

Section B

Text 2

The text below is about the train journey Theodoric took. Read it carefully and answer Questions 5–15 in the Question Paper Booklet.

- 1 As the train glided out of the station Theodoric's nervous imagination accused himself of exhaling a weak odour of stable yard, and possibly of displaying a mouldy straw or two on his usually well-brushed garments. Fortunately the only other occupation of the compartment, seemed inclined for slumber rather than scrutiny; the train was not due to stop till the terminal station, in about an hour's time, and the carriage held no communication with a corridor, therefore no further traveling companions were likely to intrude on Theodoric's semi-privacy. Yet the train had scarcely attained its normal speed before he became reluctantly but vividly aware that he was not alone with the slumbering lady; he was not even alone in his own clothes. 5
- 2 A warm, creeping movement over his flesh betrayed the unwelcome and highly resented presence of a strayed mouse. Furtive stamps and shakes and wildly directed pinches failed to dislodge the intruder and the lawful occupant of the clothes lay back against the cushions. It was unthinkable that he should continue for the space of a whole hour with this alien invasion. Yet, nothing less drastic than partial disrobing would ease him of his tormentor, and to undress in the presence of a lady, even for so laudable a purpose, was an idea that made his ear tips tingle. He is after all, a conservative man. He had never been able to bring himself even to the mild exposure of his toes in the presence of the fair sex although the lady in this case, looked to be soundly and securely asleep; the mouse, on the other hand, seemed to be trying to his godawful best to make his presence felt. 10 15
- 3 This particular mouse must have caffeine in its veins; he could not keep still for a minute and had lost its footing. In fright, or more probably temper, it bit. Theodoric was goaded into the most audacious undertaking of his life. Crimsoning to the hue of a beetroot and keeping an agonised watch on his slumbering fellow traveller, he swiftly and noiselessly secured the ends of his railway rug to the racks on either side of the carriage, so that a substantial curtain hung across the compartment. In the narrow dressing room that he had thus improvised he proceeded with violent haste to extricate himself from his sorry predicament. 20 25
- 4 As the unravelled mouse gave a wild leap to the floor, the rug, slipping its fastening at either end, also came down with a heart-curdling flop, and almost simultaneously the awakened sleeper opened her eyes. With a movement almost quicker than the mouse's, Theodoric pounced on the rug and hauled its ample folds chin-high over his dismantled person as he collapsed into the farther corner of the carriage. The blood raced and beat in the veins of his neck and forehead, while he waited dumbly for the communication cord to be pulled. The lady, however, contented herself with a silent stare at her strangely muffled companion. How much had she seen, Theodoric queried to himself; and in any case what on earth must she think of his present posture? 30 35
- 5 "I think I have caught a chill," he ventured desperately.
- 6 "Really, I'm sorry," she replied. "I was just going to ask you if you would open this window."
- 7 "I fancy it's malaria," he added, his teeth chattering slightly, as much from fright as from a desire to support his theory.
- 8 "I've got some brandy in my holdall, if you'll kindly reach it down for me," said his companion. 40

- 9 "Not for worlds--I mean, I never take anything for it," he assured her earnestly.
- 10 "I suppose you caught it in the tropics?"
- 11 Theodoric, whose acquaintance with the tropics was limited to an annual present of a chest of tea from an uncle in Ceylon, felt that even the malaria was slipping from him. Would it be possible, he wondered to disclose the real state of affairs to her in small instalments? 45
- 12 "Are you afraid of mice?" he ventured, growing, if possible, more scarlet in the face.
- 13 "Not unless they came in quantities. Why do you ask?"
- 14 "I had one crawling inside my clothes just now," said Theodoric in a voice that hardly seemed his own. "It was a most awkward situation." 50
- 15 "It must have been, if you wear your clothes at all tight," she observed. "But mice have strange ideas of comfort."
- 16 "I had to get rid of it while you were asleep," he continued. Then, with a gulp, he added, "It was getting rid of it that brought me to-to this."
- 17 "Surely leaving off one small mouse wouldn't bring on a chill," she exclaimed, with a levity that Theodoric accounted abominable. 55
- 18 Evidently she had detected something of his predicament, and was enjoying his confusion. Theodoric suddenly noticed with terror the recurring stacks of small, ugly dwellings that heralded the journey's end. Sheer terror took the place of humiliation. The train was hurtling towards the terminal, where dozens of prying eyes would be exchanged for the one paralyzing pair that watched him from the farther corner of the carriage. There was one slender, despairing chance, which the next few minutes must decide. His fellow traveller might relapse into a blessed slumber. But as the minutes throbbed by that chance ebbed away. The furtive glance which Theodoric stole at her from time to time disclosed only an unwinking wakefulness. 60 65
- 19 "I think we must be getting near now," she presently observed.
- 20 The words acted as a signal. Like a hunted beast breaking cover and dashing madly toward some other haven of momentary safety he threw aside his rug, and struggled frantically into his dishevelled garments. He was conscious of dull suburban stations racing past the window, of a choking, hammering sensation in his throat and heart, and of an icy silence in that corner toward which he dared not look. Then as he sank back in his seat, clothed and almost delirious, the train slowed down to a final crawl, and the woman spoke. 70
- 21 "Would you be so kind," she asked, "as to get me a porter to put me into a cab? It's a shame to trouble you when you're feeling unwell, but being blind makes one so helpless at a railway station." 75

