



South Australian
Certificate of Education

English Literary Studies 2018

Question booklet

Critical Reading (Questions 1 to 3)

Answer ***all*** questions

Reading and responding time 100 minutes

Total marks 30



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Questions 1 to 3

You must answer **all** three questions.

1. Each author of the three texts presents different aspects of the same event. In what ways does the content of the playscript (Text 2) and the prose text (Text 3) add to that provided by the poem (Text 1)? (*one or two paragraphs*)
2. Choose *two* of the texts. Compare the ways in which the authors have used the conventions of the text type to develop a character or characters. (*three paragraphs*)
3. Using the text you did *not* select for Question 2, explore the ways in which the author uses stylistic features to present ideas. (*two or more paragraphs*)

TEXT 1

List of ingredients

Inside the small community hall the spring day feels unnaturally warm, the crowded space an oven, as the townsfolk simmer in expectation of the fair's main event: the judging of cakes and afternoon tea delicacies. Hungry for first prize, floured claws are out for the winner's blue rosette.

Baking society has its rules and crisp, calculated expectations enforced by the grand dame of baking, Mrs Hazel Bishop, well-seasoned competition president of forty regimented years, her judgment sharp as a paring knife, her taste buds merciless.

Mrs Bishop raises an arched brow at the luscious morsels of young Miss Lily Stephens who quakes and blushes, a pink jelly cake under hawk-like inspection. Her girlish rosy spheres of sponge evoking childhood and fun, dropped to the plate with heavy disdain.

Assured hands question Mrs Miller's fruitcake, the sultanas and currants boiled within an inch of their lives. Are they evenly distributed throughout? Is the cake a delicious golden-straw colour on the outside? Or is it over-baked and dry like its creator, Mrs Miller, desiccated by years on the land?

Mrs Bishop turns up her nose in revulsion — handkerchief at the ready — at the familiar whiff of local scandal, Ms Frith, her cake overpowering, too much spice or alcohol. Lop-sided, a little tipsy, slightly sunken, the cake's surface is uneven and corrugated.

She moves to Mrs Pikoulos's entry. A sponge should be light and fluffy, the same thickness, the same colour. Here, there is a foreign hint of difference in the icing, a distant Mediterranean tang, a disagreeable flavour, a sour-cherry longing for home.

A murmur ripples through the hall. Surprise entrant, mild Mr Howard, jam-cheeked librarian stands, puffed up and proud, behind a glorious plate. A sign of a light hand and a loving touch, his scones are well risen with straight sides, thin golden crusts top and bottom, crowned with clotted cream.

Raising scone to lips — steely eyes trained on the sweet, enticing entrant — Mrs Bishop takes a ferocious bite. The air is sucked from the room in the congregation's shared intake of breath as with officious flourish Mrs Bishop pins the blue rosette on Mr Howard's chest. The icing on her cake.

TEXT 2

In first place

This scene is located in an old community hall. The set is constructed of two circles: a central, raised platform that is the fixed centre around which an outer circle revolves. On the elevated podium-like centre stands MRS BISHOP. In front of her is a large radio microphone on a stand. On the outer circle, at uniform intervals, the five contestants are located. Each contestant sits, facing the central platform (inwards) on a folding steel chair. As the outer circle turns, the contestants are delivered — still seated, back to the audience — to face MRS BISHOP who remains always facing the audience.

A spotlight illuminates MRS BISHOP. She is holding a clipboard and wearing uniform-like trousers and jacket, khaki green. When she speaks, she does so into the microphone and her voice is amplified.

BISHOP *(steely and authoritarian)* As judge of this competition, I declare the event officially open. *(pause, with fixed gaze)* Let us be clear. This competition is about more than recipes and slices and cakes — more than simply baking and jovial camaraderie. This is an event that is about striving, about standing up against the odds, about being recognised and finding a place. And. *(pause)* It is about the hunger for first place. That place above all others. *(pause)* So I, Hazel Ann Bishop, say now: Let the judging begin.

The light suddenly spreads to encompass the whole stage. It is a searing, white light. Music, like that of a carousel, plays: it is pretty, but distant. At its sound, the outer circle turns until the first contestant is delivered: facing MRS BISHOP, back to the audience.

BISHOP *(dispassionate and perfunctory)* So, dear — your name?

LILY *(nervous)* Lily Stephens.

BISHOP Lily Stephens. You look about, what — twelve years old?

LILY I'm thirteen.

