**Assessment Task for Reading**

**Topic: A Short Story – Memories of Plots and Schemes**

This assessment task focuses on developing senior secondary students’ reading skills.

This set of materials contains the following:

* **The reading text**
* **A set of questions**
* **Suggested answers**
* **Annotated text**

**Reading Text**

**Memories of Plots and Schemes**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 5  10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50  55  60  65  70 |  | I am in my seventies now, but I still run my business very actively and am too busy to look back much. But today I am in a reflective mood. It won’t last long, but while it does I’d like to tell you a story. It’s a rather private story so please don’t repeat it as some people would blame me for what I did then.  It comes from over fifty years ago – 1980 if I remember properly. The scene is a comfortable room in an office building. There wasn’t much conversation between the five people sitting there. They sipped at the coffee I served them, but waved away the sandwiches. I knew from Reception that they were all bidders for the big contract and were waiting to hear the company’s decision. Rachel had said in fact it was worth a few million and there’d be sure to be a lot more business if that first contract went well. The lady in blue tried to make some conversation, but she seemed to be the only one at ease. She only got short responses which did not keep the conversation going.  Just then the door opened and Mr Meredith walked in. He was smartly dressed, as ever, but today he had a black tie on and wore a black armband. Everyone got up, and the only man in the group stepped forward to shake his hand.  “Oh, I am sorry, my condolences.”  “Thank you. Yes, my father died last night.”  Everyone murmured their regrets.  “He was very old and had been ill for a long time, so it is not a shock. I must leave soon but before I go I must put you all out of your misery: the contract has been awarded to Apex. Congratulations! Peter.”  A smile came to the young man’s lips though he quickly suppressed it. A frown moved even faster across the lady in blue’s face, before she replaced it with a polite smile and offered her congratulations too. Her assistant stood agape, while one of the others gave an audible sigh, and the last one gave everyone a dark look.  “Well, thank you, all. I hope you won’t mind excusing us now,” Mr Meredith added.  “Of course not, but please express my condolences to your mother,” said the lady in blue.  Mr Meredith bowed. “I’ll be sure not to forget, Miss Davis.”  They all trooped out apart from the boss and the successful Peter. I brought more coffee.  “Thank you for this opportunity, sir.”  “Your bid is a good one and well-presented. But I admit I am also very interested in your China contacts. My father would never allow us to do business there because his brother was killed by Chinese soldiers in the Korean War, but it is time to move on now and the company really must start building bridges with Asia. I have a feeling that in the next few decades China’s growth is going to surprise the world.”  I heard no more as I moved away to clear the other cups, and they then left the room. But I was beginning to understand a rather strange conversation I had heard a few weeks earlier. It had been between the lady I now knew was Miss Davis, her assistant and a very well-dressed middle-aged gentleman. I had only paid any attention because Miss Davis was a very beautiful woman. I gathered they were there to present a bid for a new contract for some machinery. The man was a bit worried about the bid from another company as he reckoned they might be able to offer a better price. Miss Davis had told him not to worry.  “I happen to know that Apex has a lot of connections with Chinese businessmen, especially in Shanghai and gets most of its supplies from China, but the older Mr Meredith will not for personal reasons do business with China.”  “But not many people know that.”  At that point the assistant broke in. “Oh, so that’s why you made me have lunch with the younger Mr Meredith and drop it into the conversation. He was certainly interested and asked me a few questions.”  “Miss Davis, you are a deep one,” said the gentleman with a slight nod of the head. “I hope for your sake this ploy works as I would hate to miss this contract.”  I had carefully remembered this conversation in case the information might be of use to me later, and as I thought about it I enjoyed the irony of what had happened. Miss Davis had not been so clever after all. She obviously had weak spots, but I admired her ambition. It seemed she had the potential to go far unless any bad luck prevented her.  Anyway, I am only telling you this story because as I was being driven round earlier to inspect some of my chain of coffee shops, I noticed a piece in the newspaper.  *The death is announced of Mrs Angela Lomax, wife of the late Peter Lomax of the international conglomerate Apex Ltd, and mother of Laura, Sean and Joshua. Mrs Lomax was aged 85. She is remembered as a clever businesswoman who helped build her husband’s company into a global empire, and a constant supporter of medical charities and other good causes. Details of the funeral arrangements will be announced later.*  She was indeed a clever businesswoman. If one plan went wrong, she was flexible and would quickly change to a new one. She knew what she wanted and she usually got it. After her defeat over the contract I have just been telling you about, she lost her position at her old company, but received a large leaving payment. That enabled her to remove any obstacles in the way of her next project. I can also agree on the basis of personal experience that she was a supporter of good causes. Why else would she have given me the money to open my first coffee shop in 1982, shortly before her marriage to Peter Lomax?  Yes, it was she who started me on the road to fame and fortune. May she rest in peace. |

