

C1 Mark Scheme – *Glass Castle*

Read lines 1 - 6

0.1 List **five** things we learn about the father. [5]

Award **one mark** for each point and/or inference identified by the candidate, **to a maximum of five**:

- We learn that the father was 'a genius'.
- We learn the father 'could build or fix anything'.
- We learn he fixed a neighbour's broken TV.
- We learn he 'used a macaroni noodle to insulate some crossed wires'.
- We learn the father 'was an expert in math and physics and electricity'.
- We learn the father read 'books on calculus and logarithmic algebra'.
- We learn the father 'loved what he called the poetry and symmetry of math'.

No mark should be awarded for unabridged quotation of whole sentences.

Read lines 7 - 23

0.2 What impressions does the writer create of the parents? [5]

Some points that candidates may explore:

- Dad was always 'inventing things', too. Creative.
- Not very realistic – dreamer – tried to create an invention to find 'gold'
- Work-avoiding – never 'finished building it'.
- Opportunity to work with his children 'I'd hold the nails while Dad hit them'
- Cheerful 'Dad always whistled while he worked'
- Mother 'devoted herself to her art' dedicated and 'spent all day working' on art
- Mum had no particular style (lists) oil paintings, watercolours, charcoal drawings, pen-and-ink sketches, clay and wire sculptures, silk screens, and wood blocks.
- Mum wanted to vary her style of art "I don't want to be pigeonholed," Deliberately non-conformist
- Mum fascinated by the 'ancient, crooked Joshua tree' in a desert patch
- Caring as she would 'give us art lessons'
- She sees the struggle to survive as beautiful. . When we asked why she wanted to paint such an ugly, weather-battered tree, she said. "It's the Joshua tree's struggle to survive that gives it its beauty."
- BOTH – talented – and spending time with their children BUT not very practical (dreamers)

Read lines 24 - 47

0.3 How does the writer describe their childhood? [10]

Some points that candidates may explore:

- Plenty of friendship and companionship locally 'Lots of other kids' and 'all played together'
- All their games seem energetic but also perhaps a bit rowdy and tough 'running hard, keeping up with the pack, and not crying if you fell down'.

- Shared poverty 'tight on cash'. Kids were 'sunburned and wore faded shorts and raggedy shirts and sneakers with holes or no shoes at all.' Very factual tone – lacking in self-pity.
- Sense of freedom 'Lori, Brian, and I could go pretty much anywhere and do just about anything we wanted' no awareness of danger or threat. Independent and autonomy
- Lack of rules – not 'burdened' with a lot of rules and restrictions. Very little parental supervision.
- Basic instructions 'The only rule was that we had to come home when the streetlights went on. "And use your common sense," Mom said. Idealistic and unconventional.
- She felt it was good for kids to do what they wanted because they 'learned a lot from their mistakes' – not protective- expects them to get into trouble but sees it as a learning experience.
- Other parents behaved differently 'Carla's mother thought I should go to the hospital for stitches and a tetanus shot' Children aware that they were not coddled
- Mum sees a 'deep gash' and calls it. "Nothing but a minor flesh wound," - unsympathetic or unworried
- Mum then 'returned to her canvas and sent me back out to play' suggests wildness – lack of control is linked to mum's obsession with art. Neglectful?
- Creative and imaginative as dad told stories every night 'the wondrous things he was going to do'
- Shared dream of special project 'build the Glass Castle' – like a fairy-tale – father seems deluded and perhaps wants he children to see him a hero.
- Children believe in the dream home as sometimes he'd pull out the blueprints and 'let us work on the design for our rooms'.
- The expectation that they would 'find gold' and that this was achievable 'on the verge'
- Father expects to 'strike it rich' and makes unrealistic promises to his children – the make-believe future to help them cope with their poverty.

Read lines 48 - 66

0.4 How does the writer show the parents' attitude to money?

[10]

Some points that candidates may explore:

- Mom and Dad refused to let us the children believe in Santa as they couldn't afford expensive presents.
- They didn't want the children to think they weren't as good as other richer kids who got expensive presents, so they explain how Santa was a lie. Technique – makes out the other parents to be dishonest and deceptive - 'deceived by their dishonest parents'
- Mock the claims of the wealthy 'toys the wealthy grown-ups claimed were made by little elves wearing bell caps in their workshop at the North Pole, actually had labels on them saying MADE IN CHINA.'
- Tries to build confidence and self-esteem - "Try not to look down on those well-off children," Mom said. "It's not their fault that they've been brainwashed into believing silly lies."
- Celebrated Christmas late with leftover decorations 'perfectly good bows and wrapping paper that the affluent had thrown away' suggesting the rich are wasteful.
- Make-do attitude Christmas trees which had 'most of their needles and even some silver tinsel'
- Small gifts 'small bag of marbles or a doll or a slingshot' which had been reduced in sales
- Sense that money problems due to dad who lost his job at the mine after getting in a 'pointless argument' with the foreman
- Remembers that they had 'no money at all' for even the cheapest presents.
- That year children got individual time with their father instead 'out into the desert night, one by one'.

- Dad points out the stars as 'the special treats for poor country people like us'. Rich city folks, he'd say, lived in fancy apartments, but their air was so polluted they couldn't even see the stars.
- Encouraging children to value experience over money 'have to be out of our minds to want to trade places with rich people who could not even see the stars.'

Read lines 67 to 84 and consider the passage as a whole.

0.5 A student said, "Despite being poor, the parents are hopeful and positive and still have their dreams.' How far do you agree with this view? [10]

Some points that candidates may explore:

From whole text:

- Father inventive (making a prospector) as hopes to find gold
- Father cheerful 'whistles' as he works and involves the children in his plans
- Father tells the children stories at night.
- Father created an elaborate fantasy of building a 'glass castle' and has even drawn up plans.
- Mother obsessed with her 'art' and thinks she will be famous artist – varies her style as she doesn't want to be pigeon-holed.
- Mother does give children art lessons – but again, only in projects she is interested in. Selfish?
- Mother see beauty in the struggle to survive – like the Joshua tree – perhaps thinks children need the struggle to grow resilient.
- Dismissive of injury – calls a 'deep gash' a minor flesh wound – no effort to get medical treatment. A case could be argued here that her optimistic nature is actually neglect. It is clear she just wants to return to her art.
- They keep up children's confidence and morale by mocking the 'lies' about Christmas – but are they just making themselves feel better about not spending money on their children.
- Father seems temperamental when he loses his job over a 'pointless' argument which led them to have no money at all. Seems reckless or irresponsible.
- Makes up for it by instilling in children that nature is priceless and not to envy those with money.

From lines 67 to the end:

- Dad offers them each a 'star' – something that will survive the test of time.
- Dad argues that no-one else 'owns' the stars so he can give them away.
- Dad explains Venus is a planet not a star but give it to her at Christmas anyway – joking. Explains why it seems so bright. Sees her disappointment.
- Dad sees the importance in having values beyond that of money. The memory of their star will last much longer than any plastic present.
- Children are encouraged to 'pity' the rich who only have money, not the stars.