

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/ENGLISH IB/TOPS/MACS/HANDOUT 12

NAME: _____

READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following selections and answer the questions that follow.

SELECTION 1/4

"So what's the grand plan then, Dr. Science?" Asha asked in a betrayed sort of tone.

"Look, we don't have to give up either of your plans," Dr. Science explained. "Sebastian, we can still use The Green Dragon at the Louvre like we'd planned and when we're finished with it you can have it."

"What do you mean 'use it at the Louvre'?" Asha asked.

"We were planning on using The Green Dragon to hypnotize the visitors, the guards, and the staff at the Louvre so that we can steal and replace their entire art collection," Sebastian admitted.

"What? Don't you think that's a bit **risqué**, not to mention entirely stupid?" Asha asked. "I mean, you'd get caught instantly. There'd be **warrants** out for your arrest in every single country in the world."

"That's the point of having The Green Dragon, Asha. No one would know that any of the sculptures or paintings had been replaced because they'd all be hypnotized," Dr. Science explained and took a brief **reprieve** from talking to sip from his cold cup of tea.

Asha shot Dr. Science a furious look. After all, she had been betrayed by him. He was going to give her a copy of The Green Dragon and use the real one for himself. She sat and weighed her options. She could either help Dr. Science and keep the real Green Dragon and take a cut from the **proceeds** from the stolen artwork, or she could just leave with the real Green Dragon. She decided that the first option was slightly more agreeable and said, "I want in on the cut."

Sebastian Fresh and Dr. Science looked at each other and excused themselves to talk things over. They returned quite quickly to **resume** their discussion and negotiations involving their upcoming **heist**. **Unanimously**, they decided that it would be more **beneficial** for Asha to be in on the cut.

All three of them felt a new sense of **wellbeing**. Not only would they have the power of The Green Dragon behind them, but they'd also soon be incredibly rich from selling off stolen, original pieces from the **Mecca** of masterpieces: the Louvre in Paris. This sense of **camaraderie** was a **novel** concept to all three of them. They were so used to being selfish and backstabbing that it actually felt good to be part of a team. Unfortunately, it was much too late when they realized that one of their supposed team members had run away. And she'd run away with The Green Dragon safely tucked underneath her favourite cap.

1. What are the two options that Asha considers, and why does she choose one over the other?

2. What does the “upcoming heist” involve? Explain in your own words.

SELECTION 2/4

Little Lola had had enough. She tried her hardest to stay in a good mood while Dr. Science, Asha Bloom, and Sebastian Fresh sat around and made plans to break into the Louvre, but as they forgot to include her in these plans she **succumbed** to feeling more and more down in the dumps. She didn't want the **pittance** they were most likely going to offer her for The Green Dragon. She didn't think it was at all fair. After all, she was the one who was clever enough to snatch it out of Candy Cottonshank's purse and she was the one who had been carrying it around uncomfortably in her cap this whole time. Dr. Science and Asha didn't even treat her as a **relevant** part of their criminal crew. All they wanted was someone who would **comply** with their dumb schemes, and Little Lola was sick and tired of being that someone.

Watching Asha and Sebastian Fresh **fawn** over Dr. Science as he began to **orate** his plans for breaking into the Louvre was the last straw. Little Lola didn't feel included at all, so **solemnly** she sneaked away towards one of the rock walls and found a small hole large enough to push me through, and then she wiggled through herself. “They'll miss me once they know I've left with their precious emerald,” she said as we began our **descent** back toward the doors that greeted us upon falling into the lagoon.

“I'm sick of being treated like I'm **obsolete** and unimportant. Asha and her stupid hairdo and Dr. Science and his dumb lab coat – they'll be sorry once they haven't got me to push around any longer. And that Sebastian Fresh, he's some kind of **enigma**. He didn't even make any sense with all that talk about art and ideas. What's he getting at anyhow? Sometimes a painting is just a great painting and people like it because it's beautiful, not because it's some kind of crazy idea.” Little Lola continued to **declaim** Dr. Science, Asha, and Sebastian Fresh while she carried me to the doors that presumably led somewhere other than the cave in which Sebastian kept all his stolen artwork. When we finally arrived she marched straight over to the door with splotches on it and said, “Yup, I bet I've caused them some kind of **crisis** now that The Green Dragon isn't near, but I don't even care. They can't have it. I can go to Paris by myself.” And with that she turned the large colourful doorknob and we found ourselves in a **diverse** tunnel from the one we'd found ourselves in before.

Once Little Lola had shut the door behind her we heard an incredibly loud whistle and saw some very bright lights speeding toward us. It took mere seconds for me to figure out that it was a train. Somehow Lola and I had entered into a sort of subway system. From the look on Lola's face you could tell she thought that the train was quite **expedient**, if not a little **fortuitous**. “You

see, kitty, it's meant to be! We wanted to leave and here's a train coming to take us away." I, of course, didn't feel the same way about the train that Lola did, but as it was my duty to follow The Green Dragon, I was forced to stay with her and board the train.

