Paper 1 Part 7: Multiple matching

You are going to read an article about the attraction of buying and renovating old houses. For questions **1–10**, choose from the sections (**A–D**). The sections may be chosen more than once.

In which section does the writer

accept that the location of the house called Desolate left a lot to be desired?	1 ☐
admit to harbouring some regrets about a missed opportunity?	2 ☐
attempt to rationalise her feelings about the house she wanted to buy?	3 ☐
draw an analogy to underline how seriously she took an idea?	4 ☐
pinpoint the moment when she decided to go for something?	5 ☐
mention feelings of curiosity arising out of a conversation?	6 ☐
recount the story of another person who experienced similar feelings to her own?	7 ☐
recall getting the first inkling that a dream wouldn't be realised?	8 ☐
remember ignoring sensible misgivings about a plan?	9 ☐
suggest that her behaviour on one occasion was out of character?	10 ☐

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Love at first sight

Why are people attracted to the idea of buying and renovating ruinous old houses?

A Years ago, glancing through the property pages of the newspaper one evening, I stumbled upon a tiny photograph of a small ivy-clad stone house with a triangle of blue sea in the background. 'For sale by auction' it said, 'guide price: £80,000.' Even if I'd been looking for a country house, and I wasn't, I'd hardly have opted for one in such a remote area, yet somehow that little image became lodged in my mind. Next day, on a whim, I rang the selling agent. The house, I gleaned, gloried in the name Desolate, was truly in the middle of nowhere and hadn't been touched in half a century. Intrigued, I immediately felt an urge to go and see it for myself. So, it was that the following weekend, after an inordinately long drive down from London with the whole family in tow, I found myself edging up the seemingly interminable farm track that led up to Desolate from the main road. It turned out to be two little houses joined by a stone archway. On one side was a clapped out electricity generator; on the other, a couple of dingy rooms downstairs and a couple more upstairs, all with rotten windows and peeling, brown wallpaper. But from the sitting-room window was a view of a garden gate opening onto a field with the sea cliffs beyond. On seeing that, I was smitten.

B For more than 50 years, or so the story went, it had been home to a woman aviator called Miss Darker whose wartime exploits had allegedly inspired Michael Ondaatje's novel, *The English Patient*. In the film, she's played by Kristin Scott Thomas and meets a nasty end in the north African desert. The real-life Miss Darker returned home and spent the rest of her life as a recluse at Desolate. All of this just added to my conviction: I just had to have her house. I didn't care that my children thought it the grottiest thing ever, pointing out that despite the view there was no access to the sea, and it was miles to the nearest shop. My ears were closed to such details. I was in love and would elope if need be. I spent the next two weeks gazing rapt at the photos I'd taken and counting money.

C On the day of the auction, I drove down with an old friend. I took her to see Desolate first, showing it to her with anxious pride as I would show her a man I was marrying. Yes, she said. She understood. The sale was being held in a quiet local town, but as we arrived I sensed my plan was going awry. The car park was jammed with large 4x4s and the room itself was full of braying Londoners: mostly women with expensively abundant hair, all looking strained and excited. I took my place in the front row so I wouldn't have to see the others crammed in behind me. The bidding started at £50,000 and went up slowly. When it paused at £120,000, I was about to raise a shaking hand, but it raced on up, far out of reach until Desolate eventually sold for the best part of half a million. I couldn't look at the man who'd bought it. I got into the car and wept. It was shameful for an unsentimental, middle-aged woman to be brought so low by a heap of stone and a view. But I was desolate over Desolate.

D The memory of that thwarted love affair came back to me recently when a friend called to tell me about a house she'd seen that was far too expensive for her and suited her in no way. I could hear in her voice that it was pointless trying to talk sense into her. I started to wonder what it is about these houses that can hold such allure for people that they sell for many times their value. Internet message boards are testimony to the fact that it's by no means an uncommon scenario. Perhaps the real reason has little to do with bricks or mortar. You look at a view and you think: 'This will make my life different.' And of course, the houses we fall for most are those that need us most – those where we can most easily make our mark and become part of their history. In the end, we did buy a house; an ugly, cheap and practical one. But the sea is easily reached and through repeated use I've grown fond of it. Yet in writing this article I've looked again at the photographs I took of Desolate all those years ago and my heart still aches, just a bit.

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