

WITHINGTON GIRLS' SCHOOL

ENGLISH

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

2014

COMPREHENSION

TIME : 45 MINUTES

Read the story below very carefully. Then answer the questions on the separate question sheet.

Amy looked into her purse again, desperately hoping that she would find more than the ten pounds which had been there last time she looked. No. One five pound note and five one pound coins: all she had left from the money she had been given for her birthday.

- 5 She looked hopefully at her mother: 'Mum, is there any chance I could have next week's spending money a few days early?'

'Absolutely not.' Her mother was **adamant** as she held up a dress from the 'Sale' rack. 'What do you think of this?'

- 10 'Hideous,' muttered Amy under her breath. She and her mother had been trailing round the department stores of Manchester for hours looking for bargains in the sales. Her mother was already loaded up with bags and it looked as if she was going to add to her burden as she strode purposefully towards the till, clutching the revolting yellow dress tightly as if she expected someone to snatch it from her.

- 15 While waiting for her mother to pay, Amy pondered her **dilemma**: she had received quite a lot of money for Christmas and for her birthday but somehow she now seemed to have spent it all. There was still so much she needed to buy! Her pencil case was falling to pieces and she could not bear the thought of going back to school after the Christmas holiday with the same tatty pencil case she had had since Year 4 when all her friends would have new stationery. She also really wanted a new pair of shoes to wear with her new dress at her sister's birthday party. She had seen a pair that were just perfect – silver and sparkly; however, even in the sale they cost £30 so they were out of the question, unless her mother could be persuaded... but Amy very much doubted that possibility.
- 20
- 25 Her mother was heading towards her now.

'Here, carry this.' She thrust a bag at Amy, presumably containing the vile dress, and then they were off again through the crowds.

- 30 Outside it was freezing. The rain had turned to sleet and Amy pulled her scarf tightly around her throat in an attempt to keep out the cold wind. The pavements were crowded with shoppers, rushing to grab a bargain in the January sales.

'Come on, Amy!' Mum was forging ahead. Amy rushed to catch up and then went sprawling as she tripped over a leg.

'Oh, Amy, for goodness sake look where you are going!'

- 35 Amy picked herself up and looked apologetically at the owner of the leg, a girl not much older than herself, who was sitting on the pavement.

'Got any spare change?' the girl asked and Amy felt herself flush with embarrassment. She had fallen over a homeless person and now this girl, this dirty, slightly scary-looking girl, who was wearing torn jeans and about fifteen

40 disgustingly filthy jumpers, who was sitting on a torn sleeping bag and who – Amy’s sudden **proximity** revealed – smelt a bit, well, odd, was looking directly into her eyes and asking for money.

‘Er, sorry, er, no... Mum!’ Amy scuttled after her mother. ‘Mum, have you got any change? That girl...’

45 ‘No, Amy, I haven’t. You can’t go giving money to every beggar you fall over. We need all our money to keep our family going. You should know – you’re always asking for money for this, money for that. Now, let’s get a coffee and then we’ll start on the shoe shops. I need a pair of boots...’

50 Amy sat, surrounded by bags, reserving the table while her mother queued for the drinks. The place was crowded and Amy had to keep turning people away when they tried to sit at her table.

‘Sorry, that seat’s taken. My mum’s in the queue.’ The harassed customers retreated, muttering.

55 The café was so busy they had not even had time to clear the table. Amy gathered the dirty cups and sandwich wrappers to one corner of the table, **grimacing** as she wiped up spilt tea. Suddenly something bright amongst the rubbish caught her eye. A purse! Amy opened it and felt a sudden surge of excitement as she saw the wad of £10 notes inside. £80! Seeing her mother **negotiating** the narrow space between the tables, Amy quickly put the purse in her bag, her mind racing. She would buy the shoes, definitely ... and a pencil case, of course... and a really nice present for her sister. And she would give the
60 homeless girl some money.

Two hours and six shoe shops later her mother was ready to return to the car.

‘Mum, I still need to buy a birthday present for Lucy. Can I come home on the train later?’

65 ‘If you’re careful. Phone me and I’ll pick you up from the station. Here – £3 for the fare. Don’t be late!’

‘Thanks, Mum.’

Relieved of her burdens, Amy dodged the crowds. First she would find the homeless girl.

70 The girl was sitting in the same place, talking now to another girl, as filthy and unhealthy-looking as she was. As Amy approached, the other girl laughed, a horrible laugh, and spat on the floor. ‘Spoilt brat,’ she said, not bothering to lower her voice. Amy felt her eyes fill with tears and she crossed the road. She ran, hardly conscious of the direction she was taking, until she found herself outside
75 a shoe shop, looking at a pair of sparkly silver shoes, with a price tag of £30. She stared at the shoes, trying to calm herself after her encounter with the girls. The sun had set and the light was fading fast. Amy suddenly felt cold and lonely. Somehow the shoes did not seem as appealing as before. They looked cheap; Amy could see where the silver glitter had started to wear off and she could tell

80 they would rub her heels. She thought of the homeless girl, her trainers with the soles flapping open, her soaked jeans, her pinched white face. In the fading light she suddenly knew what she had to do.

85 The lady behind the counter at the café was kind and complimentary when Amy handed in the purse, saying how honest she was, how a lot of people would have kept the money. Amy squirmed uncomfortably, knowing how close she had come to doing just that and feeling unworthy of the woman's praise. She made her escape as quickly as she could, knowing, through her embarrassment, that she had done the right thing.

90 The homeless girl was alone again when Amy passed her on the way to the station. Amy took out her purse and pressed a £5 note and five one pound coins into the girl's hand. The girl looked at her. 'Thanks,' she murmured, the ghost of a smile on her thin lips.

Amy hurried on her way through the darkening streets, clutching the £3 her mother had given her for her train ticket, the only money she had now.