BISHOP Thirteen. *(pause — just long enough for Lily to feel uncomfortable)* And, Lily Stephens, what is it that you have made?

LILY Jelly cakes.

BISHOP *(raised eyebrow)* Jelly cakes?

LILY Yes. They're sponges dipped in jelly with a coconut sprinkle.

BISHOP *(slightly terse)* I know what a jelly cake is, Miss Stephens. *(pause — and then with slow condescension)* Listen. Perhaps you will accept a piece of advice? In future, for such events, you should choose something less ... juvenile. Jelly is not an elegant ingredient and pink is an unsophisticated colour for any food. These 'cakes' you have made are really an infantile version of the lamington. *(a thought)* Now there's something with more culinary refinement. The lamington. *(false smile)* Think about it, young Miss. Perhaps in the distant future your efforts might be a little more grown-up. *(dismissive)* Thank you.

Text 2 continues on page 6

Text 2 (continued)

The carousel music plays. The sound is a little distorted, less pretty. The outer circle revolves and brings MRS MILLER to face MRS BISHOP.

BISHOP Eileen Miller. (*with a smirk*) Long time, no see.

MILLER (*weary*) Yes. Don't get into town much. We've been struggling.

BISHOP (*with a hint of superiority*) Hard times?

MILLER Drought. You know how it is.

BISHOP Yes, dry. Like your cake, unfortunately. Too much heat, too long in the oven.

MILLER Sometimes things get the better of you.

BISHOP Look, I will give you some advice Eileen. You should stop relying only on the land. What you need is an education to fall back on. Diverse skills. Come into town more often. Enrol in a course. Break out a little. Perhaps you could start by taking something simple, like a cooking class. (*patronising*) Thank you for your efforts. Better luck next time.

Carousel music. More discordant, an uncomfortable sound. The outer circle revolves and brings MS FRITH to the front.

BISHOP (*curt and dismissive*) Frith.

FRITH Call me Faye.

Pause.

BISHOP It surprises me, *Frith*, that you think you can turn up here and hold your head high and assume that bygones are bygones.

Pause.

FRITH (*because it should be the focus of their exchange*) I've made a cake.

BISHOP Wonders will never cease. She's remained focused enough to follow a recipe from start to finish.

FRITH It's an orange syrup cake.

BISHOP (*leaps on it*) Syrup, hey? And what went into that syrup, Frith? In what special concoction have you indulged?

FRITH (*finally drawn into it, defensive*) I've been seeing a counsellor, Hazel. I'm making progress.

BISHOP (*with finality*) Yes. Well. You know how the saying goes. A leopard never changes its spots.

With irritation, MRS BISHOP waves MS FRITH on. Carousel music. Tune barely recognisable now. A darker mood. ANGELIKA PIKOULOS faces MRS BISHOP.

BISHOP (*reading from the clipboard*) How do you say this? (*struggles with the pronunciation*) Peek-a-loo-us.

Text 2 continues on page 7

Text 2 (continued)

PIKOULOS *(with the hint of an accent)* Pikoulos. Angelika Pikoulos.

BISHOP What is it, Middle Eastern?

PIKOULOS Greek.

BISHOP Must make it hard to feel like you belong here, with a name like that.

MRS PIKOULOS *does not reply.*

BISHOP Now. This cake of yours. *(a little annoyed)* There are some strange flavours here. Something foreign. What on earth is it?

PIKOULOS Perhaps, the anise? Or maybe you are tasting the mahlep. Is it hint of cherry?

BISHOP Can't say what it is. And that's the problem, *Angela*. People aren't interested in these strange ingredients. People want Australian. You know what I mean? You can't be bringing these fancy flavours here and expect to integrate. *(scornful)* To be one of us, you need to adapt. Give it some thought and maybe next time you'll be in with a chance.

The sound of the carousel is just a moody cacophony. ALISTAIR HOWARD *faces* MRS BISHOP.

BISHOP Alistair Howard. What a surprise! *(bemused laugh)* Though I suppose, amongst all those library books, there would be a recipe or two. What culinary delight have you made for us?

HOWARD Scones with home-made clotted cream.

BISHOP *(mildly impressed)* Home-made? How versatile of you. *(pause)* Do you get into the kitchen much?

HOWARD Every now and then.

BISHOP It is good to see a man trying out for this competition. So pleased that you could join us. We're all for some novelty on occasion. *(like the casting of a blessing)* I wish you all the best, Alistair Howard.

