

# Victoria Junior College

## 2016 JC2 Preliminary Examination

### Theatre Studies and Drama, 9726/01

Time 3 hours

Thursday 15th Sept 2.00 – 5.00pm

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#### Instructions to candidates

Answer **3** questions in total.

Answer Question 1(a) **and** 1(b) **or** 1(c) (Unseen Passage)

**and** Question 2 (Jacobean Comedy)

**and** Question 3 (American Drama)

Answer each question on a fresh sheet of paper.

#### Information for candidates

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question.

You are reminded of the need for good English & clear presentation in your answers. Use sketches or diagrams where necessary.

You are also reminded that this is not a literature paper, write about theatre.

*This paper consists of 8 printed pages including this one.  
Please check now.*

## Form and Concepts

Read the following passage very carefully and then answer the questions that follow it, making certain that your answers are entirely relevant to the extract.

This extract is taken from the play, *The Shadow of a Gunman*, written by Seán O'Casey in 1923. It is set during the Irish War of Independence and it centres on the mistaken identity of a building tenant who is thought to be an IRA (Irish Republican Army) assassin. Donal Davoren is a poet who has come to room with Seumas Shields in a poor, Dublin tenement slum. Many of the residents of the tenement mistake Donal for an IRA volunteer (gunman on the run). Donal does not refute this notoriety, especially when it wins him the affection of Minnie Powell, an attractive young woman in the tenement. Meanwhile, Seumas' business partner, Mr Maguire hides a bag full of Mills bombs in Seumas' room before participating in an ambush in which he is killed. The city is put under curfew as a result of the ambush, and Donal and Seumas do not discover the grenades until the British auxiliary soldiers are raiding the tenement.

### Characters:

Donal Davoren - a poet living with Seumas in the tenement. Some of the residents suspect he has an affiliation with the IRA.

Seumas Shields - a lazy pedlar of about thirty five disillusioned over the nationalist cause he supports who wishes the conflict will end.

Minnie Powell - a woman of twenty three that fawns over Davoren by virtue of his supposed IRA connections.

An Auxiliary - a soldier of the Auxiliary Division (against the IRA).

Mrs Grigson - the wife of Adolphus Grigson, an alcoholic resident of the tenement.

### ACT II

*A room in a tenement in Hilljoy Square, Dublin. The period of the play is May 1920.*

MINNIE POWELL *rushes into the room. She is only partly dressed, and has thrown a shawl over her shoulders. She is in a state of intense excitement.*

MINNIE: Mr Davoren, Donal, they're all round the house; they must be goin' to raid the place; I was lookin' out of the window an' I seen them; I do be on the watch every night; have you anything? If you have...

*There is heard at street door violent and continuous knocking, followed by the crash of glass and the beating of the door with rifle-butts.*

MINNIE: There they are, there they are!

DAVOREN *reclines almost fainting on the bed*; SEUMAS *sits up in an attitude of agonised playfulness*; MINNIE *alone retains her presence of mind. When she sees their panic she becomes calm, though her words are rapidly spoken, and her actions are performed with decisive celerity.*

MINNIE: What is it; what have you got; where are they?

DAVOREN: Bombs, bombs, bombs; my God! In the bag on the table there; we're done, we're done!

SEUMAS: Hail, Mary, full of grace – pray for us miserable sinners – Holy St. Anthony, do you hear them batterin' at the door – now an' at the hour of our death – say an act of contrition, Donal – there is the glass gone!

MINNIE: I'll take them to my room; maybe they won't search it; if they do aself, they won't harm a girl. Good-bye...Donal. (*She glances lovingly at DONAL who is only semi-conscious – as she rushes out with the bag.*)

SEUMAS: If we come through this I'll never miss a Mass again! We're going to have a terrible time.

