

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF MALTA, MSIDA

MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
MAY 2012
Candidate's Paper

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH - Oral
DATE:	18th April 2012
TIME:	P.M. (10 mins)

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

The first spacecraft to visit Mercury was NASA's Mariner 10 in 1974. Mariner 10 provided the first close-up images of Mercury's surface, which immediately showed its heavily cratered nature, and revealed many other types of geological features. The spacecraft made three close approaches to Mercury, the closest of which took it to within 327 km of the surface. On the 24th March 1975, just eight days after its final close approach, Mariner 10 ran out of fuel. Since its orbit could no longer be accurately controlled, mission controllers instructed the probe to shut down.

NASA's second mission to Mercury named Messenger was launched on the 3rd August 2004. The spacecraft has returned images of the planet Mercury, indicating that the time the planet has been dead is not as long as previously believed by scientists. Analysing the images and data closely, scientific teams at NASA believe that they indicate vividly Mercury's most recent volcanic activity, which does not complement the existing view that it has been long-dead and had a short life span. Contrarily, scientists now believe that the planet was active for much of its life span and by analysing its surface and composition further, they can learn more about how other planets in our solar system were formed and evolved.

Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun in our solar system, and, since it was first imaged by NASA, it has revealed its surface to be scarred, crater-heavy wasteland, with only the remnants of long extinct volcanoes to be seen. However, the new data and imagery suggests that not only did those volcanoes rage for far longer than first thought, but also that there is strong evidence to suggest that Mercury was prone to intense and sporadic magnetic substorms.

The Messenger spacecraft has enough fuel to orbit Mercury until at least 2013 and – as noted by the Messenger's principal investigator Sean Solomon – “Once Messenger has been safely inserted into orbit around Mercury we will be in for a terrific show.”

Adapted from *Mercury Rising*
www.howitworksdaily.com

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time.

- a. A childhood dream
- b. Five things I can't live without
- c. Blogs
- d. Studying abroad
- e. Blood donation
- f. The Arab spring

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SUBJECT:	ENGLISH - Oral
DATE:	19th April 2012
TIME:	P.M. (10 mins)

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

The Statue of Liberty is situated on Liberty Island in New York Harbour. It was officially titled 'Liberty Enlightening the World', and represents Libertas, the Roman Goddess of freedom. It was built as a monument commemorating the centenary of the American Declaration of Independence and has since become a symbol of freedom and of the United States of America.

Constructed by the French, the Statue of Liberty was a gift to the United States from the people of France and was designed by Frederic Bartholdi. The Statue of Liberty was designed as a colossal copper statue and when Bartholdi required the assistance of an engineer to address structural issues he turned to Gustave Eiffel, the designer of the Eiffel Tower, who was asked to build a massive iron pylon and a skeletal framework to act as the support for the sculpture. While remaining fixed to its steel frame, the structure was able to move in the wind – subsequently, wind speeds of 50 miles per hour have been recorded, and the statue has been known to sway up to three inches under pressure.

The pedestal, crafted from Scottish sandstone, was built in the USA. Once this was erected, it was time to assemble the statue proper. Parts of the statue were shipped from France. They arrived in 350 pieces and were packed into 214 crates. It took four months to assemble the statue and secure it on the pedestal. The pedestal is supported by two sets of iron girders which are connected by iron tie beams – these extend upwards into the framework of the statue creating a strong link from the ground.

The Statue of Liberty was originally designed as a lighthouse and functioned as such from 1886 to 1902. It housed an electric light that could be seen several miles out to sea. In the 1980s it was discovered that major restoration was required and the statue was closed between 1984 and 1986. After the September 11th attacks in 2001 the statue was closed for reasons of safety and security. On the 29th October 2011 the statue and pedestal were again closed for a year due to renovations.

Adapted from *The Statue of Liberty*
www.howitworksdaily.com

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time.

- a. Dictators
- b. My favourite food
- c. Being online
- d. The Olympics
- e. Cosmetic surgery
- f. City break or adventure holiday?

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SUBJECT:	ENGLISH - Oral
DATE:	20th April 2012
TIME:	P.M. (10 mins)

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

As the winds of recession sweep across the UK the £1.99 edition of *The Great Gatsby* sells 232% more than last year.

Elsewhere, publishers are feeling the squeeze, with spending on printed novels down 10% in 2010. But sales in cheap classics are booming. Derek Wright, director at Wordsworth, said the publisher's overall sales have doubled over the last five years to reach £1.3m in the year to end May 2011. "Historically, our classics thrive in recessions. The £1 classic paperback came out in 1992 when the country was in its third year of recession.

