Section A

Answer the question in this section.

0 1 Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that the writer has shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

Karl Murphy was a decent and kind man, a family doctor with two small children whom he was bringing up on his own. He worked long hours, and did his very best for his growing list of patients. The last two years had been tough since his beloved wife, Ingrid, had died, and there were some aspects of his work he found really hard, particularly having to break news to patients who were terminally ill. But it never occurred to him that he might have made enemies – and certainly not that there might be someone who hated him so much he wanted him dead.

And was planning to kill him tonight.

Sure, okay, however hard you tried, you couldn’t please everyone, and boy, did he see that at work some days. Most of his patients were pleasant, but a few of them tested him and the staff in his medical practice to the limit. But he still tried to treat them all equally.

As he stood at the clubhouse bar on this late October evening, showered and changed out of his golfing clothes, politely drinking his second pint of lime and lemonade with his partners in the tournament and glancing discreetly at his watch, anxious to make his escape, he realized for the first time in a long, long while he was feeling happy – and excited. There was a new lady in his life. They hadn’t been dating for long, but already he had grown extremely fond of her. To the point that he had thought today, out on the golf course, that he was falling in love with her. But being a very private man, he said nothing of this to his companions.

Shortly after 6pm he downed the remains of his drink, anxious about the time, quite unaware that there was a man waiting outside in the blustery darkness.

His sister, Stefanie, had picked the kids up from school today and would be staying with them at his home until he arrived with the babysitter. But she had to leave by 6:45pm. latest, to go to a business dinner with her husband, and Karl could not make her late for that. He thanked his host for the charity golf day, and his fellow teammates in turn congratulated him for playing so well, then he slipped eagerly away from the nineteenth-hole drinking session that looked set to go on late into the night. He had something that he wanted to do very much more than get smashed with a bunch of fellow golfers, however pleasant they were. He had a date. A very hot date, and the prospect of seeing her, after three days apart, was giving him the kind of butterflies he’d not had since his teens.

He hurried across the car park, through the wind and rain, to the far end where he had parked his car, popped open the boot, and slung his golf bag inside it. Then he zipped the small silver trophy he had won into a side pocket of the bag, totally preoccupied with thoughts of the evening ahead. God, what a ray of sunshine she had brought into his life! These past two years since Ingrid had died had been hell and now, finally, he was coming through it. In the long, bleak period since her death, he had not thought that would ever be possible.

He didn’t notice the motionless figure, all in black, who lay beneath the tartan dog rug on the rear seat, nor did he think it odd that the interior lights failed to come on when he opened the driver’s door. It seemed that almost every day another bit of the ageing Audi ceased working, or, like the fuel gauge, only functioned intermittently. He had a new A6 on order, and would be taking delivery in a few weeks’ time.

He settled behind the wheel, pulled on his seat belt, started the engine and switched on the headlights. Then he switched the radio from Classic FM to Radio 4, to catch the second half of the news, drove out of the car park, and along the narrow road beside the eighteenth fairway of Haywards Heath Golf Club. Headlights were coming the other way, and he pulled over to the side to let the car pass. As he was about to accelerate forward he heard a sudden movement behind him, then something damp and acrid was clamped over his mouth and nose.

Chloroform, he recognised from his medical training, in the fleeting instant that he tried to resist, before his brain went muzzy and his feet came off the pedals, and his hands lost their grip on the wheel.

Section A

Answer the question in this section.