HOWARD *(uncertain about how to take it all)* Yes. Thank you.

Now that each contestant has faced MRS BISHOP, *the light begins to retract back to centre.*

BISHOP Before I announce the winner, let it be clear — as always — that this judge's decision is final. *(pause, the announcement is delivered without looking at any of the contestants)* And my decision is that the winner of this year's Lockville Bake-off is ... *(pause for effect)* ... the scones with clotted cream. *(a command, pointing to ALISTAIR HOWARD)* You. You may approach the podium.

ALISTAIR HOWARD *stands, a furtive glance to the others who have lost, and moves to the centre, standing below the central podium.* MRS BISHOP *leans down and pins the rosette to ALISTAIR HOWARD's shirt. She then stands upright, looming above, statuesque. The light has now retreated so that it is, as at the start, only a spotlight on* MRS BISHOP.

BISHOP Please. Some applause for the one in first place.

Blackout.

The competition

Before: Lily Stephen's preparation

How proud her grandmother will be that she made them all by herself. How very grown-up, Lily thinks, as she hungrily licks the remaining jelly from her fingers. Small vanilla cakes with whipped cream, dipped in raspberry jelly and rolled in coconut, dainty and sweet.

Her cakes are beautiful pink diamonds. Perfect! She paid close attention to all the rules. Took care to focus, like a real baker. The hardest part was knowing when the jelly was the right consistency for coating the precisely trimmed morsels of cake. It had to be partly set, thick and viscous in order to stick: too early and the raspberry jelly would have soaked into the sponge and left it stained and soggy; too late and it would not have stuck at all. Hers were just right. Now she can't stop rushing back into the kitchen to stare at them.

Tearing herself away, she knows that she must get ready. Only her nicest dress and headband will do for the judging. Today she will stand before the town and, in each delicate cake, offer up a piece of her heart.

A baking debutante, coconut confetti lining the path, one foot in the door of adulthood.

During: Alistair Howard's method

Today, it's the slowness I see, for there is a luxurious lack of urgency in this old community hall.

I'm happily immune to Mrs Bishop, the judge who is convinced that her clipped tone and sombre jacket are intimidating. However, these are laughable, particularly when I think back to my dizzying days in New York.

Initially, I loved the adrenaline and relished the persistent hunger for perfectionism that devours a Michelin-starred restaurant in Manhattan. With ritualised sweat, and a compelling surge, every shift in that kitchen was a performance. Tilting in close, Tony would hiss, 'Don't you love the buzz?' as we seared, flipped, braised. Seared, flipped, braised.

Nights became mornings. Mornings became days and it all became unrelenting, unhealthy, unsustainable. Escape was essential. One midnight, in a euphoric stench, I regarded Tony's vacant gaze, and overheard myself declare, 'I quit'.

Now I am a local librarian adrift in a monastery of hushed books. Cloistered far from voices snarling orders and the staccato guillotining on stainless-steel benches and the empty artistry on those dreadfully white plates.

As Mrs Bishop clears her throat into the microphone, ready to anoint her victor, I smile at my scones with their home-made clotted cream. She will never know the restorative bliss of these scones, in this tiny hall.

Either way, I'm winning. This new, gentle life is my triumph.

Because I can, I exhale.

Text 3 continues on page 9

After: Mrs Pikoulos's cure

I miss you, Christos. Three years have passed, but the ache is still as strong.

What chance did we have, Christos? We worked too hard. We saved and saved — to be sending Dimitrios to university — and then? Our valencia trees worthless, ruined by all those oranges from America. We had no chance.

We tried to fit in. But the city is hours away, and there are no friends in this strange town. How I baked and baked for Dimi's school and football club and all the church fetes. I baked my days away. Now Dimi's in Hong Kong working and I have no one. No one for a catch-up, no one to laugh and share and cry with.

This is no place for me. I'm bitter and sour and full up with loneliness. Your anise and fennel patch is spindly and now mostly weeds. I find it hard to cook, and cooking for one is no way to live.

And that woman, Mrs Bishop, her words still sting — 'People want Australian, you know what I mean?' I knew at that moment I would never belong.

I'm sorry, Christos. I will be leaving without you. Father Stavros promises he'll organise flowers on your anniversary and name day. I must return to Lemnos, to my sister and my cousins, and leave this other land. My heart is heavy, Christos.

We were never in with a chance — you know what I say?