"The UK readers' appetite for the classics does not seem to diminish. Television and film adaptations continue to fuel interest, and I think the psychology behind our current success is exactly the same. When the present-day shopper goes on Amazon to look for, say the book of a new film adaptation like *Jane Eyre*, our edition will invariably make an early appearance in the listing because of the price, and if you click on it, then another eight or so of our titles pop up in the 'people who bought this also bought' section, and at only £1.99, the temptation to pop a couple more in your basket is very strong," he added.

Stone also put the growth in Wordsworth's sales down to cash-strapped students looking for cheap editions of their set texts. "Some of the solid sales of the Wordsworth classics will have come from students and parents of students who need to buy copies to study," he said. "Five years ago, they probably would have walked into a shop and shelled out £7-£10 on a Penguin/OUP/Vintage Classics edition because it looked nice and contained an introduction by an academic that could help with an essay. This year, with their belts tightened, they'll make do with a much cheaper edition and just use Wikipedia for exam-cram assistance." Wright agreed, saying the publisher now sees "a very marked peak in sales at the start of the academic year".

Adapted from *Cheap classics boom as rest of book trade struggles* by Alison Flood
Guardian.co.uk
9th December 2011

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time.

- a. Human rights violations
- b. Smartphones
- c. My perfect day
- d. Reality TV
- e. Hero worship
- f. Public transport

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SUBJECT:	ENGLISH - Oral
DATE:	21 st April 2012
TIME:	A.M. (10 mins)

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

On the 17th December 2010 an act of self-immolation would change the course of Arab political history. Mohamed Bouazizi and his actions spawned a hugely unprecedented movement, forever altering the Arab political landscape, delivering the much-vaunted 'breakthrough' in the fight against autocracy.

Theoretically, Bouazizi lacked the kind of pedigree that qualifies one's entry into history books. He had no wider horizon beyond being a street vendor. He was not elite - his family was modest in every sense - and his town was on the margins of Tunisia both politically and economically.

I visited his place of burial in my first trip to Tunisia back in January 2011 after Bin Ali was ousted. I was not alone. Rather, Bouazizi was not alone. There were Tunisians and non-Tunisians visiting to pay homage to a modest individual who took a stand not knowing it would alter the oppressive dynastic and undemocratic status quo of an entire region. On the site, several high school pupils from a neighbouring town spoke of him as a saviour and hero. Deservedly, his place in Tunisia's history books is set in stone. Graffiti in many Tunisian towns and cities still read 'Martyr Bouazizi' or 'Mohamed Bouazizi Square'.

I recall making mental notes of why his individual act of self-immolation was an enactment of a public good. He protested by staging a public suicidal act. It was an act of violence directed only at himself, which he deliberately displayed opposite the town's seat of power, in a public street and in broad daylight. Bouazizi intended his act of lunacy and courage to be a public signal of resistance and disobedience. It was live political theatre in which he tragically played out his own death with a message: for Tunisians to free themselves from their oppressive predicament was to resist or face his fate.

Bouazizi's message was decoded rightly and the rest is history: quietism no more. Bouazizi was capable of rising above the ordinary when his surrounding environment favoured change. He had the courage to resist when it mattered most. He seized the moment, and history seized him within its chronicles.

(Mohamed Bouazizi is a Tunisian street vendor who set himself on fire in an act of desperate defiance sparking the Arab Spring).

Adapted from *The Bouazizi Big Bang* by Larbi Sadiki
www.aljazeera.com
17th December 2011

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time.

- a. Extreme sports (*for example, bungee jumping, skydiving, ice climbing...*)
- b. Parents
- c. Online shopping
- d. Organic food
- e. Airports and train stations
- f. Malta's infrastructure

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PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

"The Iron Lady" is the name of the new film in which Meryl Streep stars as Margaret Thatcher. You have only to consider the title itself to understand the impact of the person portrayed. It helps explain why, in these hard times, she and her legacy arouse even more interest than they did in the boom era at the end of the 20th century.

First, the word "Lady". Mrs Thatcher was the first and only woman ever to have led a major British political party, and remains so to this day. She was the first woman prime minister in the English-speaking world and the longest-serving British prime minister of either sex since universal suffrage. And this Lady was first called "Iron" not by her admirers but by her enemies. After becoming leader of the Conservative Party in 1975, Mrs. Thatcher opened a new, controversial front in the Cold War with the Soviet Union. Soviet communism, she argued, should not be accommodated but overcome.