0 1 Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that the writer has shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

The view from the narrow window was dreary and inexpressibly lonely. Miles of neglected park-land stretched in an unbroken plain to the horizon and the sea beyond. On all sides it was the same.
      The grey-green stretches were hayed once a year, perhaps, but otherwise uncropped save by the herd of heavy-shouldered black cattle who wandered about them, their huge forms immense and grotesque in the fast-thickening twilight.
      In the centre of this desolation, standing in a thousand acres of its own land, was the mansion, Black Dudley; a great grey building, bare and ugly as a fortress. No creepers hid its nakedness, and the long narrow windows were dark-curtained and uninviting.
      The man in the old-fashioned bedroom turned away from the window and went on with his dressing.
      ‘Gloomy old place,’ he remarked to his reflection in the mirror. ‘Thank God it’s not mine.’
      He tweaked his black tie deftly as he spoke, and stood back to survey the effect.
      George Abbershaw, although his appearance did not indicate it, was a minor celebrity.
      He was a smallish man, chubby and solemn, with a choirboy expression and a head of ridiculous bright-red curls which gave him a somewhat fantastic appearance. He was fastidiously tidy in his dress and there was an air of precision in everything he did or said which betrayed an amazingly orderly mind. Apart from this, however, there was nothing about him to suggest that he was particularly distinguished or even mildly interesting, yet in a small and exclusive circle of learned men Dr George Abbershaw was an important person.
      His book on pathology, treated with special reference to fatal wounds and the means of ascertaining their probable causes, was a standard work, and in view of his many services to the police in the past his name was well known and his opinion respected at the Yard.
      At the moment he was on holiday, and the unusual care which he took over his toilet suggested that he had not come down to Black Dudley solely for the sake of recuperating in the Suffolk air.
      Much to his own secret surprise and perplexity, he had fallen in love.
      He recognized the symptoms at once and made no attempt at self-deception, but with his usual methodical thoroughness set himself to remove the disturbing emotion by one or other of the only two methods known to mankind – disillusionment or marriage. For that reason, therefore, when Wyatt Petrie had begged him to join a week-end party at his uncle’s house in the country, he had been persuaded to accept by the promise that Margaret Oliphant should also be of the party.
      Wyatt had managed it, and she was in the house.

Section A

Answer the question in this section.

0 1 Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that the writer has shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

For many years Wilfred Martin collected samples of alternative medicines, homeopathic remedies and herbal pills. Most of them he never used, never even tried because he was afraid of them, but he kept the lot in a cupboard in a bathroom in his house in Falcon Mews, Maida Vale, and when he died they went, along with the house and its contents, to his son Carl. Carl’s mother recommended throwing it all out. It was junk, harmless at best, possibly dangerous, all those bottles and jars and sachets just taking up room. But Carl didn’t throw it out because he couldn’t be bothered. He had other things to do. If he had known how it, or one particular item among all the rest, would change his life, transform it, ruin it, he would have emptied the lot into a plastic bag, carried the bag down the road and dumped it in the big rubbish bin.

Carl had taken over the former family home in Falcon Mews at the beginning of the year, his mother having moved to Camden when his parents divorced. For a while he thought no more about the contents of his bathroom cupboard. He was occupied with his girlfriend Nicola, his novel Death’s Door, which had just been published, and with letting the top floor of his house. He had no need of those two rooms plus kitchen and bathroom, and great need of the rent. Excited though he was about the publication of his first book, he was not so naïve at twenty-three as to suppose he could live by writing alone. Rents in central London had reached a peak, and Falcon Mews, a crescent looping out of Sutherland Avenue to Castellain Road in Maida Vale, was highly desirable and much sought-after. So he placed an advertisement in the Paddington Express offering accommodation, and next morning twenty prospective tenants presented themselves on his doorstep. Why he chose the first applicant, Dermot McKinnon, he never knew. Perhaps it was because he didn’t want to interview dozens of people. It was a decision he was bitterly to regret.

Section A

Answer the question in this section.

0 1 Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that the writer has shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

Grace was as good a name as any, and this morning Grace was in Tasmania, strolling through a well-heeled corner of Hobart’s Sandy Bay, casing the secluded houses.  A Friday morning in spring, a sea fret receding to Storm Bay and the Tasman Sea, it was good to be alive, and she raised no warning bells in her tennis whites worn over tracksuit pants, her sunglasses, Nike trainers and perky billed cap, her shouldered gym bag.  A racquet handle poked out of the bag, telling you she was an idle young wife, maybe a young professional on her day off, even – if you were suspicious or censorious – an adulterer wearing a cover story.

