

Read the following extract carefully. It is taken from the novel *Persuasion* written by Jane Austen and first published in 1817. Charles and Mary Musgrove, her sister Anne, his sisters Henrietta and Louisa and friend Captain Wentworth are visiting his friend Captain Benwick in Lyme. Whilst walking along the seafront on The Cobb, there is an accident.

(This extract has been taken from the Penguin Classics edition, 1985)

1 There was too much wind to make the high part of the new Cobb pleasant for the ladies,
2 and they agreed to get down the steps to the lower, and all were contented to pass quietly
3 and carefully down the steep flight, excepting Louisa; she must be jumped down them by
4 Captain Wentworth. In all their walks, he had had to jump her from the stiles; the
5 sensation was delightful to her. The hardness of the pavement for her feet, made him less
6 willing upon the present occasion; he did it, however; she was safely down, and instantly,
7 to shew her enjoyment, ran up the steps to be jumped down again. He advised her against
8 it, thought the jar too great; but no, he reasoned and talked in vain; she smiled and said, 'I
9 am determined I will:' he put out his hands; she was too precipitate by half a second, she
10 fell on the pavement on the Lower Cobb, and was taken up lifeless!

11 There was no wound, no blood, no visible bruise; but her eyes were closed, she breathed
12 not, her face was like death. - The horror of that moment to all who stood around!

13 Captain Wentworth, who had caught her up, knelt with her in his arms, looking on her with
14 a face as pallid as her own, in an agony of silence. 'She is dead! she is dead!' screamed
15 Mary, catching hold of her husband, and contributing with his own horror to make him
16 immoveable; and in another moment, Henrietta, sinking under the conviction, lost her
17 senses too, and would have fallen on the steps, but for Captain Benwick and Anne, who
18 caught and supported her between them.

19 'Is there no one to help me?' were the first words that burst from Captain Wentworth, in a
20 tone of despair, and as if all his own strength were gone.

21 'Go to him, go to him,' cried Anne, 'for heaven's sake go to him. I can support her myself.
22 Leave me, and go to him. Rub her hands, rub her temples; here are salts, - take them,
23 take them.'

24 Captain Benwick obeyed, and Charles at the same moment, disengaging himself from his
25 wife, they were both with him; and Louisa was raised up and supported more firmly
26 between them, and every thing was done that Anne had prompted, but in vain; while
27 Captain Wentworth, staggering against the wall for his support, exclaimed in the bitterest
28 agony,

29 'Oh God! her father and mother!'

30 'A surgeon!' said Anne.

31 He caught the word; it seemed to rouse him at once, and saying only 'True, true, a surgeon
32 this instant,' was darting away, when Anne eagerly suggested,
33 'Captain Benwick, would not it be better for Captain Benwick? He knows where a surgeon
34 is to be found.'
35 Every one capable of thinking felt the advantage of the idea, and in a moment (it was all
36 done in rapid moments) Captain Benwick had resigned the poor corpse-like figure entirely
37 to the brother's care, and was off for the town with the utmost rapidity.
38 As to the wretched party left behind, it could scarcely be said which of the three, who
39 were completely rational, was suffering most, Captain Wentworth, Anne, or Charles, who,
40 really a very affectionate brother, hung over Louisa with sobs of grief, and could only turn
41 his eyes from one sister, to see the other in a state as insensible, or to witness the
42 hysterical agitations of his wife, calling on him for help which he could not give.

Now answer the following questions:

1. Lines 1-12

Identify a phrase that tells you Louisa could be badly injured. (1 mark)

2. Lines 13-20

Give two short quotations that convey Captain Wentworth's distress. (2 marks)

3. Lines 21-34

How does the writer use language and structure to show that Anne takes charge of the situation? Support your points with detailed reference to the text. (6 marks)

4. How effectively does the writer build up tension in this whole extract?

Support your views with detailed reference to the text. (15 marks)



Self or peer marking

Use the suggested marking plan below to help you mark the paper. It's useful to experience being the examiner. Think about how clear your answers are: have you followed the instructions, numbered your answer, answered the question, made direct references to the text, used terminology etc.?