Not many people in the West agreed with her at the time, except one Ronald Reagan, and he was just an ex-governor of California with a dream of running for president. After Mrs. Thatcher had made a couple of stirring speeches on this theme, the Soviet Red Army newspaper Red Star christened her "The Iron Lady." In doing so, it intended to make a satirical comparison with Otto von Bismarck, the 19th-century "Iron Chancellor" of Germany and to paint her as rigid and harsh.

But Margaret Thatcher immediately saw her opportunity in the insult. There is nothing better than being feared by your opponents. "Iron" means strong. For a woman to be so attacked proved that she had graduated, before she had even become prime minister, into world politics. So she put on her prettiest (red) gown and made a speech embracing her new title. She has been the Iron Lady ever since. After more than 11 years in power, Mrs Thatcher left office against her wishes (and without electoral defeat) in November 1990, the victim of a coup by members of her own party.

Adapted from *What would the iron lady do?*
The Wall Street Journal
17th December 2011

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time.

- a. Austerity measures and frugal living
- b. Our family photo album
- c. Do you prefer dancing or watching people dance?
- d. File sharing and piracy
- e. Travelling around the world
- f. Dying to be thin

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MAY 2012

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH
DATE:	2nd May 2012
TIME:	4.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.

ANSWER BOTH SECTIONS

You are advised to spend about 1 hour on each task.

SECTION A – LANGUAGE (60 marks)

1. ESSAY (30 marks)

Write approximately 500 words on **one** of the following:

- a) Easter in Malta and Gozo.
- b) It's better to 'eat to live' rather than to 'live to eat'. Do you agree?
- c) Write a letter to a local organisation in which you wish to congratulate the organising committee on a recent activity, adding a few suggestions for future events.
- d) Relaxation.
- e) A television company aiming to attract younger viewers has asked you to compile a report on the variety and entertainment value of programmes available on television today. Write your report for the company.
- f) 'The moon seemed unusually large in the sky that night...'. Include this sentence in a short story for a science fiction and/or fantasy magazine. Please underline the sentence in your essay.

2. COMPREHENSION AND SUMMARY (30 marks)

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

5	<p>Travelling on the Tube¹ in London, I overheard a conversation between two schoolboys, aged 15 or 16. “What would you buy if you won the lottery?” asked one, a bright-eyed, dark-haired boy. “I’d buy a really big house – and some cars,” replied his more placid-looking ginger-haired friend. “Just like everybody else.” The boys were polite and well-spoken; for all I know, they were boarders at one of the better houses at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. I was both fascinated and shocked by their exchange but I suppose I shouldn’t have been.</p>
10 15 20	<p>But when I went home and discussed with my partner Ching Ling what the boys had said, we agreed on one thing: that at their age, our aspirations and ambitions were wildly different from those of the ginger-haired boy. The first interesting point of difference came early on in the question asked by the dark-haired boy (call him Harry). He asked “what would you <i>buy</i>?” rather than “what would you <i>do</i>?” Not many of my aspirations at the age of 16, I can honestly say, had to do with buying rather than doing. When I won an obscure divinity prize at school, I bought a new, or rather slightly less old, set of second-hand golf clubs and a cello bow. Those acquisitions seemed no small beer to me: there was no end to what I might do with them (the golf clubs served me faithfully for 25 years).</p>
25 30	<p>I might have had limited aspirations to buy things, but when it came to doing things my ambitions were unbounded, if somewhat vague. I wanted to act, to play music, to write, to love. Both Ching Ling and I, at that age, wanted to travel, to see more of the world. But the really startling point of difference came with the answer of the ginger-haired boy (call him Ron). Why would a 16-year-old boy want to buy “a really big house”? I had no interest in buying any kind of house – let alone a “really big” one – until well into my 30s. I was only persuaded into buying a small London flat in my late 20s by a perspicacious, street-wise girlfriend who saw, first, that this might be the only time in my life when I was holding down “a proper job”, and, second, that it would prove a good investment.</p>
35 40 45	<p>Well beyond my teens, I was vehemently opposed to property ownership. The British obsession with owning, buying and selling houses seemed to me the root of all evil – that is, the root of a system that valued property more than people. It was a negative root in another way: a way of rooting people to the spot, making them immobile. When I was Ron’s age I wanted to be mobile, to be on the move. When I inherited a small sum of money from a relative on my 21st birthday, I did not, like my more sensible sister, immediately put down a deposit on a flat. I set off for Barcelona with a large suitcase containing all the worldly goods I would need for the next nine months (the most important and the heaviest being a portable Adler typewriter). Living in a rented room, with a tiny patio garden overlooked by the pineapple pinnacles of Gaudí’s Sagrada Família church, I had never been happier in my life.</p>

