

Text 1

Then he sat down on the veranda and watched the day advance gradually like a bitter, an unmerited and an overwhelming sorrow. At last he looked at his watch. It was time for him to go to the office.

In the afternoon he could not sleep, his head ached miserably, so he took his gun and went for a tramp in the jungle. He shot nothing, but he walked in order to tire himself out. Towards sunset he came back and had two or three drinks, and then it was time to dress for dinner. There wasn't much use in dressing now; he might just as well be comfortable; he put on a loose native jacket and a sarong. That was what he had been accustomed to wear before Doris came. He was barefoot. He ate his dinner listlessly and the boy cleared away and went. He sat down to read the *Tatler*. The bungalow was very silent. He could not read and let the paper fall on his knees. He was exhausted. He could not think and his mind was strangely vacant. The chik-chak was noisy that night and its hoarse and sudden cry seemed to mock him. You could hardly believe that this reverberating sound came from so small a throat. Presently he heard a discreet cough.

'Who's there?' he cried.

There was a pause. He looked at the door. The chik-chak laughed harshly. A small boy sidled in and stood on the threshold. It was a little half-caste boy in a tattered singlet and a sarong. It was the elder of his two sons.

'What do you want?' said Guy.

The boy came forward into the room and sat down, tucking his legs away under him.

'Who told you to come here?'

'My mother sent me. She says, do you want anything?'

Guy looked at the boy intently. The boy said nothing more. He sat and waited, his eyes cast down shyly. Then Guy in deep and bitter reflection buried his face in his hands. What was the use? It was finished. Finished! He surrendered. He sat back in his chair and sighed deeply.

'Tell your mother to pack up her things and yours. She can come back.'

'When?' asked the boy, impassively.

Hot tears trickled down from Guy's funny, round spotty face.

'Tonight.'

Somerset Maugham, *The Force of Circumstance*

(386 words)

Text 2

'Well, one comes and another goes,' said Van Heerden at last, slowly, reaching out for philosophy as a comfort, while his eyes filled with rough tears. Major Carruthers stared: he could not understand. At last the meaning of the words came into him, and he heard the moaning from the hut with a new understanding. The idea had never entered his head; it had been a complete failure of the imagination. If nine children, why not ten? Why not fifteen, for that matter, or twenty? Of course there would be more children.

'It was the shock,' said Van Heerden. 'It should be next month.'

Major Carruthers leaned back against the wall of the hut and took out a cigarette clumsily. He felt weak. He felt as if Van Heerden had struck him, smiling. This was an absurd and unjust feeling, but for a moment he hated Van Heerden for standing there and saying: this grey country of poverty that you fear so much, will take on a different look when you actually enter it. You will cease to exist; there is no energy left, when one is wrestling naked, with life, for your kind of fine feelings and scruples and regrets.

'We hope it will be a boy,' volunteered Van Heerden, with a tentative friendliness, as if he thought it might be considered a familiarity to offer his private motions to Major Carruthers. 'We have five boys and four girls - three girls,' he corrected himself, his face contracting.

Major Carruthers asked stiffly: 'Will she be all right?'

45 'I do it,' said Van Heerden. 'The last was born in the middle of the night, when it was raining. That was when we were in the tent. It's nothing to her,' he added, with pride. He was listening, as he spoke, to the slow moaning from inside. 'I'd better be getting in to her,' he said, knocking out his pipe against the mud of the walls. Nodding to Major Carruthers, he lifted the sack and disappeared.

After a while Major Carruthers gathered himself together and forced himself to walk erect across the clearing under the curious gaze of the children. His mind was fixed and numb, but he walked as if
50 moving to a destination. When he reached the house, he at once pulled paper and pen towards him and wrote, and each slow difficult word was a nail in the coffin of his pride as a man. Some minutes later he went in to his wife. She was awake, turning on her side, watching the door for the relief of his coming. 'I've written for a job at Home,' he said simply, laying his hand on her thin dry wrist, and feeling the slow pulse beat up suddenly against his palm.

55 He watched curiously as her face crumpled and the tears of thankfulness and release ran slowly down her cheeks and soaked the pillow.

Doris Lessing, *The Second Hut*

(482 words)

Wort- und Sachangaben:

Text 1

line 3:	tramp	walk
line 8:	the <i>Tatler</i>	British magazine
line 10:	chik-chak	a type of gecko, i.e. small reptile
line 11:	to reverberate	widerhallen

Text 2

line 40:	tentative	unsure, shy
line 41:	motion	here: feeling

I. Comprehension (about 400 words)

(15VP)

1. Briefly summarize the main events leading up to the situation Guy and Major Carruthers find themselves in.
2. Compare how Guy and Major Carruthers arrive at their decisions and cope with them. Consider their feelings and thoughts throughout the given texts.