

BENENDEN

Lower School Scholarship 2018

ENGLISH

13+

1 Hour

Full Name:

Current school:

Date:

Instructions to Candidates:

- Write your answers in the space provided in this booklet.
- The total mark for the paper is 100
- The first two questions are based on a fiction passage; the final question is to demonstrate your own writing skills.

Read the following extract from Robert Cormier's novel 'Heroes' and answer the questions beneath. In this extract the narrator describes a table tennis tournament at school.

Two hours later, I had survived more games than I could count, time passing in a blur as the ball zoomed back and forth across the table. Serve and return. Spin and chop. The kill shot and the soft shot. My opponents went down in rapid succession. Finally, Joey LeBlanc, who was having a bad day with his serves, lost by a wide margin, 21 to 12, and went off muttering to himself.

Never before had I known such a sense of destiny. I felt invincible, impossible to defeat, the ball always under my control. The spectators often cheered, gasped at a spectacular shot, either by me or by an opponent, and fell silent when the outcome of a contest seemed in doubt. But I knew no doubt. Between games, my eyes sought Nicole and often spotted her smiling encouragement. The centre seemed vacant when I looked and did not see her.

Louis Arabelle also had been winning contest after contest at the other table, drawing his own cheers and applause. We glanced at each other between games and exchanged grins. It seemed inevitable that we would meet in the final contest of the day. Each time I heard a burst of applause for the next table, I knew that Louis had scored another spectacular point.

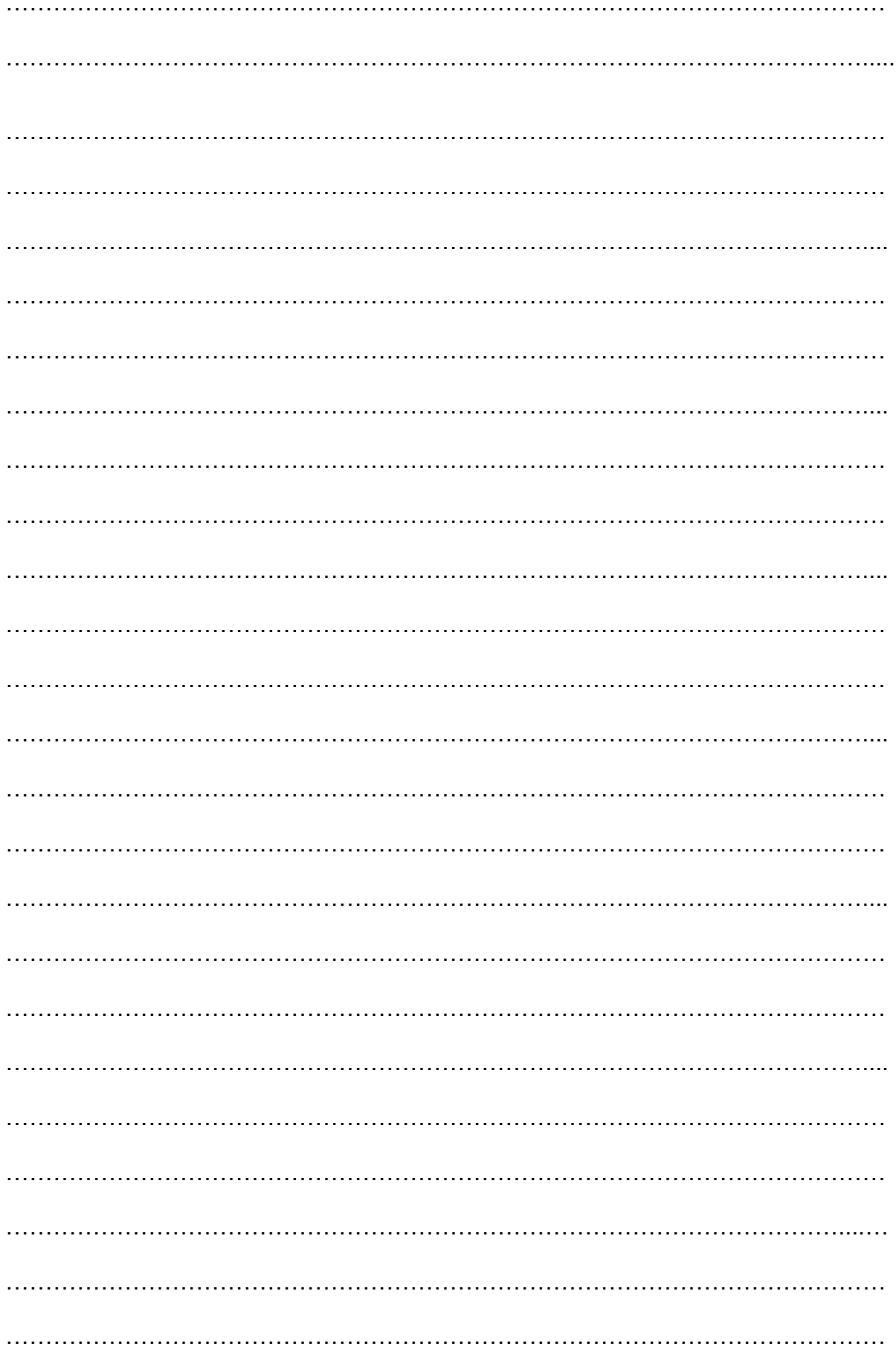
Finally, Louis and me. Standing across the table from each other. Both of us undefeated. Louis tall and rangy with long arms and legs, ready to play his deceptive game, never tense, never hurrying. I prepared myself for his soft strokes and dizzy spins and chops.

Louis took five quick points with his first round of serves, catching me off balance with the casual way he raised his paddle and the ferocity of the ball as it arched over the net towards me. A hush fell on the crowd.

I didn't panic, told myself to relax: this was a day in which I could not lose. My own five serves sent the game into a tie and after that I simply planted myself six feet from the table and concentrated on the return. Louis lost three points in a row and for the first time I saw him flushed with frustration, trying harder, frowning and, finally, making mistakes.

I reached 21 points to his 18 simply playing the game Larry LaSalle had taught me, being patient, remaining cool and composed while Louis pressed harder. As he missed his last remaining shot which gave me the victory, a shout went up from the crowd followed by cheers and whistles and the stomping of feet.





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(30 marks)



