

Enduring Love from chapter 1

The narrator, Gadd and other men are trying to stop a hot air balloon from flying off. Inside the basket is a terrified boy.

A mighty fist of wind socked the balloon in two rapid blows, one-two, the second more vicious than the first. It jerked Gadd right out of the basket on to the ground, and with Gadd's considerable weight removed from the equation, it lifted the balloon five feet or so, straight into the air. The rope ran through my grip, scorching my palms, but I managed to keep hold, with two feet of line spare, The others kept hold too. The basket was right above our heads now, and we stood with arms upraised like Sunday bell ringers. Into our amazed silence, before the shouting could resume, the second punch came and knocked the balloon up and westwards. Suddenly we were treading the air with all our weight in the grip of our fists. 5 10

Almost simultaneous, with the desire to stay on the rope and save the boy, came other thoughts, thoughts of self preservation and fear. We were rising, and the ground was dropping away as the balloon was pushed upwards. I knew I had to get my legs and feet locked round the rope. But the end of the line barely reached below my waist and my grip was slipping. My legs flailed in the empty air. Every fraction of a second that passed increased the drop, and the point must come when to let go would be impossible or fatal. Then, someone did let go. Immediately, the balloon and its hangers on lurched upwards another several feet. 15

But letting go was in our nature too. The child was not my child, and I was not going to die for it. Then I glimpsed another body fall away and I felt the balloon lurch upwards. The matter was settled. Altruism had no place. Being good made no sense. I let go and fell, I reckon, about twelve feet. I landed heavily on my side, I got away with a bruised thigh. Around me - before or after, I'm not so sure - bodies were thumping to the ground. 20 25

By the time I got to my feet the balloon was fifty yards away, and one man was still dangling by his rope, all his energies concentrated in his weakening grip. He was already a tiny figure and as the balloon and its basket lifted away and westwards, the smaller he became and the more terrible it was. Our silence was a kind of acceptance, a death warrant. Or it was horrified shame. He had been on the rope so long that I began to think he might stay there until the balloon drifted down. But even as I had that hope we saw him slip down right to the end of the rope. And still he hung there. For two seconds, three, four. And then he let ruthless gravity played its part. And from somewhere a thin squawk cut through go and the stilled air. He fell as he had hung, a stiff little black stick. I've never seen such a terrible thing as that falling man. 30 35

Q1

Read again the first part of the source, lines 1 to 10.

List **four** details from this paragraph that describe the helplessness of the men.

- A
- B
- C
- D

[4 marks]

Q2 [AO2 - language]

Look in detail at this extract from lines 10 to 25 of the source:

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25

How does the writer use language here to describe the narrator's predicament?
You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

[8 marks]

Q3 structure

You now need to think about the **whole** of the **source**. This text is from a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the extract develops
- any other structural features that interest you. [8 marks]

Q4 [AO4 - evaluate with reference]

Focus this part of your answer on the second half of the source, **from line 26**

to the end. A student, having read this section of the text said: "The writer vividly conveys The horror of the situation. It is as if you are there with the narrator."

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you should:

- write about your own impressions of what the narrator sees
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with quotations from the text.

[20 marks]