*The street door is broken open and heavy steps are heard in the hall, punctuated with shouts of "Old the light ere", "Put em' up", etc. An Auxiliary opens the door of the room and enters, revolver in one hand and electric torch in the other. His uniform is black and he wears a black beret.*

THE AUXILIARY: 'Oo's 'ere?

SEUMAS: Only two men, mister; me an' me mate in t'other bed.

THE AUXILIARY: Why didn't you open the door?

SEUMAS: We didn't hear you knockin', sir.

THE AUXILIARY: You must be a little awd of 'earing, ay?

SEUMAS: I had rheumatic fever a few years ago, an' ever since I do be a - I do be a little deaf sometimes.

THE AUXILIARY (*to DAVOREN*). Ow' is it that you're not in bed?

DAVOREN: I was in bed; when I heard the knockin' I got up to open the door.

THE AUXILIARY: You're a koind blowke, you are. Delighted like to have a visit from us, ay? Ah? (*Threatening to strike him*) Why down't you answer?

DAVOREN: Yes, sir.

THE AUXILIARY: What's your name?

DAVOREN: Davoren, Dan Davoren, sir.

THE AUXILIARY: You're not an Irishman, are you?

DAVOREN: I-I-I was born in Ireland.

THE AUXILIARY: Ow, you were, were you; Irish han' proud of it, ay? (*to SEUMAS*) What's *your* name?

SEUMAS: Seuma... Oh no, Jimmie Shields, sir.

THE AUXILIARY: Ow, you're a selt (*he means a Celt*)... one of the seltic race that speaks a lingo of its ahn, and that's going to overthrow the British Empire – I don't think! 'Ere, where's your gun?

SEUMAS: I never had a gun in me hand in me life.

THE AUXILIARY: Now: you wouldn't know what a gun is if you saw one, I suppowse.

SEUMAS: Oh, be careful, please, be careful.

THE AUXILIARY: Why, what 'ave I got to be careful abaht?

SEUMAS: The gun; it might go off.

THE AUXILIARY: An what prawse if it did; it can easily be re-lowded. Any ammunition 'ere? What's in the chest? (*He searches and scatters contents of the chest.*)

SEUMAS: Only a little bit o' grub; you'll get nothin' here, sir, no one in the house has any connections with politics.

THE AUXILIARY: Now? I've never met a man yet that didn't say that...

MRS. GRIGSON *enters, dressed disorderly and her hair awry.*

MRS. GRIGSON: They're turning the place upside-down. Upstairs an' downstairs they're makin' a litter of everything! I declare to God, it's awful what law - abidin' people have to put up with. An' they found a pint bottle of whisky under Dolphie's pillow, an they're drinking every drop of it - an Dolphie'll be like a devil in the mornin' when he finds he has no curer.

THE AUXILIARY (*all attention when he hears the word whisky.*): A bottle of whisky, ay? 'Ere, where do you live - quick, where do you live?

MRS. GRIGSON: Down in the kitchen - an' when you go down will you ask them not to drink - oh, he's gone without listenin' to me. (*while MRS. GRIGSON is speaking THE AUXILIARY rushes out.*)

SEUMAS (*anxiously to MRS. GRIGSON*): Are they searchin' the whole house, Mrs. Grigson?

MRS. GRIGSON (*who is standing at the door, looking out into the hall*): There's not a bit of me that's not shakin' like a jelly!

SEUMAS: They'll hardly search all the house; do you think they will, Mrs. Grigson?

*During the foregoing dialogue the various sounds of a raid - orders, the tramping of heavy feet, the pulling about of furniture, etc - are heard. Now a more definite and sustained commotion is apparent. Loud and angry commands of 'Go on', 'Get out and get into the lorry', are heard, mingled with a girl's voice - it is Minnie's - shouting bravely, but a little hysterically, 'Up the Republic'.*

MRS. GRIGSON (*from the door*): God save us, they're taking Minnie, they're taking Minnie Powell! (*Running out*) What in the name of God can have happened?