**END OF READING TEXT**

**Questions**

**Read the short story “The Memories of Plots and Schemes” and answer questions 1-21. Blacken the circle when appropriate.**

1. How old was the narrator in 1980 and what was his job? (2 marks) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why is the narrator in a reflective mood today? (2 marks)

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1. How did most of the bidders feel when they were waiting to hear the company’s decision?

A. confident

B. nervous

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ |

C. relaxed

D. depressed

Find two examples from the text that support your answer. (2 marks)

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. According to Rachel, why were the bidders eager to get the contract? (2 marks)
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. The idiomatic expression “put you all out of your misery” used by Mr Meredith in line 20 means:

A. cheer you up

B. stop keeping you waiting anxiously

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ |

C. kill you as an act of mercy

D. disappoint you

1. Why did the young man suppress his smile in line 22?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Find words from **lines 1-30** that mean the same as the following. Use ONE word only for each item. (5 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Meaning** | **Word in the text** |
| 1. drank slowly |  |
| 1. spoke quietly |  |
| 1. walked in a line |  |
| 1. in surprise with the mouth wide open |  |
| 1. sympathy |  |

1. From the information given in lines 1-35, decide if the following statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG). (8 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| a) | Rachel was one of the bidders. |  |
| b) | The lady in blue thought she would win the contract. |  |
| c) | The assistant of the lady in blue was happy with the result. |  |
| d) | The lady in blue knew Mr Meredith’s mother. |  |
| e) | Mr Meredith lost a relative during a war in Asia years ago. |  |
| f) | Mr Meredith’s company built bridges in China. |  |
| g) | The well-presented bid was not the only reason Mr Meredith awarded the contract to Apex. |  |
| h) | Mr Meredith wanted to move his business to China. |  |

1. Why was Miss Davis so confident about getting the contract in front of her assistant and the well-dressed middle-aged gentleman?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What does “it” in line 48 refer to? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. From her action over the contract, we know that Miss Davis is

A. foolish

B. stubborn

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ |

C. careless

D. cunning

1. What did the gentleman mean when he said “Miss Davis, you are a deep one” (line 50)?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. The narrator “enjoyed the irony of what had happened” (line 53). Explain why the narrator found the situation ironic. (2 marks)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Give an example of Miss Davis’ “weak spot” (line 54) from this story.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Based on information from the story, fill in the table which shows the biographical data of Mrs Lomax. (5 marks)

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **\_\_\_\_**  (first name) (maiden name) (family name) |
| Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Children: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Age of death: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Achievements and contributions:   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

1. The narrator describes Mrs Lomax as a “clever” and “flexible” woman. Do you agree? Support your answer with examples from the text. (4 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description | Agree/  Disagree | Explanation and support from the story |
| Clever |  |  |
| Flexible |  |  |

1. What does the narrator mean when he says the large leaving payment “enabled Ms Davis to remove any obstacles in the way of her next project” (lines 67-68)? Complete the following paragraph in your own words based on your understanding of the story. (4 marks)

|  |
| --- |
| Miss Davis’s next project after the defeat over the contact was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She knew that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ could be her obstacle because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She removed this obstacle by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |

1. What feeling does the narrator have towards Miss Davis? You can choose more than one answer.
2. Gratitude
3. Jealousy

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ |

1. Pity
2. Admiration
3. Think of two adjectives to describe the narrator and explain with reference to information provided in the story. (4 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Adjective | Explanation |
| (1) |  |
| (2) |  |

1. Based on the information in the story, match each speech with the character who makes it. Write the letter in the space provided. (4 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Miss Davis |  |
| The Narrator |  |
| Peter Lomax |  |
| Young Mr Meredith |  |

1. My deepest sympathy goes out to you and your family in your time of grief and loss. Thanks for choosing us out of all the bids. I really look forward to our collaboration.
2. It’s time to let go of the past and exploit the vast potential of the China market.
3. I can smell a rat from this conversation. Let me listen more carefully to find out what it’s all about. Maybe I can take some advantages out of this.
4. Take this hush money and disappear from my life! Promise me you will keep what you saw and heard secret.

