



Sixth Form Scholarship Examination

Classics

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions:

You should answer all 3 questions

1 Read through this passage and answer the questions which follow.

Penelope has loyally waited nineteen years for her husband Odysseus to return home from the war at Troy. Many suitors wish to marry her for her status. Now she has been ordered to arrange a competition, the winner of which will marry her. The competition is to shoot an arrow through the holes of axe heads which have been lined up .

Penelope is fetching the bow which Iphitus had given to Odysseus.

The great lady reached the store-room and set foot on the oaken threshold – the work of some carpenter of bygone days, who had smoothed it well and trued it to the line, fixed the door-posts in their sockets and hung the polished doors on them. She quickly undid the thong attached to the hook, passed the key through the hole, and with an accurate thrust shot back the bolt. With a groan like the roar of a bull at grass in a meadow, the doors flew open before her, and she stepped onto the raised floor-boards. Here stood the chests where clothing was laid in scented herbs. Reaching up, Penelope lifted the bow in the shining case off its peg. And there she sat down with the case on her knees and burst into tears and wept aloud as she drew out her husband's bow. But when the torrent of tears had brought its own relief, she set out for the hall to face the proud Suitors, carrying the supple bow and the quiver with its deadly load of arrows in her hands, and her women followed with a box full of the iron and bronze axes that their master had won as prizes. When she drew near to the Suitors the great lady drew a fold of her shining veil across her cheeks and took her stand by a pillar of the massive roof, with a faithful maid on either side. Then she issued her challenge to the Suitors.

trans. E.V. Rieu, revised by D. C. H. Rieu and P. V. Jones (Penguin) p. 317

- a) In lines 5 -6 Homer says that the store – room doors opened “ with a groan like the roar of a bull at grass in a meadow”. How does this comparison help us to imagine the scene in the story? 5
- b) In the passage , what impression do you form of the character of Penelope? Give reasons for your views and support them with details from the passage. 10
- c) Does this passage make you want to read the rest of the Odyssey? Give your reasons. 10

2 Read through this passage and answer the questions which follow.

Aeneas is retelling what happened on the night that Troy fell. In this passage Pyrrhus (a Greek) breaks into the palace of Priam ,King of Troy.

'Right on the threshold of the entrance hall Pyrrhus prances triumphantly, his armour a blaze of bronze: he's just like a snake that glides into the light after a cold winter couched underground, swollen with poisonous herbs it has fed on; now having sloughed off its skin, in gleaming bright colours, all new, it sinuously slithers its coils and lifts its head high to the sun, its forked tongue flickering. With Pyrrhus is the giant Periphas, Automedon, Achilles' charioteer and squire, and some of Achilles' men; they run up to the building, hurling fire-brands onto the roof.

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'In the lead Pyrrhus himself, wielding a tough double axe, batters his way through the door, and wrenches its bronze hinge-posts from their sockets. He hacks out a hole through the solid oak planking, making a great wide opening. The palace interior, the long state-room, is revealed, the private home of Priam and earlier kings: they can see armed men on guard at the entrance. Inside is a confusion of shrieks and pitiful turmoil, and the vaulted halls ring with the wailing of women whose cries reach the golden stars. Terrified mothers flit through the echoing palace, cling to the door-posts, and kiss them. Pyrrhus attacks with his father's ferocity; neither bolts nor guards can resist him.'

trans. G. Tingay (CUP) pp.45-46

- a) In lines 2 -5 Pyrrhus is compared to a snake. What details help the reader to imagine this picture? What does this simile emphasise about Pyrrhus' appearance and behaviour. 10
- b) How well ,in your opinion , does this passage bring the scene to life? Give reasons for your answer? 10
- c) How does the passage reveal the alternative sides of war?

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3 Write about anything from the classical world which you know. It may be a story, a work of literature, art or archaeology. Describe and say what you find interesting about it