SEUMAS: Holly Saint Anthony grant that she'll keep her mouth shut.

DAVOREN (*sitting down on the bed and covering his face with his hands*): We'll never again be able to lift up our heads if anything happens to Minnie.

SEUMAS: For God's sake keep quiet or somebody'll hear you; nothin'll happen to her, nothin' at all - it'll all be alright if she only keeps her mouth shut.

MRS. GRIGSON (*running in*): They're after getting a whole lot of stuff from Minnie's room! Enough to blow up the whole street, they says! God, to-night, who'd have ever thought that of Minnie Powell.

SEUMAS: Did she say anything, is she sayin' anything, what's she sayin', Mrs. Grigson?

MRS. GRIGSON: She's shoutin' 'Up the Republic' at the top of her voice.

SEUMAS: God blast her. Can she not mind her own business? What way are they using Minnie, Mrs. Grigson; are they rough with her?

MRS. GRIGSON: They couldn't be half rough enough; the little hussy, to be so deceitful; she might as well have had the house blew up! God to-night, who'd think it was Minnie Powell!

*Explosions of two bursting bombs are heard on the street outside the house, followed by fierce and rapid revolver fire. There is a general clamour and confusion. SEUMAS and DAVOREN cower down in the room. A lull follows, punctuated by an odd rifle shot; then comes peculiar and ominous stillness, broken in a few moments by the sound of voices and*

movement. MRS. GRIGSON *hurriedly leaves the room. Questions are heard being asked: 'Who was it was killed?', 'Where was she shot?' which are answered by: 'Minnie Powell'; 'She went to jump off the lorry an' she was shot'; 'She's not dead is she?'; 'They say she's dead – shot through the bossum!'*

DAVOREN (*in a tone of horror stricken doubt*): D'ye hear what they're sayin' – Minnie Powell is shot!

SEUMAS: For God's sake speak easy, an' don't bring them in here on top of us again.

DAVOREN: Is that all you're thinking of? Do you realise that she has been shot to save us?

SEUMAS: Is it my fault; am I to blame?

DAVOREN: It is your fault and mine, both; oh, we're a pair of dastardly cowards to have let her do what she did.

SEUMAS: She did it off her own bat – we didn't ask her to do it.

MRS. GRIGSON *enters. She is excited and semi-hysterical, and sincerely affected by the tragic occurrence.*

MRS. GRIGSON (*falling down in a sitting posture on one of the beds*): Minnie Powell, poor little Minnie Powell's been shot dead. Oh, it was horrible to see the blood pourin' out, an' Minnie moanin'. The ambulance is bringin' her to the hospital, but what good's that when she's dead! Poor little Minnie, poor little Minnie Powell, to think of you full of life a few minutes ago, an' now she's dead!

DAVOREN: Ah me, alas! Pain, pain, pain ever, for ever! Oh, Donal Davoren, shame in your position now till the silver cord is loosened and the golden bowl be broken.

### SECTION A: UNSEEN PASSAGE

Answer Question 1 (a) and 1 (b) or 1 (c)

- 1 (a) Identify two moments of significant dramatic tension in the extract. Write brief notes on how you think these moments should be performed to make an impact on the audience? [10]

Answer **one** of the following questions:

- (b) Provide ideas for set, costume and props that would be as appropriate and effective as possible? [15]

OR

- (c) As an actor, how might you approach and perform one of the roles in order to create an effective performance? [15]

### SECTION C: JACOBAN COMEDY

- 2 “These plays are too cruel to be considered comedies by today’s standards!” How far do you agree with this viewpoint and use specific examples from any Jacobean Comedy texts that you have studied. [25]

### SECTION D: AMERICAN DRAMA

- 3 In American Drama, “Unless you adhere to the shared dominant values of the American dream you will never be able to achieve success”. How far do you agree with this statement and provide examples from the texts that you have studied to support your argument. [ 25]

END OF PAPER