            But no warning bells.  No cause for a stop-and-search.  She belonged there.

In fact, it was hide in plain sight, Grace hiding behind the cap and shades, hiding the fact that the tennis skirt was Velcroed to the bodice and the gym bag held burglary tools, gloves and heavy-duty vinyl sacks.  One shouted accusation, one query, and she’d be gone, ripping away the skirt and ditching it together with the cap, bag and shades.  Transform herself into a jogger, and who looks twice at a jogger?

            ‘Always expect the worst,’ Galt had drummed into her, ‘so you’ll never be caught off guard when it happens.’

            Another thing Galt liked to say was avoid apartment buildings.  Well, there were none here.  There’s always someone at home in an apartment block, Galt said, always a sad soul sitting at a window all day long, hoping for a diversion to brighten the unvarying hours.

            Next, Grace checked for the presence of children: toys, bikes, skateboards, even a little pink gumboot, left discarded in a front or side yard.  Yes, kids go to school, Galt would say, but not if they’re a toddler, or suffering from chickenpox, not if it’s a curriculum day for their teachers.  A kid at home means an adult at home.

            Vehicles, another item on Galt’s checklist.  Grace’s homework had told her she was in a land of two-car households, two adults working 9 to 5 in highly-paid jobs.  No-one worked shiftwork here.  Play it safe, Galt always said.  If there’s a vehicle in the driveway or carport, move on.  And a closed garage door is no guarantee the garage is empty.

            Finally, choose targets that minimise the nosy-neighbour problem.  As Galt said, the people worth stealing from paid top dollar to block an outsider’s line of sight, so she should look for high hedges, sloping land, tree density and curved streets.

            The rest Galt hadn’t taught her.  ‘I can show you how to avoid detection,’ he’d said, ‘I can keep my people off your back, but you were the break-in queen long before I found you.’

            Grace made a rapid pass through the little neighbourhood.  Trees and bushes crowded most of the houses.  No one about, only a workman bolting a gate to a picket fence, another unloading a lawnmower.  The houses ranged from weatherboard bungalows to sharply modern glass and concrete structures, with Tudor houses, Tuscan villas and small, tiled, steeply-gabled 1930s mansions in between.  She mentally selected four targets and went to work.

The first was a nightmarish arrangement of interconnected concrete cubes, set well back from the street and behind a high fieldstone wall.  She did what she always did and entered the grounds briskly, exactly as if her best friend lived there and they’d arranged to play tennis together.  When she was halfway to the front door, she blew a high-frequency whistle audible only to dogs.  She was answered at once by frenzied barking, one deep-chested, the other a high yap.

            She retreated.

Section A

Answer the question in this section.

0 1 Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that the writer has shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

It was five o’clock on a winter’s morning in Syria. Alongside the platform at Aleppo stood the train grandly designated in railway guides as the Taurus Express. It consisted of a kitchen and dining-car, a sleeping-car and two local coaches. By the step leading up into the sleeping-car stood a young French lieutenant, resplendent in uniform conversing, with a small man muffled up to the ears of whom nothing was visible but a pink-tipped nose and the two points of an upward-curled moustache. It was freezingly cold, and this job of seeing off a distinguished stranger was not one to be envied, but Lieutenant Dubosc performed his part manfully. Graceful phrases fell from his lips in polished French. Not that he knew what it was all about. There had been rumours, of course, as there always were in such cases.

The General’s—his General’s—temper had grown worse and worse. And then there had come this Belgian stranger—all the way from England, it seemed. There had been a week—a week of curious tensity. And then certain things had happened. A very distinguished officer had committed suicide, another had suddenly resigned, anxious faces had suddenly lost their anxiety, certain military precautions were relaxed. And the General, Lieutenant Dubosc’s own particular General, had suddenly looked ten years younger. Dubosc had overheard part of a conversation between him and the stranger.