1. Suggest another title for the story and explain your choice. (2 marks)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**END OF QUESTIONS**

**Suggested Answers to the Reading Task**

1. How old was the narrator in 1980 and what was his job? (2 marks)

The narrator was in his twenties in 1980 and he worked as a waiter in a café in an office building.

1. Why is the narrator in a reflective mood (line 2)? (2 marks)

He is in a reflective mood because he has learnt the news of Mrs Angela Lomax’s death from the newspaper. He looks back on what happened between them and feels like disclosing the secret he has kept for her over the past 50 years.

1. How did most of the bidders feel when they were waiting to hear the company’s decision?

A. confident

B. nervous

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⚫ | ⭘ | ⭘ |

C. relaxed

D. depressed

Find two examples from the text that support your answer. (2 marks)

1. They were so tense that they lost their appetite and waved away the sandwiches.
2. They did not want to chat with the lady in blue and only gave her short responses.
3. According to Rachel, why were the bidders eager to get the contract? (2 marks)
4. The contract was worth a few million / a lot of money.
5. It would lead to more business / future contracts if the first went well.
6. The idiomatic expression “put you all out of your misery” used by Mr Meredith in line 20 means:

A. cheer you up

B. kill you as an act of mercy

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⚫ | ⭘ |

C. stop keeping you waiting anxiously

D. disappoint you

1. Why did the young man suppress his smile in line 22?

He suppressed his smile because it seemed inappropriate to be too happy when Mr Meredith’s father had just died.

1. Find words from **lines 1-28** that mean the same as the following. Use ONE word only for each item. (5 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Meaning** | **Word in the text** |
| 1. drank slowly | sipped (line 7) |
| 1. spoke quietly | murmured (line 18) |
| 1. walked in a line | trooped (line 29) |
| 1. in surprise with the mouth wide open | agape (line 24) |
| 1. sympathy | condolences (lines 16 & 27) |
|  |  |

1. From the information given in lines 1-35, decide if the following statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG). (8 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| a) | Rachel was one of the bidders. | F |
| b) | The lady in blue thought she would win the contract. | T |
| c) | The assistant of the lady in blue was happy with the result. | F |
| d) | The lady in blue knew Mr Meredith’s mother. | NG |
| e) | Mr Meredith lost a relative during a war in Asia years ago. | T |
| f) | Mr Meredith’s company built bridges in China. | F |
| g) | The well-presented bid was not the only reason Mr Meredith awarded the contract to Apex. | T |
| h) | Mr Meredith wanted to move his business to China. | NG |

1. Why was Miss Davis so confident about getting the contract in front of her assistant and the well-dressed middle-aged gentleman?

Miss Davis was confident because she knew old Mr Meredith would not do business with China but their competitor Apex had a lot of business connections with China. She believed young Mr Meredith’s hearing of Apex’s Chinese connection from her assistant would destroy Apex’s chances of getting the contract.

1. From her action over the contract, we know that Miss Davis is

A. honest

B. stubborn

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⚫ |

C. careless

D. cunning

1. What does “it” in line 48 refer to?

Apex’s connections with Chinese businessmen

1. What did the gentleman mean when he said “Miss Davis, you are a deep one” (line 50)?

He praised Miss Davis for being shrewd/sly/artful. OR

He meant that Miss Davis was good at achieving success by underhand methods/cunning tricks/ devious means. OR

She was surprised by the tricks Miss Davis kept up her sleeve.

1. The narrator “enjoyed the irony of what had happened” (line 53). Explain why the narrator found the situation ironic. (2 marks)

Miss Davis could not predict the death of old Mr Meredith, which changed the situation totally. In telling Mr Meredith Apex’s involvement in China, Miss Davis thought she would destroy Apex’s chances of winning. However, contrary to her intention, her action actually gave Peter and Apex an advantage as Mr Meredith favoured connection to China after his father’s death.

