

3 “It was mad...Ridiculous.” (TEXT 1 2006)
Write a short story suggested by the above title.

The Marking Scheme stated:
Reward awareness of the narrative shape of a short story. An implicit link with the textual prompt given in the title is sufficient.

Note that since 2006 the instructions for Short Stories have become more stringent. It is less easy to slip in a learned off story and still accomplish the task. Creative adaptation is usually required.

*Try to appreciate this response by a Sixth Year as a good story. Trust that if you can entertain a reader, while being on task, you can gain an **A** grade. In the exam, the reader is the examiner and she or he is expecting a creative response that is focused on the instruction of the question.*

Note the effective use of dialogue in this sample story. Can you find any complications, the climax? What do you think of the closure achieved?

If you want to learn more how to write at this level, listen to and learn from your teacher.

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It Was Mad...Ridiculous

Elaine peered at herself in the mirror, tucking her white-gold curls behind her ear.

'Honey, I got so burned today! No amount of after-sun will solve this.'

Orla looked up from where she was lining up shots of vodka on the counter. Grinning, she laughed 'Bacon-back!

Turning with a cocked eyebrow, Elaine mentioned that she couldn't talk. Not after last summer when Orla got so sunburnt at a music festival, she ended up passed out outside her tent, lying in an ocean of tarpaulin and empty beer cans.

The girls laughed each knocking back a shot. Their faces contorted with the bitter taste. Shaking it off, they continued laughing.

'Starting early, aren't we?'

Leona was standing at the door with a smile on her face. The prettiest and most enthusiastic of the three, she was always up for a good night out. Walking over to the counter, she picked up a refilled shot glass. The liquor picked up the harsh light of the apartment, breaking it up, like shattered glass.

Raising a shot glass to meet the other two, she grinned a mad grin, a grin full of expectation and said: 'To our sixth year holiday! Let's go wild!!'

Knocking back the shots in what seemed like one movement the girls began dancing around the apartment, relishing and absorbing their newly presented freedom.

Two hours and two bottles of vodka later the threesome found themselves amidst the hustle and bustle of Ayia Napa. There was a carnival atmosphere about the town. Despite it nearing midnight, everywhere remained open. Shops, restaurants, clubs were buzzing, their harsh neon lights seducing the in-surge of post-exam students, like moths to a flame. Souvenir stores had their wares pushed out on the street, enticing impulse buyers. Music blared from every open window, the shock waves of the bass running up people's legs.

The girls meandered down the street amidst the madness, trying to decide what club to go to first. Hiccupping, Orla suggested 'Club Trance', because she had heard at the complex that there was a 'Buy One, Get Three Free' offer on shots! Leona shook her head, her brown hair tossing.

'No! No! Let's go to "Fusion", the music there is meant to be unreal!'

Eventually they decide on another club, further down the road, a place called 'Seals'. They took their time, knowing that the clubs would be open for hours yet.

Feeling a hand on her shoulder, Leona spun around. It was a local bar owner. He pointed at the bar and all the drink promotions on the windows. 'If you lovely ladies come in, we will give you free shots', looking at the bar which looked very busy

and then at the girls. Leona nodded, 'Sure! Why not?' The Cypriot grinned, flashing his teeth. 'You are Irish? Irish people like drink.'

When the girls got inside they pushed themselves to the bar, Orla instantly ordering a round of shots. They giggled as other men and Irish students their own age chatted to them and bought more and more drinks. Leona could feel her senses beginning to dull, her nostrils no longer filled with the smell of stale beer. Stumbling, the three took to a small dance floor, tripping over each other, their heartbeats matching the bass beat.

Half an hour later they had moved down the busy road to another club. Along the way they had picked up three guys who were from Dublin too. In fact it seemed most of the young people there were from Dublin. Giggling, Elaine slurred, 'Southside in the Sun'.

The group took advantage of the drinks promotions, the girls taking advantage of the leering men, and so not having to touch their purses.

The club was hot, sweat dripping from the cold parlour walls, strobe lights blinding and un-blinding the punters.

Leona could feel a wave of complacency wash over her, her head felt light, her smiling teeth glowing under the ultra-violet light. Suddenly feeling ill, she decides to go out for some fresh air.

Outside she half stood, half leaned against the wall of the club. Reaching in her handbag she fumbled until her fingers found the familiar shape of her 'Camel Lights'. She placed one between her lips, lit the end and took a long drag. Exhaling she smiled to herself. There were no other smokers outside. Ever since the smoking ban had come in Ireland, she had instinctively always smoked outside.

Feeling better, she stood up straight. Her eyesight was now less blurred and she could feel her lips when she bit down on them. 'Oh no!' she thought, 'I'm sobering up!' Turning to walk back into the bar, she saw Elaine and Orla stumbling out the door, with two guys in tow. They were laughing hysterically, like two hyenas. Turning to the taller of the two boys, Orla grabbed him and kissed him hard on the mouth. Dissolving once again into a fit of laughter, Elaine moved over towards Leona, her top askew and a glass in one hand. 'Gimme a smoke' she demanded. Pulling out two cigarettes, Leona handed Elaine one and place the second in her own mouth.

Suddenly there was a scream. Spinning around the girls found Orla on the ground, her skirt flapping around her waist. Wiping some of the street dust from her cheek, she giggled deliriously. Stretching out on an arm Elaine went to pull her up. With a feeling of exasperation, Leona watched as Elaine joined Orla on the ground. They were a drunken heap of hair, handbags and cigarettes. Her spirit crushed, Leona closed her eyes. Taking a deep breath, she re-opened them; the heap was still there, writhing on the dusty street. 'This is mad... ridiculous' she thought.

Now completely sober, Leona's eyes were wide open. She was ashamed. Ashamed for her friends, ashamed for the boys and ashamed for herself.

'This can't be real, it's all and act'.

Drooping over each other Elaine and Orla stood up, grabbing each other for support.

'Let's go!' they screamed.

Grabbing Leona's slender wrist, Orla looked her in the eyes and spat 'We're going to club Trance...' Her face was smiling but her eyes were blank.

Shaking her arm free, Leona looked back at Orla.

'No, I'll see you back at the apartment'.

Turning on her heel and with a heartless goodbye sign, Leona walked away.

Comments

90 ex 100 awarded for this response done as a mock paper.

There is no doubt that an LC examiner or Appeal examiner if it came to it would award an A1. The quality stands out.

A **B** grade would be a poor reward for this story.

Remember, if you feel that the original mark was un fair to you in the LC, that you can *appeal* your mark in September.

*Warning: Do **not reuse** an essay that contains a quote required by a previous examination...the reasons should be obvious to you!*