 “You have saved us, mon cher,” said the General emotionally, his great white moustache trembling as he spoke. “You have saved the honour of the French Army—you have averted much bloodshed! How can I thank you for acceding to my request? To have come so far—”

To which the stranger (by name M. Hercule Poirot) had made a fitting reply including the phrase—“But indeed, do I not remember that once you saved my life?” And then the General had made another fitting reply to that, disclaiming any merit for that past service; and with more mention of France, of Belgium, of glory, of honour and of such kindred things they had embraced each other heartily and the conversation had ended.

Section A

Answer the question in this section.

0 1 Explore the significance of the crime elements in this extract. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that the writer has shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

The intense interest aroused in the public by what was known at the time as “The Styles Case” has now somewhat subsided. Nevertheless, in view of the world-wide notoriety which attended it, I have been asked, both by my friend Poirot and the family themselves, to write an account of the whole story. This, we trust, will effectually silence the sensational rumours which still persist.

I will therefore briefly set down the circumstances which led to my being connected with the affair.

I had been invalided home from the Front; and, after spending some months in a rather depressing Convalescent Home, was given a month’s sick leave. Having no near relations or friends, I was trying to make up my mind what to do, when I ran across John Cavendish. I had seen very little of him for some years. Indeed, I had never known him particularly well. He was a good fifteen years my senior, for one thing, though he hardly looked his forty-five years. As a boy, though, I had often stayed at Styles, his mother’s place in Essex.

We had a good yarn about old times, and it ended in his inviting me down to Styles to spend my leave there.

“The mater will be delighted to see you again—after all those years,” he added.

“Your mother keeps well?” I asked.

“Oh, yes. I suppose you know that she has married again?”

I am afraid I showed my surprise rather plainly. Mrs. Cavendish, who had married John’s father when he was a widower with two sons, had been a handsome woman of middle-age as I remembered her. She certainly could not be a day less than seventy now. I recalled her as an energetic, autocratic personality, somewhat inclined to charitable and social notoriety, with a fondness for opening bazaars and playing the Lady Bountiful. She was a most generous woman, and possessed a considerable fortune of her own.

Their country-place, Styles Court, had been purchased by Mr. Cavendish early in their married life. He had been completely under his wife’s ascendancy, so much so that, on dying, he left the place to her for her lifetime, as well as the larger part of his income; an arrangement that was distinctly unfair to his two sons. Their step-mother, however, had always been most generous to them; indeed, they were so young at the time of their father’s remarriage that they always thought of her as their own mother.

Lawrence, the younger, had been a delicate youth. He had qualified as a doctor but early relinquished the profession of medicine, and lived at home while pursuing literary ambitions; though his verses never had any marked success.

Section A

Answer the question in this section.

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[25 marks]

Mr Sherlock Holmes, who was usually very late in the mornings, save upon those not infrequent occasions when he stayed up all night, was seated at the breakfast table. I stood upon the hearthrug and picked up the walking stick which our visitor had left behind him the night before. Just under the head was a broad silver band, nearly an inch across. “To James Mortimer, MRCS, from his friends of the CCH” was engraved upon it, with the date “1884”.

“Well, Watson, what do you make of it?”

Holmes was sitting with his back to me, and I had given him no sign of my occupation.

“How did you know what I was doing? I believe you have eyes in the back of your head.”

“I have, at least, a well-polished, silver-plated coffee-pot in front of me,” said he. “But, tell me, Watson, what do you make of our visitor’s stick? Since we have been so unfortunate as to miss him and have no notion of his errand, this accidental souvenir becomes of importance. Let me hear you reconstruct the man by an examination of it.”

“I think,” said I, following so far as I could the methods of my companion, “that Dr Mortimer is a successful elderly medical man, well-esteemed, since those who know him give him this mark of their appreciation.”

“Good!” said Holmes. “Excellent!”

Section A

Answer the question in this section.