Adapted from The Mouse by H H Munro

Section B [20 marks]

*For
Examiner's
Use*

Refer to Text 2 on pages 3 and 4 of the Insert for Questions 5–15.

5 Where was Theodoric prior to boarding the train?

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.....[1]

6 When did Theodoric discover the mouse? Answer in your own words.

.....
.....[1]

7 The writer stated that Theodoric is a 'conservative man' (line 16). Explain how this claim is supported with two pieces of evidence from Paragraph 2.

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.....
.....[2]

8 What was unusual and effective about the phrase 'dismantled person' (line 30)?

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.....
.....
.....[2]

9 What was Theodoric expecting to happen in Line 32? Answer in your own words.

.....
.....[1]

- 10 What does 'limited to an annual present of a chest of tea' tell us about Theodoric's acquaintance with the tropics (line 44-45)?

.....
.....[1]

- 11 What does 'this' in Paragraph 16 refer to?

.....
.....[1]

- 12 i) In paragraph 18, how did the two travellers know that they were about to come to the end of their journey?

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.....[1]

- ii) What can we infer about the towns from this observation?

.....
.....[1]

- 13 Explain fully why 'sheer terror took the place of humiliation (line 59) for Theodoric?

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.....[2]

- 14 Theodoric was about to reach the end of his journey. Explain how the language used in Paragraph 20 captures his rising panic.

Support your ideas with three details from Paragraph 20.

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.....[3]

- 15 The structure of the text reflects the feelings of the main character as he tries to rectify his discomfort on his train journey.

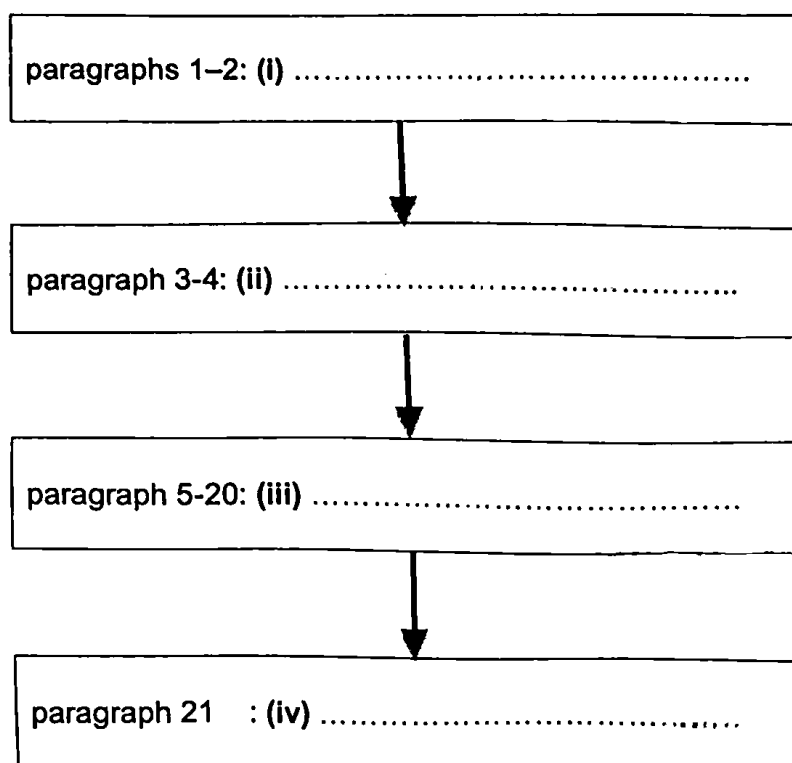
For
Examiner's
Use

Complete the flow chart by choosing one phrase from the box to summarise the main feelings described in each part of the text. There are some extra phrases in the box that you do not need to use.

Cycle of Feelings

Self-conscious	Realisation	Despair and desperation
Increasing discomfort	Feeling like a fool	Feeling out of character

Flow chart



[4]