1. 1 mark for:

'was taken up lifeless!' or 'her eyes were closed, she breathed not, her face was like death'

2. 1 mark for each of two examples.

Choose from:

- 'a face as pallid as her own'
- 'in an agony of silence'
- 'Is there no one to help me?'
- 'in a tone of despair'
- 'as if all his own strength were gone'

Try to choose two phrases that are **not** next to each other in the text.

3. Austen shows that Anne takes charge through:

the character's direct speech, e.g.

- She gives a series of commands, using simple language, to organise the other characters - 'Go to him' and 'Rub her hands'
- Repetition makes the orders more forceful - 'take them, take them'
- The short exclamatory 'A surgeon!' conveys succinctly a practical idea Captain Wentworth immediately agrees with.
- Anne's choice of Captain Benwick to find a surgeon, in the form of a rhetorical question, and the reason for her choice, present her as thinking more rationally than the others in this crisis.
- Use of the colloquial interjection 'for heaven's sake' would be considered a little impolite and unladylike then and so, again, adds force to her utterance.

third person omniscient narrative, e.g.

- Austen suggests approval of Anne's response to the accident through authorial comment - 'every thing was done that Anne had prompted'
- The verb 'cried' and adverb + verb 'eagerly suggested' convey the way Austen wants us to 'hear' Anne's direct speech as assertive.
- Austen presents the other characters as less able to cope, leaving only Anne in control of the situation - even 'Captain Wentworth, staggering against the wall for his support' cannot take charge at this moment.

1-2 marks for comments and valid but undeveloped text references

3-4 marks for explanations of language and structure and relevant text references

5-6 marks for analysis of language and structure and well-selected text references.

4. You will earn marks by evaluating how effectively the **writer** engages the **reader** through the build-up of tension:
- The first paragraph of narrative engages the reader by creating a happy, playful scene between Louisa and Captain Wentworth but the tone begins to change at line 7, 'He advised against it' and there is tension by line 10 when she 'was taken up lifeless'.
 - The pattern of three 'no wound, no blood, no visible bruise' could suggest no injury but it's followed by references to death 'her face was like death' and 'the poor corpse-like figure', drawing the reader into wanting to know Louisa's fate.
 - Dialogue builds up tense exchanges between characters, with short, monosyllabic, often repeated and exclamatory utterances e.g. Mary's 'She is dead! she is dead!' which create a sense of urgency. Use of the present tense creates immediacy, as if the reader is witnessing the event happen.
 - Vocabulary choices add to the tension, e.g. The writer conveys Wentworth's feelings with repetition of the abstract noun 'agony', increasing the effect by adding the superlative 'bitterest' when he realises he will have to break the news to Louisa's parents. Emotive vocabulary in the final paragraph conveys the dramatic effect of the accident on the characters, e.g. 'wretched', 'suffering' and 'grief'.
 - Austen's choice of the verbs 'screamed', 'cried' and 'exclaimed' convey the initial emotions the characters are presented as expressing through voice quality in response to the accident. This adds to the tension for the reader.
 - The omniscient narrator's aside in brackets '(it was all done in rapid moments)' reinforces the sense of urgency created by the speed of events after the accident.
 - The writer creates a different reaction for every character: Mary becomes hysterical, Henrietta faints, Captain Wentworth kneels with Louisa 'in his arms' (creating a romantic picture), later 'staggering against the wall' in shock, and Charles 'sobs with grief' at the imagined loss of his sister. The final paragraph engages the reader by creating a tableau of a distressing scene with three 'completely rational' characters trying to comfort and revive the other three. At this point the reader doesn't know the fate of Louisa who is still 'insensible' as the writer is still building up the tension.

1-3 marks for description, limited assertions, limited textual references

4-6 for comment, opinion and some valid textual references

7-9 for explanation, informed opinion and relevant text references

10-12 for analysis, developed judgement and detailed, supportive references

13-15 for evaluation, sustained and detached overview, well-selected textual references.

Don't worry if you aren't familiar with all the terminology used in the marking plan; using some terminology that you are confident you understand in your answers will help you gain marks.