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[25 marks]

“My dear fellow,” said Sherlock Holmes as we sat on either side of the fire in his lodgings at Baker Street, “life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent. We would not dare to conceive the things which are really mere commonplaces of existence. If we could fly out of that window hand in hand, hover over this great city, gently remove the roofs, and peep in at the queer things which are going on, the strange coincidences, the plannings, the cross-purposes, the wonderful chains of events, working through generations, and leading to the most outré results, it would make all fiction with its conventionalities and foreseen conclusions most stale and unprofitable.”

 “And yet I am not convinced of it,” I answered. “The cases which come to light in the papers are, as a rule, bald enough, and vulgar enough. We have in our police reports realism pushed to its extreme limits, and yet the result is, it must be confessed, neither fascinating nor artistic.”

 “A certain selection and discretion must be used in producing a realistic effect,” remarked Holmes. “This is wanting in the police report, where more stress is laid, perhaps, upon the platitudes of the magistrate than upon the details, which to an observer contain the vital essence of the whole matter. Depend upon it, there is nothing so unnatural as the commonplace.”

I smiled and shook my head. “I can quite understand your thinking so,” I said. “Of course, in your position of unofficial adviser and helper to everybody who is absolutely puzzled, throughout three continents, you are brought in contact with all that is strange and bizarre. But here”—I picked up the morning paper from the ground—“let us put it to a practical test. Here is the first heading upon which I come. “A husband‟s cruelty to his wife.‟ There is half a column of print, but I know without reading it that it is all perfectly familiar to me. There is, of course, the other woman, the drink, the push, the blow, the bruise, the sympathetic sister or landlady. The crudest of writers could invent nothing more crude.”

 “Indeed, your example is an unfortunate one for your argument,” said Holmes, taking the paper and glancing his eye down it. “This is the Dundas separation case, and, as it happens, I was engaged in clearing up some small points in connection with it. The husband was a teetotaler, there was no other woman, and the conduct complained of was that he had drifted into the habit of winding up every meal by taking out his false teeth and hurling them at his wife, which, you will allow, is not an action likely to occur to the imagination of the average story-teller. Take a pinch of snuff, Doctor, and acknowledge that I have scored over you in your example.”

Section A

Answer the question in this section.

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[25 marks]

If you are asking me if I believe in forgiveness, in my experience, those who beg for mercy seldom deserve it.  Last night was difficult for me.  In the end, I turned over onto my back in bed, eager to find rest.  When somewhere outside my room, a door slammed and robbed me of my sleep once more.  For some reason sleep eluded me.  Under normal circumstances, I sleep well, even better after the excitement of a kill.  Although I’ve always believe, it’s the smell of the blood, which helped me to sleep.

But not tonight.

For the first time in years, I haven’t slept well.  Eventually, I had to get up and switch on the light.

And here you are?  Like some half-forgotten dream.

Questions, bloody questions.  If you are going to rob me of my sleep tonight, I might as well answer your questions.  To start with, you really need to sort out the lighting in this place.  It’s too dull.

Oh, so you’re telling me the lighting is supposed to calm my nerves.  Lady, the last thing you should worry about are my nerves.  What’s puzzling me though is why you’re wandering about at this time of night, anyway.  Can’t you sleep?  Or maybe you’ve something to hide too!

Questions more bloody questions.

So what’s with wanting to know about my mother now?

I might as well tell you, I suppose.  Overall, she was a good woman, maybe a little bossy.  Really, I don’t know about other people’s mothers.  Where I lived separated me from the rest of the community…  Now look here others like you might view my isolation as being wrong, but for me it made things easier.  Mum was a qualified teacher, who opted to do my schooling at home, as the nearest schools were many miles away.  Mum liked living alone, especially after Dad left, though, she liked to drive to the nearest church every Sunday.

Originally, my family weren’t church-going folks until after we moved to the new house.

What!  You think I’m making excuses for my behaviour.  Let me tell you, lady you’ve got it so wrong!

With pride, Mum told me, “We’re God-fearing people, Aaron.  I want everyone to know we’re living the way the Good Lord expects us to live.”

And Lord, didn’t I know it.