

***A High Wind in Jamaica* By Richard Hughes**

It was the custom that, whenever Mr. Thornton had been to St. Anne's, John and Emily should run out to meet him, and ride back with him, one perched on each of his stirrups.

That Sunday evening they ran out as soon as they saw him coming, in spite of the thunderstorm that by now was clattering over their very heads, with the lightning bounding from tree to tree, bouncing about the ground, while the thunder seemed to proceed from violent explosions in your own very core. 5

"Go back! Go back, you damned little fools!" Mr Thornton yelled furiously: "Get into the house!"

They stopped, aghast: and began to realise that after all it was a storm of more than ordinary violence. They discovered that they were drenched to the skin must have been the moment they left the house. The lightning kept up a continuous blaze: it was playing about their father's stirrup-irons; and all of a sudden they realized that he was afraid. They fled to the house, shocked to the heart: and he was in the house almost as soon as they were. 10 15

Mrs. Thornton rushed out, saying that she thought the worst was over now. Perhaps it was; but all through supper the lightning shone almost without flickering. And John and Emily could hardly eat: the memory of that momentary look on their father's face haunted them. It was an unpleasant meal altogether. he lightning kept up its play. The thunder made talking arduous, but no one was anyhow in a mood to chatter. Only thunder was heard, and the hammering of the rain. 20

But suddenly, close under the window, there burst out the most appalling inhuman shriek of terror.

"Tabby!" cried John, and they all rushed to the window. 25

But Tabby had already flashed into the house: and behind him was a whole club of wild cats in hot pursuit. John momentarily opened the dining-room door and puss slipped in, disheveled and panting. Not even then did the brutes desist: What insane fury led these jungle creatures to pursue him into the very house is unimaginable; but there they were, in the passage, caterwauling in concert: and as if at their incantation the thunder awoke anew, and the lightning nullified the meagre table lamp. It was such a din as you could not speak through. Tabby, his fur on end, pranced up and down the room, his eyes blazing, talking and sometimes exclaiming in a tone of voice the children had never heard him use before and which made their blood run cold. He had gone utterly manic: and in the passage Hell's pandemonium reigned terrifically. 30 35

Outside, above the door the fanlight was long since broken. Something black and yelling flashed through the fanlight, landing clean in the middle of the supper table, scattering the forks and spoons and upsetting the lamp. And another and another - but already Tabby was through the window and streaking again for the bush. The whole dozen of those wild cats leapt one after the other clean through the fanlight onto the supper table, and away from there only too hot in his tracks: in a moment the whole devil-hunt and its hopeless quarry had vanished into the night. 40

Read again the first part of the source, lines 1 to 9.

List **four** things from this part of the text about the weather.

- A
- B
- C
- D

[4 marks]

Q2 [AO2 - language]

Look in detail at this extract from lines 10 to 22 of the source:

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How does the writer use language here to describe the ferocity of the weather?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

[8 marks]

Q3

You now need to think about the **whole** of the **source**.

This text is from the opening of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the extract develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

Q4 [AO4 - evaluate with reference]

Focus this part of your answer on the second half of the source, **from line 23 to the end**.

A student, having read this section of the text said: "The writer skilfully conveys Tabby's fear and the determination of the wild cats in pursuit of him. It is as if you are actually there."

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you should:

- write about your own impressions of the scene
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with quotations from the text.

[20 marks]