50	I suppose you could say that Ron’s aspirations were much more “realistic” than mine: that is to say, much more in tune with the mainstream mythology of contemporary culture, as celebrated in endless TV programmes and magazines such as OK! and Hello! But here I would disagree. I actually think Ron’s aspirations were far less realistic than mine, far less in tune with what a young person might actually desire. The giveaway was the seemingly innocuous phrase “some cars”. I can understand a young person wanting to own a car; owning my first car as a graduate student, after relying on my parents’ ferrying for so long,
55	gave me a great feeling of independence. I even flirted with the idea of buying a sports car until I worked out the insurance premium. But “some cars”? This seems tantamount to the aspiration to own a garage.
60	Sitting in the Tube carriage somewhere underneath London’s West End, I could bite my tongue no longer. In a lull in the boys’ conversation, I threw in a comment: “Don’t you think your aspirations are, well, just a bit middle-aged?” Of course, the irony was not lost on me. Harry laughed: “I suppose I might buy a room in an underwater hotel,” he ventured. But Ron had the last word: “You could buy the whole hotel.”
	<p><i>The Slow Lane</i> by Harry Eyres Financial Times Weekend 5th November 2011</p>

1. ‘The Tube’ is another term for the underground network of trains in and around London.

- a. Give the meaning of the following words as they appear in context: acquisitions (line 18); unbounded (line 23); street-wise (line 30); vehemently (line 34); innocuous (line 52); lull (line 60). (6 marks)
- b. In your own words, explain how and why the author, in his youth, opposed “property ownership” (line 34). (3 marks)
- c. Explain what ‘in tune’ means (lines 48-51) in this context. (3 marks)
- d. “This seems tantamount to the aspiration to own a garage”. In your own words, explain what the author thinks about owning “some cars” rather than “a car” (lines 50-57). (3 marks)
- e. What does the expression “I could bite my tongue no longer” (lines 59-60) suggest about the author’s reactions to the two boys’ conversation? (3 marks)
- f. In a paragraph of between 80 and 100 words, write a summary describing how the author’s aspirations differ from those of the two young boys. (12 marks)

SECTION B – LITERATURE (30 marks)

Choose one of the texts below and answer ONE of the three questions set on the text using no less than 450 words. All answers must be supported by close reference to the text.

Text 1: Graham Greene *The Heart of the Matter*

- a. ‘My friendship for you is the only good thing in this black heart, I cannot give it up. We must stay friends always’. Comment on the relationship between Scobie and Yusef in light of this quotation.

OR

- b. Discuss the significance of religion in Greene’s *The Heart of the Matter*.

OR

- c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *The Heart of the Matter*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:
- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel.
 - What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel.
 - The relation to the central themes of the novel.

When he turned towards the window the light dazzled him. He put his hand over his eyes and said, ‘I wish to God my head...’ and shivered. ‘I’m in for a dose if I can’t stop it. If you don’t mind Ali putting up my bed at your place, Father, I’ll try and sweat it out.’

He took a heavy dose of quinine and lay naked between the blankets. As the sun climbed it sometimes seemed to him that the stone walls of the small cell-like room sweated with cold and sometimes were baked with heat. The door was open and Ali squatted on the step just outside whittling a piece of wood. Occasionally he chased away villagers who raised their voices within the area of sick-room silence. The *peine forte et dure* weighed on Scobie’s forehead: occasionally it pressed him into sleep.

But in this sleep there were no pleasant dreams. Pemberton and Louise were obscurely linked. Over and over again he was reading a letter which consisted only of variations on the figure 200 and the signature at the bottom was sometimes ‘Dicky’ and sometimes ‘Ticki’; he had the sense of time passing and his own immobility between the blankets – there was something he had to do, someone he had to save, Louise or Dicky or Ticki, but he was tied to the bed and they laid weights on his forehead as you lay weights on loose papers. Once the sergeant came to the door and Ali chased him away, once Father Clay tiptoed in and took a tract off a shelf, and once, but that might have been a dream, Yusef came to the door.

Text 2: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie *Purple Hibiscus*

- a. *Purple Hibiscus* is a novel about fearful silence as much as it is about the power of language, laughter and self expression. Discuss.

OR

- b. Compare and contrast Father Benedict and Father Amadi.

