

Text 2

The text below is a descriptive account of a man's disturbing journey to a mysterious house in Grange Valley where he was scheduled to meet an unknown host. Read it carefully and answer Questions 5 – 13.

- 1 Dillon Bilks came to Grange Valley on a thunderous black evening when an ebony cloud crested the hill-top above, and, catching the up flung rays of sunset, glowed red like a blacksmith's forge. Through the dense ranks of firs cloaking the slopes, a breeze, presaging the coming storm, whispered evilly, and in the hollow, the birds were still. 5

- 2 The man who had driven him from the station glanced at him, with a curiosity thinly veiled.
 "What about your things, sir?" he inquired.
 Dillon stared rather blankly at the ivy-covered lodge, which, if appearances were to be trusted, was unoccupied. 10
 "Wait a moment; I will ring," he said curtly; for this furtive curiosity, so ill concealed, had manifested itself in the manner of the taxi driver from the moment that Dillon had directed him to drive to Grange Valley.

- 3 He pushed open the gate and tugged at the iron ring which was suspended from the wall of the lodge. A discordant clangour rewarded his efforts, the cracked note of a bell that spoke from somewhere high up in the building, that seemed to be buffeted to and fro from fir to fir, until it died away, mournfully, in some place of shadows far up the slope. In the voice of the bell there was something furtive, something akin to the half-veiled curiosity in the eyes of the man who stood watching him; something fearful, too, in both, as though man and bell were warning in loud whispers: "Return! Beware of disturbing the dwellers in this place." 15 20

- 4 But Dillon angrily recalled himself to the realities. He felt that these ghostly imaginings were born of the injury he was suffering; that he would have perceived no query in the glance of the taxi driver and heard no solitary whisper in the clang of the bell had he been fit, had he been fully recovered from the effects of his wound. Solitary whisper? Yes, that was it—his mind had supplied, automatically, an aptly descriptive term: the cracked bell spoke with the voice of ancient monasteries, had in it the hush of walkways and like the sigh of abandonment. And when he thought about it, the taxi man hadn't been very friendly, in fact, he was more crab-like which was understandable coming from a man who was probably very weary at the end of a long day at work. 25 30
 "Hang it all!" muttered Dillon. "This won't do."

- 5 A second time he awoke the ghostly bell-voice, but nothing responded to its call; man, bird and beast had seemingly deserted Grange Valley. He was conscious of a sudden nervous irritation, as he turned abruptly and met the inquiring glance of the taxi-man. 35
- "I have arrived before I was expected," he said. "If you will put my things on the porch here I will go up to the house and get a servant to fetch them. They will be safe enough in the meantime." 40
- His own words increased his irritability; for were they not in the nature of an apology on behalf of his silent and unseen host? Were they not a concession to that mysterious interrogation in the man's stare? Moreover, deep within his own consciousness, some vague thing was stirring; so that, the man dismissed, promptly departed. 45
- 6 The throb of the motor mounting the steep, winding lane grew dimmer and dimmer until it was borne away entirely upon the fitful breeze. Faintly, he detected the lowing of cattle in some distant pasture; the ranks of firs whispered secretly one to another, and the pall above the hills grew blacker and began to extend over the valley. Amid that ominous stillness of nature he began to ascend the cone-strewn path. Evidently enough, the extensive grounds had been neglected for years, and that few pedestrians, and fewer vehicles, ever sought Grange Valley. 50

Section B [20 marks]

- 5 At the beginning of the text, the day was described as one that was NOT a pleasant one for travelling through Grange Valley. Explain fully how the language used in Paragraph 1 supports this description.

Support your ideas with three details from paragraph 1.

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..... [3]

- 6 In paragraph 2 'The man who had driven him from the station glanced at him, with a curiosity thinly veiled' (lines 6 – 7).

Identify the words or phrases in the given sentence which suggest

- (i) a quick look [1]
- (ii) unconcealed nosiness [1]

- 7 In paragraph 3 'In the voice of the bell there was something furtive, something akin to the half-veiled curiosity in the eyes of the man who stood watching him; something fearful, too, in both, as though man and bell were warning in loud whispers: "Return! Beware of disturbing the dwellers in this place' (lines 18 – 22).

- (i) How does the writer make the bell seem human?

.....

..... [1]

- (ii) Why is the bell described in this way?

..... [1]

- 8 In paragraph 3, what is unusual and effective about the phrase 'loud whispers' (line 21)?

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..... [2]

- 9 In paragraph 4 'He felt that these ghostly imaginings were born of the injury he was suffering; that he would have perceived no query in the glance of the taxi driver and heard no solitary whisper in the clang of the bell had he been fit, had he been fully recovered from the effects of his wound.'

What does this suggest about the reason behind Dillon's first impression of the clanging bell and the taxi man?

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..... [1]

- 10 The writer uses similes 'like the sigh of abandonment' (line 30) and 'crab-like' (line 31). What do the similes suggest about Dillon's view of the subjects they refer to?

Similes	Dillon's view
'like the sigh of abandonment'	
'crab-like'	

[2]

- 11 In paragraph 5 'His own words increased his irritability' (line 42). Give one reason why Dillon was irritated by his own words.

.....

..... [1]

- 12 In paragraph 6 'Evidently enough, the extensive grounds had been neglected for years, and that few pedestrians, and fewer vehicles, ever sought Grange Valley.'

Is the writer's view accurate? Give evidence to support your answer.

- (i) 'the extensive grounds had been neglected for years'

..... [1]

- (ii) 'few pedestrians, and fewer vehicles, ever sought Grange Valley'

..... [1]

- 13 The structure of the text reflects the main feelings Dillon Bilks experienced as events unfolded. Complete the flow chart by choosing one word from the box to summarise the main feeling described in each part of the text. There are some extra words in the box you do not need to use.

Dillon Bilks' feelings

rational	dull	irritable	sorrowful
lonely	annoyed	uneasy	

Flow chart

Paragraph 2	:	(i)
↓		
Paragraph 3	:	(ii)
↓		
Paragraph 4	:	(iii)
↓		
Paragraph 5	:	(iv)
↓		
Paragraph 6	:	(iv)

[5]

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