

The Best Composition KCPE 2003

A NERVE-JARRING ORDEAL

The occasion was very different from what we had expected. Even before we entered the room, we could hear some noises.

We slowly approached the room gazing at each other worriedly. 'Where are all the people?' I curiously asked myself. My mother and I were invited for a Thanks-giving party in my neighbour's house but to our utter disbelief, there was no one in sight.

Abruptly, we heard another sound inside the room. We looked around to see if anyone was there but our efforts were futile. Slowly and cautiously, we approached the room. My heart beat erratically as I stared suspiciously at the door, wondering what horrors lay on the other side.

I reluctantly got hold of the door-knob as open the door as it creaked loudly. I was engulfed by a wave of pitch darkness. My mother stood beside the door gazing at me. Suddenly, I heard another sound, although it was more distinct and close. I stood still as I gazed into the darkness that had enveloped me, trying to make out shapes. In a split second, I heard a hair-rising scream from behind me. I turn around, knowing perfectly well that it must have been my mother. Fear ran its icy hand up and down my spine as I made my way back to the door. In the blink of an eye, two strong hands clutched

my neck in a vice-like grip holding me back.

My heart concorted in painful lumps as I tried to escape from the grip. The hands tightened and pressed against my skin. I tried to breath but my efforts bore no fruits. I stood there trying to evade the brutal force that had already captured me. My body began to get limp as I began to lose my senses. I felt the grip loosen and finally let go. I fell to the ground with a sickening thud. I tried to breath but air could not reach my lungs. I shut my eyes as my world exploded into pitch-darkness.

When I came to, I found myself in a room. The walls were black with age and dirt. The ceiling seemed not to have touched white-wash in more than a decade. A dim light in the centre of the desolate room flickered as if a soft breeze was blowing. The memories of what had happened came flooding back. Questions filled my mind, questions whose answers I did not know. I slowly stood up. My neck still felt sour and the marks of the attacker's nails that had dug into me were still fresh.

I gazed around looking for a way out of that mess. I called out my mother's name repeatedly but my cries were only answered by the pin-drop silence. Tears of despondency cascaded down my ruddy visage as grotesque images filled my mind. My stomach twisted in agonizing knots as searing pain surged through me. What if my mother was killed?

I thought to myself. Even the thought of it made shocks run down the nape of my neck to the tip of my toes. Bitterness dug a deep cavity into my heart as I thought about life without my mother.

Hardly had I thought of it when I heard a loud embittered laugh come from outside the room. I quickly wiped away the tears and reluctantly, approached the door I thought to myself, that the attacker was standing, waiting for me, but my instincts told me otherwise. Mustering all my courage, I slowly turned the door knob and the door creaked open.

"Surprise!" I stood there transfixed to the ground as I gazed around. My eyes soon adjusted to the bright light that had covered me. All around me was everyone I knew. My friends and my relatives were all around, all clad in special costumes. Out of the crowd - came my mother. I ran towards her as she hugged me fondly. Tears of joy welled up in my eyes but I blinked repeatedly to bid them back. "Happy Halloween Priscilla," she whispered gently into my ear.

All the fear and melancholy that had filled me, turned into joy, for I was as happy as a sandboy. It had all been part and parcel of the plan to scare me out of my wits, but it did not matter any more. An ear to ear smile formed across my thudding visage as I knew it was going to be a day to be remembered.

The candidate communicates definitely and the account is engrossing', There is a twist in the story and the end is well managed. There are a number of tickable items, both vocabulary, phraseology and sentence construction. The candidate still makes errors such as the construction blemish in the first sentence of the third paragraph. '*sour*' is used instead of '*sore*' and '*turn*' instead of '*turned*', but these do not detract by much. It still remains an outstanding composition.

Mark awarded 38

3.4 ADVICE TO TEACHERS

Teachers are reminded to warn candidates against reading sample compositions and memorizing chunks if not whole compositions for regurgitation during examinations. This amounts to cheating in examinations and the KNEC is increasingly getting concerned. *Candidates should not be surprised when their results are cancelled as a result of such dishonesty.* Instead, the teachers should encourage wide reading of story books, newspapers, magazines and listening to the radio, TV and participation in debates and speech competitions to improve their language. Let there be adequate practice in composition writing.