



Reading 30

You are going to read an extract from a novel. Seven paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs A–H the one which fits each gap. There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

In those days the council houses stretched all over the western side of the city: row after row of huddled, dingy dwellings in orange half-brick or pale white stucco. In summer the chemicals from the May and Baker factory two miles away came and hung round the doors and gardens with an indescribable smell of sulphur, and the most common sight in that part of Norwich early in the morning was a paperboy wrinkling his nose in disgust as he negotiated somebody's front path.

Gap 1

That my mother should intrude into these early memories is no surprise. I remember her as a small, precise and nearly always angry woman, the source of whose anger I never quite understood, and consequently couldn't do anything to appease. Even as a child, though, accompanying her to the small shops in Bunnett Square or on longer excursions into the city, I'm sure that I had some notion of the oddity of her personality.

Gap 2

As a moral code this was completely beyond my comprehension: even now I'm not sure that I understand it. To particularise, it meant not straying into neighbours' gardens or jeopardising their rose bushes as you walked down the street; it meant sitting for long half-hours in a silent dining room, with your hands folded across your chest, listening to radio programmes that my mother liked; it meant - oh, a hundred proscriptions and prohibitions.

Gap 3

It was only later that I comprehended what poor company this trio was; they formed a depressed and depressing sisterhood, a little dribble of inconsequent talk about bad legs, the cold weather and the perils of ingrate children, a category in which I nearly always felt myself included.

Gap 4

This was easier said than done. Growing up in West Earlham at this time followed a well-regulated pattern. Until you were five you simply sat at home and got under your parents' feet (I can remember awful aimless days, when I must have been about four, playing on a rug in the front room while my mother sat frostily in an armchair). Then, the September after your fifth birthday, you were packed off to Avenue Road infants' school half a mile away in the direction of the city.

Gap 5

If I remember anything about these early years it's the summer holidays; those days when you caught occasional glimpses of the world that existed outside West Earlham: a vague old man who lived next door to Mrs Buddery and told stories about his time in the Merchant Navy; a charity fete, once, held at a house far away in Christchurch Road, where a motherly woman doled out lemonade and tried to get me interested in something called the League of Pity - a kind of junior charity, I think - only for my mother, to whom subsequent application was made, to dismiss the scheme on the grounds that its organisers were 'only after your money'.

Gap 6

No doubt I exaggerate. No doubt I ignore her virtues and magnify her frailties. But there was precious little milk of human kindness in my mother; it had all been sucked out of her, sucked out and thrown away.

Gap 7

My mother wasn't, it must be known, altogether averse to this recreation, and eventually almost got to have opinions on the various subjects presented for her edification. I can remember her stopping once in front of a fine study of a Roman soldier in full battle gear to remark, 'Well, I wouldn't like to meet him on a dark night!' I recall this as a solitary instance of my mother attempting to make a joke.

A

To do my mother justice she wasn't unconscious of her role as the guardian of my education. On Sundays occasionally, she would take me - in my 'good clothes' - on the 85 bus to the Norwich Castle Museum. Here, hand-in-hand, suspicious, but mindful of the free admission, we would parade through roomfuls of paintings by the Norwich School of Artists.

B

The lucky few had a mother with a rickety bike and a child seat - these were extraordinary contraptions in cast-iron with improvised safety- straps. As far as I recall, my mother consigned me to the care of other children in the street for this journey.

C

Of explanation - who we were, where we came from, what we were supposed to be doing - there was none. And yet it seemed to me that my early life, lived out in the confines of the West Earlham estate, in a dark little house in a fatally misnamed terrace called Bright Road, was crammed with mysteries that demanded explanation. There was, to take the most obvious, the question of my father.

D

She was, for instance, quite the most solitary person I have ever known, as alone in a room full of people as on a moor. To this solitariness was added a fanatic adherence to a kind of propriety uncommon on the West Earlham estate, which occasionally broke out in furious spring-cleanings or handwashings and instructions to 'behave proper'.

E

Mercenary motives were a familiar theme of my mother's conversation, and politicians my mother held in the deepest contempt of all. If she thought of the House of Commons - and I am not sure if her mind was capable of such an unprecedented leap of the imagination - it was as a kind of opulent post office where plutocrats ripped open letters stuffed with five pound notes sent in by a credulous public.

F

Most of this early life I've forgotten. But there is a memory of sitting, or perhaps balancing, at any rate precariously, on some vantage point near an upstairs window, and looking at the houses as they faded away into the distance. Later on there are other phantoms - faces that I can't put names to, my mother, ironing towels in the back room of a house that I don't think was ours, snow falling over the turrets of the great mansion at Earlham.

G

In time other figures emerged onto these stern early scenes. For all her solitariness, my mother wasn't without her cronies. There was Mrs Buddery, who was fixated on the Royal Family; Mrs Winall, who said exactly nothing, except for grunts supporting the main speaker; and Mrs Laband - livelier than the others, and of whom they vaguely disapproved.

H

Looking back, it was as if a giant paperweight, composed of the West Earlham houses, my mother and her cronies, the obligation to 'behave proper', lay across my shoulders, and that it was my duty immediately to grow up and start the work of prising it free.

Источник задания: CPE Practice Tests (old format)

Reading 30 — Keys

- 1 F
- 2 D
- 3 G
- 4 H
- 5 B
- 6 E
- 7 A

EXPLANATION

In those days the council houses stretched all over the western side of the city: row after row of huddled, dingy dwellings in orange half-brick or pale white stucco. In summer the chemicals from the May and Baker factory two miles away came and hung round the doors and gardens with an indescribable smell of sulphur, and the most common sight in that part of Norwich early in the morning was a paperboy wrinkling his nose in disgust as he negotiated somebody's front path.

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early memories

instructions are explained

summarizes the previous paragraphs

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