



GCSE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

**Paper 1 Explorations in creative
reading and writing**

8700/1

Insert

The source that follows is:

SOURCE A:

21st Century prose–fiction

‘The Silk Factory’ by Judith Allnatt

**An extract from the beginning of a novel
published in 2015.**

[Turn over]

SOURCE A

This extract is from the beginning of a novel by Judith Allnatt, published in 2015. It is set in a house that used to be part of a nineteenth-century silk factory. Rosie and her two children, Sam and Cara, now live in the house.

**1 It was on their first day at the
house that Rosie saw the stranger
child. Standing at the sink, her
hands deep in suds, Rosie was
5 overwhelmed by the tasks that lay
ahead of her. Tired after the long
drive from London the evening
before, she gazed vaguely at the
sunlit, overgrown garden where
10 Sam and Cara were playing.**

**The sash window had old glass
that blunted the image, wavering
the straightness of fence and
washing line, pulling things out of**

15 shape. Sam was kneeling beside
the patch of earth that Rosie had
cleared for him, making hills and
valleys for his matchbox cars and
trucks by digging with an old
20 tablespoon, and Cara was toddling
from bush to bush with a yellow
plastic watering can. Through the
antique glass, Rosie watched them
stretch and shrink as they moved,
25 as if she were looking through
ripples. She closed her eyes, glad
of a moment of calm after the
trauma of the last few days.
Letting go of the plate she was
30 holding, she spread her tense
fingers, allowing the warmth of the
water to soothe her. When she
opened her eyes, another child
34 was there.

[Turn over]

35 Rosie had made a quick check of
the unfamiliar garden before letting
the children go out to play. The
bottom half of the garden was an
overgrown mess, a muddle of trees
40 and shrubs. An ancient mulberry
tree stood at the centre. Its
massive twisted branches drooped
to the ground in places, its
knuckles in the earth like a
45 gigantic malformed hand. The
wintry sun hung low in the sky and
the gnarled growth threw long
twisted shadows across the
undergrowth within its cage. The
50 trunk of the tree was snarled with
the tangled ivy that grew up
through the broken bricks and
chunks of cement, choking it. The
path that led down towards the
55 fence at the bottom, which marked
the garden off from an orchard
beyond, disappeared into a mass
of nettles and brambles before it

59 reached the padlocked door.

60 A little girl was sitting back on her heels beside a clump of daisies that grew against the fence. She had her back to Rosie and was holding tight to the handle of a

65 large wicker basket that stood on the ground beside her. Cara

seemed unfazed by the girl's presence and continued to move, engrossed, along the row of

70 plants. Rosie bent forward to look through the clearest of the panes and peered closer. The child was small, maybe around eight or nine, although something in the tense

75 hunch of her shoulders made her seem older. Her hair hung down her back in a matted, dusty-looking plait and she was wearing

[Turn over]

**dressing-up clothes: an
80 ankle-length dress and pinafore in
washed-out greys and tans, like a
home-made Cinderella* costume.**

**Where on earth had she come
from? She must be a neighbour's
85 child but how had she got in? The
wooden fences that separated the
gardens between each of the
houses in the terrace were high –
surely too high for a child to climb.**

**90 The child glanced over her
shoulder, back towards the
houses, a quick, furtive movement
as if she were scanning the upper
windows of the row, afraid of being
95 overlooked. Rosie caught a
glimpse of her face, pale and
drawn with anxiety, before the girl
turned back and reached forward
to quickly tuck a piece of trailing
100 white cloth into the basket. Almost**

unconsciously, Rosie registered that the girl was left-handed like herself, and that there was something animal-like in her
105 movements: quick, like the darting of a mouse or the flit of a sparrow, some small dun creature that moves fast to blend into the background. Something wasn't
110 right here. She had seen distress in those eyes.

Rosie turned away, dried her hands hurriedly and slipped on her flip-flops. She would go gently,
115 raise no challenge about her being in the garden but say hello and try to find out what was the matter. Maybe if she pointed out that her mother would be worrying
120 where she was, she could

[Turn over]

persuade the girl to let her take her home.

But when she stepped outside, the child was gone.

GLOSSARY

*** Cinderella – a poor girl from a fairy tale**

BLANK PAGE

BLANK PAGE

Copyright information

For confidentiality purposes, all acknowledgements of third-party copyright material are published in a separate booklet. This booklet is published after each live examination series and is available for free download from www.aqa.org.uk.

Permission to reproduce all copyright material has been applied for. In some cases, efforts to contact copyright-holders may have been unsuccessful and AQA will be happy to rectify any omissions of acknowledgements. If you have any queries please contact the Copyright Team.

Copyright © 2020 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

IB/M/CD/Jun20/8700/1/E1

