

**Read through the passage very carefully. You should spend at least five minutes reading and re-reading the extract before you answer the questions.**

## **An Emergency**

**This extract is from the opening chapter of an American novel called *The Eighteenth Emergency* by Betsy Byars. It is the story of a 12 year old boy who has to deal with the school bully and his gang of friends. *Cracker Jacks* are an American snack of caramel coated popcorn and peanuts.**

The pigeons flew out of the alley in one long swoop and settled on the awning of the grocery store. A dog ran out of the alley with a torn Cracker Jack box in his mouth. Then came the boy.

5 The boy was running hard and fast. He stopped at the sidewalk, looked both ways, saw that the street was deserted and kept going. The dog caught the boy's fear, and he started running with him.

10 The two of them ran together for a block. The dog's legs were so short he appeared to be on wheels. His Cracker Jack box was hitting the sidewalk. He kept glancing at the boy because he didn't know why they were running. The boy knew. He did not even notice the dog beside him or the trail of spilled Cracker Jacks behind.

Suddenly the boy slowed down, went up some stairs and entered an apartment building. The dog stopped. He sensed that the danger had passed, but he stood for a moment at the bottom of the stairs. Then he went back to eat the Cracker Jacks scattered on the sidewalk and to snarl at the pigeons who had flown down to get some.

15 Inside the building, the boy was still running. He went up the stairs three at a time, stumbled, pulled himself up by the banister and kept going until he was safely inside his own apartment. Then he sagged against the door.

20 His mother was sitting on the sofa, going over some papers. The boy waited for her to look up and ask him what had happened. He thought she should be able to hear something was wrong just from the terrible way he was breathing. 'Mom,' he said.

'Just a minute. I've got to get these orders straight.' When she went over her cosmetics orders she had a dedicated, scientific look. He waited until she came to the end of the sheet.

25 'Mom.' Without looking up, she turned to the next page. He said again, 'Mom.' 'I'm almost through. There's a mistake some –'

He said, 'Never mind.' He walked heavily through the living room and into the hall. He threw himself down on the day bed.

His mother said, 'I'm almost through with this, Benjie.'

30 'I said, "Never mind."' He looked up at the ceiling. In a blur he saw a long cobweb hanging by the light fixture. A month ago he had climbed on a chair, written UNSAFE FOR PUBLIC SWINGING and drawn an arrow to the cobweb. It was still there.

He closed his eyes. He was breathing so hard his throat hurt.

'Benjie, come back,' his mother called. 'I'm through.'

'Never *mind*.'

35 'Come on, Benjie, I want to talk to you.'

He got up slowly and walked into the living room. She had put her order books on the coffee table. 'Sit down. Tell me what's wrong.' He hesitated and then sat beside her on the sofa. She waited and then said again, 'What's wrong?'

40 He did not answer for a moment. He looked out of the window, and he could see the apartment across the street. A yellow cat was sitting in the window watching the pigeons. He said in a low voice, 'Some boys are going to kill me.'

'Not *kill* you, Benjie,' she said. 'No one is –'

45 He glanced quickly at her. 'Well, how do I know what they're going to do?' he said, suddenly angry. 'They're chasing me, that's all I know. When you see somebody chasing you, and when it's Marv Hammerman and Tony Lionni and a boy in a black sweat shirt you don't stop and say, "Now, what *exactly* are you guys planning to do – kill me or just break a few arms and legs?"'

'What did you do to these boys?'

50 'What did I do? I didn't do anything. You think I would do something to Marv Hammerman who is the biggest boy in my school? He is so big he should be in high school.'

'I know you did something. I can always tell. Now, what happened?'

'Nothing, Mom. I didn't do anything.' He looked down at his shoes. With his foot he began to kick at the rug. A little mound of red lint piled up in front of his trainer.

55 'They wouldn't be after you for nothing.'

'Well, they are.' He paused. He knew he had to give an explanation, but he could not give the right one. He said, 'Maybe Hammerman just doesn't like me. I don't know. I'm not a mind reader.'

'Look at me, Benjie.'

60 'Without looking up he said, 'Mom, just listen to what Hammerman did to this boy in my room one time. This boy was in the line for the cafeteria and Hammerman came up to him and –'

'What I want to hear is what happened *today*, Benjie?'

65 'Just *listen*. And this boy in the cafeteria was standing in the line, Mom, doing absolutely nothing, and Hammerman comes up to him and –'

'Benjie, what happened *today*?'

He hesitated. He looked down at his trainer. There was a frayed hole in the toe, and he had taken a ballpoint pen and written AIR VENT and drawn a little arrow pointing to the hole.

70 'What happened?' she asked again.

'Nothing.' He did not look at her.

'Benjie –'

'Nothing happened.'

75 She sighed, then abruptly she looked up. 'The beans!' She walked to the kitchen, and he lay back on the sofa and closed his eyes.

'Benjie?' He looked up. His mother was leaning around the door, looking at him. 'Why don't you watch television? Get your mind off yourself. That always helps me.'

'No, it won't help.'

80 'Well, let's just see what's on.' She came back in and turned on the television. He closed his eyes. He knew there was nothing on television that could interest him.

## **Section A: Reading**

**You are advised to spend 40 minutes on Section A.**

1. What is the boy in the extract called?

.....  
[1 mark]

2. Find and write down three pieces of evidence in the extract that show the story is set in America. You cannot use the Cracker Jacks as an example.

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.....  
[3 marks]

3. Find and write down three pieces of evidence that show that the boy in the extract is afraid.

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.....  
.....  
[3 marks]

4. On line 5 and 6 it says that the 'The dog caught the boy's fear, and he started running with him.' What technique is being used here?

.....  
[1 mark]

5. What happens to the Cracker Jacks?

.....  
[1 mark]

6. Who is chasing the boy?

.....  
.....  
[3 marks]

7. What is the boy's mum doing when he gets home?

..... [1 mark]

8. In several places in the extract, some words are in italics, such as 'Never *mind*' on line 34. Why has the writer done this?

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

9. Give the meaning of the words:

**Awning** (line 1) .....

**Sagged** (line 17) ..... [2 marks]

10. Why does the boy think his mum ought to be able to tell something is wrong with him?

..... [1 mark]

11. Circle how the words are being used **in the lines mentioned below**.

**beside** (on line 38) is a: *noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition.*

**abruptly** (on line 74) is a: *noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition.*

**turned** (on line 79) is a: *noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition.*

**explanation** (on line 56) is a: *noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition.*

[4 marks]

12. Find a word in lines 5-10 that means to look at someone or something briefly.

..... [1 mark]

13. Write down a word that works just as well as '**abruptly**' in line 74.

..... [1 mark]

14. Write down a word that works just as well as '**hesitated**' in line 37

..... [1 mark]

15. How does the writer show the boy's frustration with his mum from line 35 to the end of the extract?

Use brief quotations to support your ideas.

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[4 marks]

16. Explain how the boy in the extract might be described as imaginative.

Use two quotations to support your ideas.

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[4 marks]

17. Why, when asked by his mum what happened on line 70, does he say 'nothing'?

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[2 marks]

## **Section B: Writing**

You are advised to spend 35 minutes on this section.

**EITHER** Write a story in which water plays an important part.

**OR**

Write a story which involves a character going on a journey to somewhere they have never been.

- Your story should be in complete sentences and paragraphs
- Remember to include some description as well as some direct speech between characters and punctuate speech properly
- Be imaginative with your sentences, punctuation, vocabulary and ideas - show how well you can write

***25 marks are available for the content and how well you write the story.***

***25 marks are available for spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary.***

***Some space for planning if you wish to use it. This planning will not be marked.***