3. Explain in your own words why Lola has decided to sneak away?

4. How is Lola's understanding of the value and meaning of art different from Dr. Sebastian Fresh's?

SELECTION 3/4

We quickly jumped on to one of the cars as the train jerked to a stop at the platform. All the seats on board were completely empty and one of the overhead lights had gone out giving the car a slightly **ominous** appearance. We sat down near a window and the voice of the train conductor shouted, "Next stop, Paris!"

"Where on earth could she have gone?" Dr. Science screamed in a panic, accidentally knocking over a rather **potent**-smelling can of red paint.

In a **similar** fashion, Asha looked around the room, bumping into replicas of different art works calling out Lola's name, "Lola, Lola, where are you? This isn't funny anymore. Come out right now!"

"Forgive me for **broaching** such a sensitive topic, but what does it matter if that stupid little girl ran off?" Sebastian Fresh asked as he tried to protect a **gilded** frame from Asha's rampage.

"She has The Green Dragon," Dr. Science answered simply.

Sebastian's jaw almost dropped to the floor. "What do you mean she has The Green Dragon?"

Dr. Science offered Sebastian a **cursory** version of how Little Lola had stolen the emerald from Candy Cottonshank's purse. It wasn't the whole story, but it was enough for him to understand what had happened up until they'd all reached the tunnel.

"Congratulations are in order, it seems," Sebastian said, starting to applaud sarcastically. "I have to offer both of you **kudos** for being the biggest idiots in the world."

"Idiots? How dare you call us idiots?" Asha Bloom said, taking great offense.

"How dare I? Well, let's see, as far as I can **surmise**, the two of you pushed Little Lola away by treating her poorly, thus losing The Green Dragon again. If that isn't idiotic, I don't know what is."

"Sebastian is right, Asha," Dr. Science said. "We should have been more concerned with how Lola would react. But instead of fighting amongst ourselves now, we've got to find out where she's gone. We need a new plan. Now, what **pertinent** information do we know about little Lola that will help us find her and recover The Green Dragon?"

"She has that stupid cat with her," Asha said flopping down into an overstuffed chair and sulking because instead of paying attention to her, now Dr. Science and Sebastian Fresh were more concerned with Little Lola.

"I don't think the cat is at all significant. I mean, other than keeping her company, what can a cat do? It's not like a cat knows kung-fu or how to bake a soufflé," Sebastian observed.

"Yes, what else do we know about Lola?" Dr. Science said, thinking out loud.

"She loves orange soda," Asha said.

"Good, good. That sort of information will help us in the long run."

"Look," Sebastian Fresh suddenly called out. "There's been a **breach** in the train tunnel." "The train tunnel?" Asha asked him trying to understand what he meant.

Sebastian laughed a little before he answered her. "Before we made these tunnels our headquarters they were used **explicitly** for underground trains that were **abandoned** ages ago. I cleverly decided to keep one of the trains that heads straight for Paris so that I could transport the stolen art more easily. Each of the doors at the entrance to our headquarters leads to something else. One leads to our cave, one leads to the train..."

Before he could finish telling where the other tunnels led to Dr. Science interrupted him. "Sebastian, which door leads to the train tunnel?"

"The door with the splotches."

"That was Lola's favourite door!" Asha exclaimed.

"Yes, that's it. She must have gone through the door and gotten on the train," Dr. Science said.

"Which means she'll arrive in Paris in a few hours," Sebastian added.

"It's **imperative** that we think and act quickly," Dr. Science pointed out as he **paced** back and forth.

5. What ideas do Dr. Science, Sebastian Fresh, and Asha come up with to look for Lola? Explain why some ideas do not work, and why others do.

SELECTION 4/4

Asha was nervous and started to **gorge** herself on the plate of disgusting cookies that had been sitting there since Little Lola left. "We just have to find her. That's all there is to it," she said.

"But how are we supposed to find her in a city as big as Paris? And what exactly do you suggest we do once we find her? It's obvious that we can't just go up to her and make nice," Sebastian stated, joining Dr. Science in his pacing.

"I think I've got a plan," Dr. Science finally said.

"I'm not sure we should trust your plans anymore, Dr. Science. They've gotten us into mess after mess without **exception**," Asha said with her mouth full.

"Trust me, Asha, this plan is very simple. Little Lola will most likely be **downtrodden** and upset when she reaches Paris, so the first thing she'll do is try to cheer herself up with orange soda."

"One of the few soda fountains in Paris is very near where the train stops in Paris," Sebastian said nodding.

