

Name: _____

Text for **Section A**, an extract from *Stepsister* by Jennifer Donnelly, about Isabelle, her sister Tavi and her stepsister Ella

‘Six sous¹,’ the baker’s wife said.

‘Six?’ Isabelle echoed, confused. ‘But the sign here says three.’ She pointed to a slate on the baker’s stall with a price marked on it in chalk.

5

The woman spat on her palm, rubbed the 3 away and wrote 6 in its place. ‘For you, six,’ she said insolently.

‘But that’s double the price. It’s not fair!’ Isabelle protested.

‘Neither is treating your stepsister like a slave,’ said the woman. ‘Don’t deny it. You were cruel to a defenceless girl. Got your comeuppance, though, didn’t you? Ella is queen now and more beautiful than ever. And you? You’re nothing more than her ugly stepsister.’

10

Isabelle lowered her head, her cheeks flaming. She and Tavi had only just arrived at the market and already the taunts were starting.

Taking a deep, steadying breath, she remembered her sister’s directive: *Behave*. She counted out the coins from her pocket and handed them over. The baker’s wife gave her an undersized loaf, burned on the bottom, and a sneering smile to go with it.

15

‘Serves her right,’ said a woman standing in line.

‘Burned bread’s too good for her,’ sniffed another.

20

Distracted by the villagers’ talk, Isabelle did not see the pothole in front of her until she stepped down in it hard. A searing pain shot up her leg. In agony, she glanced up and down the street hoping to see her cart, but there was no sign of it.

She did, however, see Odette, the innkeeper’s daughter, walking towards her, tapping her cane over the cobblestones. Odette was blind and used the cane to navigate the village’s winding streets.

25

Then Isabelle saw something else.

Cecile, the mayor’s daughter, and her gaggle of friends were walking behind Odette. She was waving her parasol in front of her as if it were a cane, mocking² Odette. Her friends were giggling.

30

Dread gripped Isabelle. She knew she should go to Odette and defend her. But her foot hurt and she had no heart for another confrontation. She told herself that

Odette didn't know what was happening. After all, she couldn't see Cecile, but she, Isabelle, could, and knew she would be the girl's next victim. She looked around anxiously for a place to hide, but it was too late. Cecile had spotted her. 35

'Isabelle de la Paum , is that *you*?' she drawled, forgetting about Odette.

As Cecile spoke, Isabelle's eyes fell on the entrance to an alley. She didn't bother to reply but rushed down the narrow passage, heedless of³ the pain she was in. The alley was damp and smelled like a sewer, but she managed to avoid Cecile and emerge on the very street where she'd left her cart. 40

Relief flooded through her. Tavi wasn't there yet, but Isabelle was certain she'd come soon.

Isabelle had been in such a hurry to escape that she'd started for the cart without looking up and down the street. 45

'Isabelle, darling! *There* you are!' a voice called out.

Isabelle's stomach tightened. Slowly, she turned around.

Standing behind her, smiling like a viper, was Cecile.

Glossary

¹sous: small coins used in France in the past

²mocking: teasing / making fun of

³heedless of: without paying attention to

Read the **text** in the insert, and answer Questions 1–10.

1 Look at lines 3–5.

Why does Isabelle repeat what the baker's wife says?

_____ [1]

2 Look at lines 6–14.

(a) What does the phrase *Got your comeuppance* tell us about the woman's opinion of Isabelle?

Tick (☐) **one** box.

The woman thinks that Isabelle... has

done nothing wrong.

☐

is treated unfairly by her stepsister.

☐

deserves what has happened to her.

☐

should be queen instead of her stepsister.

☐

[1]

(b) Give **one** example of a metaphor that the writer uses to show Isabelle's feelings.

_____ [1]

3 Look at line 3 and line 15.

Italics are used in both these lines. Why are italics used? Tick (☐) **two** boxes.

to emphasise that it is just a joke

☐

to emphasise a character's feelings

☐

to show what a character has written

☐

to show a word in a different language

☐

to show what a character said previously

☐

[2]

4 Look at lines 3–20.

(a) Explain how the behaviour of the baker's wife shows us she doesn't like Isabelle. Give **two** ways.

-
-

[2]

(b) Put the events in chronological order from (1) the one that happens first, to (5) the one that happens last. One example has been done for you.

Isabelle is shown disrespect by the baker's wife. - - - - .

Isabelle treats her stepsister badly. - 1 - - - .

Isabelle's stepsister joins the royal family. - - - - .

Isabelle is taunted by other people. - - - - .

Isabelle and her sister arrive at the market. - - - - .

[3]

5 Look at lines 21–24.

Give the main clause of the first sentence in this paragraph.

_____ [1]

6 Look at lines 25–28.

Give **one** reason why the writer starts a new paragraph after *...there was no sign of it*.

_____ [1]

7 Look at lines 29–31.

Give **one** example of a collective noun in this paragraph.

_____ [1]

8 Look at lines 32–37.

(a) What type of figurative language does the writer use in the first sentence?

_____ [1]

- (b) Give **one** word that tells us that Isabelle knew protecting Odette was the right thing to do.

_____ [1]

- (c) In the sentence beginning *After all...* which character does the first *she* refer to?

_____ [1]

9 Look at lines 38–48.

- (a) What does the word *flooded* tell us about Isabelle’s emotion?

_____ [1]

- (b) Explain **two** ways that the writer creates a feeling of tension in the final three lines.

- _____
- _____

[2]

10 Look at the whole text.

- (a) Why do you think Isabelle feels threatened by Cecile? Give **two** reasons using evidence from the text.

- _____
- _____

[2]

- (b) Explain **two** ways that Isabelle’s actions show her fear of Cecile. Give a quotation from the text to support each explanation.

Explanation: _____

Quotation: _____

Explanation: _____

Quotation: _____