



Shrewsbury School

SHREWSBURY SCHOOL

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION 2013

ENGLISH

(1 hour)

Instructions to candidates:

- Answer ALL the questions in SECTION A and ONE question from SECTION B.
- Always write in full sentences, paying close attention to spelling, punctuation and clarity of presentation.
- The quality of your answers will be assessed and you should think carefully before writing.
- Marks are shown in brackets at the end of each question, and should be used as guidance for the length of time to spend on each question.
- Answer on lined paper.

Section A: Comprehension (30 minutes)

Read the passage below, taken from *Lord of the Nutcracker Men* by Iain Lawrence, before answering the questions.

My dad was a toy maker, the finest in London. He made miniature castles and marionettes, trams and trains and carriages. He carved a hobbyhorse that Princess Mary rode through the ballroom at Buckingham Palace. But the most wonderful thing that Dad ever made was an army of nutcracker men.

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He gave them to me on my ninth birthday, thirty soldiers carved from wood, dressed in helmets and tall black boots. They carried rifles tipped with silver bayonets. They had enormous mouths full of grinning teeth that sparkled in the sun.

10 They were so beautiful that every boy who saw them asked for a set for himself. But Dad never made others. “They’re one of a kind,” he said. “Those are very special soldiers, those.”

I had no other army to fight them against, so I marched my nutcracker men across the kitchen floor, flattening buildings that I made out of cards. I pretended that no other army even *dared* to fight against those fierce-looking soldiers.

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When I was ten, the war started in Europe, the war they said would end all wars. The Kaiser’s army stormed into Luxembourg, and all of Europe fled before it.

But for me, the war really began on the day the butcher vanished, when I found his door mysteriously locked. Inside, the huge carcasses hung on their hooks, and the rows of pink meat lay on the counters. Yet there was no sign of Fatty Dienst, who had greeted me there just the day before – as he always had – with a great smile and a laugh, with a nub of spicy sausage hidden in his apron pocket. He’d pulled it out in his hand that had no thumb, and said – as always – “*Ach*, look what I’ve found, Johnny.” His accent turned my name to Chonny. “That’s goot Cherman sausage there, Chonny.” he’d told me.

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That night I asked my dad, “What happened to Fatty Dienst?”
“That *butcher*?” said Dad. “I suppose he’s gone home to be with all the *other* butchers. To join that *army* of butchers.”

I didn’t understand; they had always been friends. Many times I had seen Dad laughing at Fatty’s jokes, or the winking as he slipped an extra slice of ham in with the rest.
“I never trusted that man,” said Dad.

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Then the others vanished: Mr Hoffman the barber, Henrik the shoemaker, Willy Kempf the doorman. They slipped away one by one, and soon only Siegfried was left – poor little Siegfried who worked as a waiter. I went to school with one of his sons.

But it wasn’t much longer until I saw *him* leaving too, with his wife and their children, each with a suitcase made out of cardboard. A crowd of boys and barking men drove them along like so many sheep. Some of my pals ran in circles around the poor man, who walked so slowly and sadly that I felt like crying.

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Dad was watching beside me, in the window of our flat. He looked furious. “Do you know

what that fellow was doing?”

“Serving people?” I asked.

- 45 “Telling them he was Swiss,” said Dad, his hands clenched. “But I demanded to see his passport, and showed up the rotter for what he was.”

- Off they went, with their little cardboard suitcases, down towards the railway station on Victoria Street. Dad flung open the window and shouted after them, “Go along home!” It made no sense: their home was in London, just around the corner. Only the week before, I had seen
50 Dad get up from our supper at Paddington Station and press a tenner into little Siegfried’s hand. But now he seemed full of hate, and I thought I would never understand how a man could be his friend one day, and his enemy the next.

- Then the Kaiser’s army stormed into Belgium. I saw them at the picture show, hundreds of
55 soldiers looking just like my nutcracker men, all in black boots and silver tipped helmets. They flickered across the screen, their arms held stiff at their sides but their legs swinging high. They marched on and on as though nothing would stop them. And I started asking my dad, “Can you make me some Frenchmen? Can you make me some Tommies?”

- There was nothing Dad wouldn’t do for me. He whittled away in his shop, and came home with
60 a tiny Frenchman, his blue coat buttoned back into flaps, his legs marching. I named him Pierre. The next day it was a Tommy that Dad brought home, with the tiniest Union Jack I’d ever seen painted on his sleeve. I put him into the battle on the fifth day in August, 1914, the night that Britain went to war.

- 65 All of London seemed to celebrate. Men joined up by the hundreds, by the thousands, marching away in tremendous, cheering parades. They passed my father’s toy shop, stepping along, as the women shouted and the children dashed in amongst them. Through a blizzard of rose petals, they passed in such numbers, with such a stamping of feet, that the smaller toys shook on my father’s shelves. But Dad didn’t go with them.

Section A: Comprehension (30 minutes)

- 1) What is the name of the narrator? 1 mark
- 2) Name four things that the narrator's father made before he made the army of nutcracker men. 2 marks
- 3) How old was the narrator when war was declared in Europe? 1 mark
- 4) Name the five men who disappeared and their professions. 5 marks
- 5) What was different and important about the last person's disappearance? 4 marks
- 6) Explain what Dad means when he says "*That* butcher." (line 27) 3 marks
- 7) What does the narrator find confusing about his father? 2 marks
- 8) What is the significance of the narrator's request in lines 57-8? 3 marks
- 9) When did Britain go to war? 1 mark
- 10) Identify the metaphor in line 67 and explore its significance. 3 marks

[25 marks]

Section B: Short essay (30 minutes)

Write a story with **one** of the following titles:

- 1) Describe your favourite room.
- 2) Write a story with the opening sentence: "He awoke feeling groggy and confused..."
- 3) "School trips – what a useless waste of time!" Write a speech in which you **either** agree or disagree with this view.

[25 marks]

[Total = 50 marks]