"Lola will most likely stop for an orange soda. In fact, she'll probably drink more than one. In the meantime, one of us will disguise ourselves as a nice French lady who will offer to take care of her."

"And then what?" Asha asked.

"Well, then we kidnap her, of course," answered Dr. Science.

"That's the dumbest plan I've ever heard," Asha said. "Little Lola never talks to strangers."

"Have you got a better idea?" Sebastian asked. Asha shook her head.

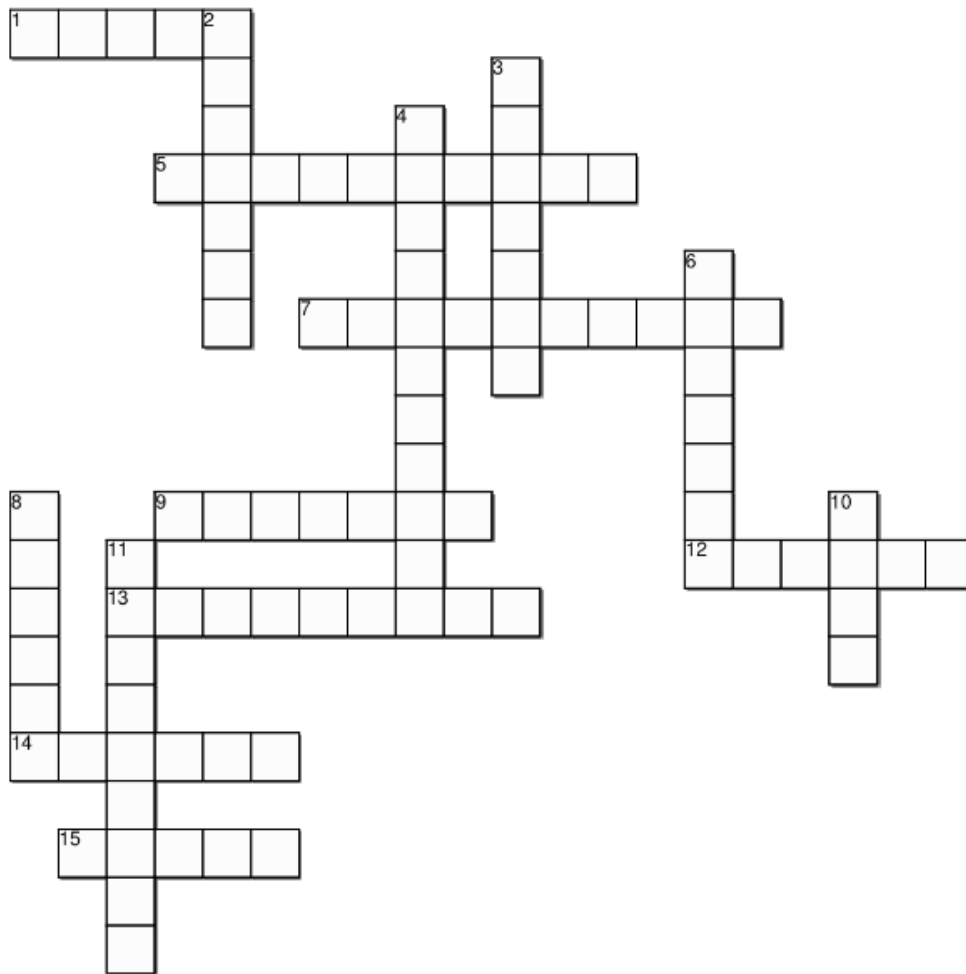
"All right then, we've got to get to Paris and quickly. There's no telling how long Lola will sit at that soda fountain drinking orange sodas. We haven't got any time to lose," said Dr. Science as he shoved something into the inside pocket of his white lab coat.

"Follow me," Sebastian said. "We can take my jet."

Both Dr. Science and Asha looked at Sebastian Fresh as if he were some kind of **prodigal** art thief. "You have a jet? Isn't that kind of expensive?" Dr. Science asked.

Sebastian Fresh just smiled and snapped his fingers and before too long the three of them had entered the jewel-encrusted door and were boarding his private jet.

Complete the crossword below



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Across

1. Praise and honour received for an achievement.
5. Of vital importance
7. Happening by chance.
9. Hasty and therefore not thorough or detailed.
12. Raise a difficult subject for discussion.
13. Convenient and practical.
14. A person or thing that is mysterious or difficult to understand.
15. A city in western Saudi Arabia, considered by Muslims to be the holiest city of Islam.

Down

2. Suppose that something is true without having evidence to confirm it.
3. Giving the worry impression that something bad is going to happen.
4. Mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together.
6. Fail to resist temptation or pressure.
8. Begin again.
10. Give a servile display of exaggerated affection.
11. Relevant

THE END