1. Give an example of Miss Davis’ “weak spot” (line 54) from this story.

She was over-confident and overlooked loopholes in her plan. OR

She was careless in keeping her plan secret.

1. Based on information from the story, fill in the table which shows the biographical data of Mrs Lomax. (5 marks)

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| Name: Angela Davis Lomax  (first name) (maiden name) (family name) |
| Spouse: Peter Lomax |
| Children: Laura Sean Joshua |
| Age of death: 85 |
| Achievements and contributions:   1. She built Apex Ltd into a global empire. 2. She supported medical charities and other good causes. |

1. The narrator describes Mrs Lomax as a “clever” and “flexible” woman. Do you agree? Support your answer with examples from the text. (4 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description | Agree/  Disagree | Explanation and support from the story  (any reasonable answers) |
| Clever | Agree | She hid her disappointment after knowing the results and offered Peter Lomax congratulations with a smile to win his good impression. |
| Disagree | She was careless and let the narrator overhear her plot and scheme. She also overlooked the possibility of old Mr Meredith’s death and made a mistake in her plan. |
| Flexible | Agree | She changed her plan quickly after failure and married Mr Lomax after she lost her position at her old company. |
| Disagree | She only relied on dirty tricks to achieve success and could have considered other ethical means. |

1. What does the narrator mean when he says the large leaving payment “enabled Ms Davis to remove any obstacles in the way of her next project” (lines 67-68)? Complete the following paragraph in your own words based on your understanding of the story. (4 marks)

|  |
| --- |
| Miss Davis’s next project after the defeat over the contact was to marry Mr Peter Lomax of Apex. She knew that the narrator could be her obstacle because he overheard her conversation and knew her plots against Peter and Apex. She removed this obstacle by giving him a large sum of (hush) money to open his first coffee shop. |

1. What feeling does the narrator have towards Miss Davis? You can choose more than one answer.
2. Gratitude
3. Jealousy

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⚫ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⚫ |

1. Pity
2. Admiration
3. Think of two adjectives to describe the narrator and explain with reference to information provided in the story. (4 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Adjective | Explanation |
| 1. Cunning | He carefully remembered the conversation between Miss Davis, her assistant and the gentleman, thinking that it could be of use to him later. |
| 1. Grateful | He remembered how Miss Davis helped him open his first coffee shop and started him on the road to fame and fortune. He showed admiration for her. |
| 1. Successful | He managed to open a chain of coffee shops after Miss Davis gave him money for the first one. |
| Any other reasonable answers | |

1. Based on the information in the story, match each speech with the character who makes it. Write the letter in the space provided. (4 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Miss Davis | **C** |
| The Narrator | **D** |
| Peter Lomax | **A** |
| Young Mr Meredith | **B** |

1. My deepest sympathy goes out to you and your family in your time of grief and loss. Thanks for choosing my company out of all the bids. I really look forward to our collaboration.
2. It’s time to let go of the past and exploit the vast potential of the China market.
3. I can smell a rat from this conversation. Let me listen more to find out what it’s all about. Maybe I can take advantage of this.
4. Take this hush money and disappear from my life! Promise me you will keep what you saw and heard secret.

1. Suggest another title for the story and explain your choice. (2 marks)

“The Secret of Brainy Ms Davis” because the narrator discloses the secret he has kept for Ms Davis over the last 50 years in the story. (any other reasonable answers)

