there must be some kind of moral to the story, something that I would learn from the experience of trudging through seven hundred long pages, but there was nothing worthwhile. I don't know why the literary world sees this book as such a masterpiece. The characters are portrayed as being intelligent, but they do such stupid things! And as for it being a love story - marrying someone you don't love and then being abused by them - that doesn't spell love to me.

Which person read a book which...

1. was set in an Oriental country
2. finished in an unrealistic way
3. had characters that the reader could sympathise with
4. is well-known and was written a long time ago
5. contained two stories
6. was not set in the past
7. was historically accurate
8. made the reader cry
9. contained insignificant details
10. has a well-known scene