

ENGLISH LITERATURE A

(7712/2B)

Paper 2B: Texts in shared contexts: Modern Times: Literature from 1945 to the present day

Insert

Instructions to candidates

The material in this insert is for use with Section B of the question paper.

Section B: Answer both Question 1 and Question 2.

Recommended time for Section B: approximately 100 minutes.

Total marks for Section B: 50 marks (25 marks per question).

The Other Side of the Wall

Marcus Osei

First published 2021 by Quayside Fiction

Extract context: *This extract is taken from Part Two of the novel. The narrator, Elena, is in her late thirties and has been married to Daniel for seven years. She has been exchanging messages with a man named Patrick for several months.*

They had agreed not to meet on Tuesdays, because Tuesday was when Daniel came home early. So naturally it was on a Tuesday that she called, and naturally he came.

She opened the door before he knocked. She had been watching from the upstairs window, she supposed, though she could not remember deciding to. He looked different on her street, which she had not expected. Smaller, somehow. More real. The distance between them when she opened the door was less than a metre and neither of them moved to close it.

"I should not be here," he said.

She stood back to let him in.

The hallway felt different with him in it. His coat was wet. She could smell the cold on him. She took the coat and hung it over Daniel's coat on the peg and did not allow herself to think about that. They went into the kitchen because that was where people went, and she put the kettle on because that was what people did, and they stood on opposite sides of the kitchen island and she thought that this -- this distance, this ordinary room, this Tuesday afternoon -- was somehow worse than anything she had imagined. She had imagined desire as a tide. This was more like weather: persistent, unremarkable, everywhere at once.

"We should talk," he said.

"I know," she said.

The kettle boiled. She did not move to pour it. Outside, a car pulled into the road. They both heard it. Neither of them moved. The car passed. She became aware that she had been holding her breath since he walked through the door.

She made the tea eventually. She gave him the blue mug, which was Daniel's mug, and did not notice until he was already holding it. She thought about saying something and then thought about what she would have to explain and said nothing. Patrick wrapped both hands around it the way Daniel never did. Daniel held mugs by the handle only, fastidiously, as though heat were undignified. She had never thought about this before. She was thinking about it now.

"I have been thinking," Patrick said, "that we should stop."

"I know," she said again.

"I mean it this time."

She looked at him across the kitchen that she had chosen the tiles for and the handles for and the lampshade above the table where Daniel did the crossword on Sunday mornings. All of it chosen, decided, permanent. She had made a life in this room. She had been, by all external measures, happy in it. She still was, she supposed. That was the part nobody told you. That it was possible to want something else without wanting this any less. That desire was not, in the end, a verdict.

"I know you mean it," she said.

He nodded. He did not put the mug down. She did not ask him to leave.

Section B

Answer both Question 1 and Question 2.

0 1

How does Osei present the tension between desire and guilt in this extract?

In your response you should:

- analyse the methods the writer uses to shape meanings
- include relevant subject terminology
- consider the contexts in which the text was written and received.

[25 marks]

Recommended time: 40 minutes

0 2

In this extract, Osei presents forbidden love as something ordinary and domestic rather than dramatic. Compare how illicit desire is presented in this extract and in one or two other texts you have studied.

In your response you should:

- make connections across the texts you have studied

- include relevant subject terminology
- consider the contexts in which texts were written and received.

[25 marks]

Recommended time: 35-40 minutes

Extract: Marcus Osei, The Other Side of the Wall (2021, Quayside Fiction) . That's LIT . For teaching use only . thatslit.org