**END OF SUGGESTED ANSWERS**

**Annotated Text**

**Memories of Plots and Schemes**

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| 5  10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50  55  60  65  70 | I am in my seventies now, but I still run my business very actively and am too busy to look back much. But today I am in a reflective mood. It won’t last long, but while it does I’d like to tell you a story. It’s a rather private story so please don’t repeat it as some people would blame me for what I did then.  It comes from over fifty years ago – 1980 if I remember properly. The scene is a comfortable room in an office building. There wasn’t much conversation between the five people sitting there. They **sipped** at the coffee I served them, but waved away the sandwiches. I knew from Reception that they were all bidders for the big contract and were waiting to hear the company’s decision. Rachel had said in fact it was worth a few million and there’d be sure to be a lot more business if that first contract went well. The lady in blue tried to make some conversation, but she seemed to be the only one at ease. She only got short responses which did not keep the conversation going.  Just then the door opened and Mr Meredith walked in. He was smartly dressed, as ever, but today he had a black tie on and wore a black armband. Everyone got up, and the only man in the group stepped forward to shake his hand.  “Oh, I am sorry, my **condolences**.”  “Thank you. Yes, my father died last night.”  Everyone **murmured** their regrets.  “He was very old and had been ill for a long time, so it is not a shock. I must leave soon but before I go I must **put you all out of your misery**: the contract has been awarded to Apex. Congratulations! Peter.”  A smile came to the young man’s lips though he quickly suppressed it. A frown moved even faster across the lady in blue’s face, before she replaced it with a polite smile and offered her congratulations too. Her assistant stood **agape**, while one of the others gave an audible sigh, and the last one gave everyone a dark look.  “Well, thank you, all. I hope you won’t mind excusing us now,” Mr Meredith added.  “Of course not, but please express my **condolences** to your mother,” said the lady in blue.  Mr Meredith bowed. “I’ll be sure not to forget, Miss Davis.”  They all **trooped** out apart from the boss and the successful Peter. I brought more coffee.  “Thank you for this opportunity, sir.”  “Your bid is a good one and well-presented. But I admit I am also very interested in your China contacts. My father would never allow us to do business there because his brother was killed by Chinese soldiers in the Korean War, but it is time to move on now and the company really must start building bridges with Asia. I have a feeling that in the next few decades China’s growth is going to surprise the world.”  I heard no more as I moved away to clear the other cups, and they then left the room. But I was beginning to understand a rather strange conversation I had heard a few weeks earlier. It had been between the lady I now knew was Miss Davis, her assistant and a very well-dressed middle-aged gentleman. I had only paid any attention because Miss Davis was a very beautiful woman. I gathered they were there to present a bid for a new contract for some machinery. The man was a bit worried about the bid from another company as he reckoned they might be able to offer a better price. Miss Davis had told him not to worry.  “I happen to know that Apex has a lot of **connections with Chinese businessmen**, especially in Shanghai and gets most of its supplies from China, but the older Mr Meredith will not for personal reasons do business with China.”  “But not many people know that.”  At that point the assistant broke in. “Oh, so that’s why you made me have lunch with the younger Mr Meredith and drop ***it*** into the conversation. He was certainly interested and asked me a few questions.”  “Miss Davis, **you are a deep one**,” said the gentleman with a slight nod of the head. “I hope for your sake this ploy works as I would hate to miss this contract.”  I had carefully remembered this conversation in case the information might be of use to me later, and as I thought about it I enjoyed the irony of what had happened. Miss Davis had not been so clever after all. She obviously had weak spots, but I admired her ambition. It seemed she had the potential to go far unless any bad luck prevented her.  Anyway, I am only telling you this story because as I was being driven round earlier to inspect some of my chain of coffee shops, I noticed a piece in the newspaper.  *The death is announced of Mrs Angela Lomax, wife of the late Peter Lomax of the international conglomerate Apex Ltd, and mother of Laura, Sean and Joshua. Mrs Lomax was aged 85. She is remembered as a clever businesswoman who helped build her husband’s company into a global empire, and a constant supporter of medical charities and other good causes. Details of the funeral arrangements will be announced later.*  She was indeed a clever businesswoman. If one plan went wrong, she was flexible and would quickly change to a new one. She knew what she wanted and she usually got it. After her defeat over the contract I have just been telling you about, she lost her position at her old company, but received a large leaving payment. That enabled her to remove any obstacles in the way of her next project. I can also agree on the basis of personal experience that she was a supporter of good causes. Why else would she have given me the money to open my first coffee shop in 1982, shortly before her marriage to Peter Lomax?  Yes, it was she who started me on the road to fame and fortune. May she rest in peace. | Q1  Q2  Q1  Q7a, Q3  Q4, Q8a  Q8b, Q3  Q7e  Q6  Q7b  Q5  Q6  Q7d, Q8c  Q7e  Q7c  Q8g  Q8e  Q12  Q9, Q11  Q12  Q11  Q12  Q14, Q19  Q14, Q18  Q19  Q15  Q16  Q16  Q17  Q18,Q19  Q19 |

**END OF ANNOTATED TEXT**