



GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (8700)

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

Insert

The source that follows is:

Source A: 20th Century prose-fiction

It is an extract from the controversial novel *Junk* by Melvin Burgess published in 1996; winner of the Carnegie Medal and the Guardian's Children fiction award in 1997.

It tells the story of teenagers, Tar and Gemma, who are in a relationship.

**Please turn the page over
to see the source**

Source A

It is the 1980s, in Bristol. Teenagers, Tar and Gemma, have run away to Bristol and have become addicted to Heroin; Gemma is ringing her parents for the first time since she has left home. She is in a room with boyfriend Tar and friends Lily and Rob.

"Gemma, come home, please come home... please..." she said. And she started crying.

I wanted to hug her and hold her. I had to hug the phone, it was the nearest I could get to her. Dad made me angry, but Mum just made me love her.

5 "I can't come back, not yet, Mum, not yet. But I'm okay, I really am and I miss you, Mum, and I'll come back as soon as I can," I blabbed. I was just about crying already.

"Oh Gemma," she said. "Oh Gemma..." And she couldn't even talk, she was crying so much.

I wish she wouldn't cry.

I could hear Dad trying to get the phone back but she pulled herself together. He was going on in the background, raising his voice to her. It made me cross.

10 "What's he going on about now?" I said.

She said, "Don't be angry with your father, Gemma. It's been a terrible strain. He hasn't been sleeping, the doctor's put him on pills."

I felt rotten then, but Tar reached over and put his hand over the receiver so she couldn't hear and he said, "Bloody junkie."

15 It was so funny. It was awful. There was a second's pause and then everyone started spluttering and laughing silently. Lily clapped her hand and slid down to the floor of the booth and hid her face in her hands. I had to bite my cheeks to stop myself from laughing.

I gritted my teeth and said, "What sort of pills?"

"Sleeping pills, you know. Quite strong ones."

20 Rob and Tar were holding on to each other.

"He's in the most awful state," finished my mum.

25 I was howling and laughing and laughing and I had to do it all without making a noise. It was so funny! All that stuff about him worrying about me and there he was, packed up to the eyeballs with downers and smoking fags. Lily got up off the floor and hissed, "Ask her if he'll send some down. We'll give him a good price..."

I was killing myself. Mum was saying, "Are you all right, Gemma? Are you all right" And then I heard Dad saying "She must be on drugs or something..." And of course that made me howl even more. I could barely stand up. We were all getting really hysterical.

30 Then Mum started crying again and I felt rotten so I just said, "Look Mum, there's a spot of bother here, I'll ring you back later..." and I slapped the phone down and we all just roared with laughter. It was so hysterical. It was rotten, I felt awful, but it was so funny... none of us could help it.

END OF SOURCE