OR

- c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:
- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel.
 - What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel.
 - The relation to the central themes of the novel.

I was in my room after lunch, reading James chapter five because I would talk about the biblical roots of the anointing of the sick during family time, when I heard the sounds. Swift, heavy thuds on my parents' hand-carved bedroom door. I imagined the door had gotten stuck and Papa was trying to open it. If I imagined it hard enough, then it would be true. I sat down, closed my eyes, and started to count. Counting made it seem not that long, made it seem not that bad. Sometimes it was over before I even got to twenty. I was at nineteen when the sounds stopped. I heard the door open. Papa's gait on the stairs sounded heavier, more awkward, than usual. I stepped out of my room just as Jaja came out of his. We stood at the landing and watched Papa descend. Mama was slung over his shoulder like the jute sacks of rice his factory workers bought in bulk at the Seme Border. He opened the dining room door. Then we heard the front door open, heard him say something to the gate man, Adamu.

“There's blood on the floor,” Jaja said. “I'll get the brush from the bathroom.”

We cleaned up the trickle of blood, which trailed away as if someone had carried a leaking jar of red watercolour all the way downstairs. Jaja scrubbed while I wiped.

Mama did not come home that night, and Jaja and I had dinner alone. We did not talk about Mama.

Text 3: Robert Bolt *A Man for All Seasons*

- a. In one of the play's endings, Robert Bolt has Cromwell and Chapuys link arms and chuckle, '*it is the self-mocking, self-indulgent, rather rueful laughter of men who know what the world is and how to be comfortable in it*'. Discuss the significance of such an ending.

OR

- b. *A Man for all Seasons* 'depicts the confrontation between Church and State'. Discuss.

OR

- c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the play *A Man for All Seasons*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:
- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the play.
 - What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the play.
 - The relation to the central themes of the play.

ALICE Oh, you'd walk on the bottom of the sea and think yourself a crab if he suggested it! (To ROPER) And you! You'd dance him to the Tower- You'd dance him to the block! Like David with a harp! Scattering hymn books in his path! (To MORE) Poor silly man, d'you think they'll leave you here to learn to fish?

MORE (Straight at her) If we govern our tongues they will! Now listen, I have a word to say about that. I have made no statement. I've resigned, that's all. On the King's Supremacy, the King's divorce which he'll now grant himself, the marriage he'll then make - have you heard me make a statement?

ALICE No-and if I'm to lose my rank and fall to housekeeping I want to know the reason; so make a statement now.

MORE No- (ALICE exhibits indignation) Alice, it's a point of law! Accept it from me, Alice, that in silence is my safety under the law, but my silence must be absolute, it must extend to you.

ALICE In short you don't trust us!

MORE A man would need to be half-witted not to trust you but- (Impatiently) Look- (He advances on her) I'm the Lord Chief Justice, I'm Cromwell, I'm the King's Head jailer --and I take your hand (He does so) and I clamp it on the Bible, on the Blessed Cross (Clamps her hand on his closed fist) and I say: "Woman, has your husband made a statement on these matters?" Now - on peril of your soul remember - what's your answer?

ALICE No.

MORE And so it must remain. (He looks around at their grave faces) Oh, it's only a life line, we shan't have to use it but it's comforting to have. No, no, when they find I'm silent they'll ask nothing better than to leave me silent; you'll see.

Text 4: Ian McEwan *Atonement*

a. Discuss the interplay between fantasy and reality in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.

OR

b. In Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, the overactive imagination of a child changes the course of events for a number of characters, among these is Robbie Turner. Write an essay analysing Robbie's character.

OR

c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *Atonement*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:

- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel.
- What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel.
- The relation to the central themes of the novel.

But hidden drawers, lockable diaries and cryptographic systems could not conceal from Briony the simple truth: she had no secrets. Her wish for a harmonious, organised world denied her the reckless possibilities of wrongdoing. Mayhem and destruction were too chaotic for her tastes, and she did not have it in her to be cruel. Her effective status as an only child, as well as the relative isolation of the Tallis house, kept her, at least during the long summer holidays, from girlish intrigues with friends. Nothing in her life was sufficiently interesting or shameful to merit hiding; no one knew about the squirrel's skull beneath her bed, but no one wanted to know. None of this was particularly an affliction; or rather, it appeared so only in retrospect, once a solution had been found.

At the age of eleven she wrote her first story – a foolish affair, imitative of half a dozen folk tales and lacking, she realised later, that vital knowingness about the ways of the world which compels a reader's respect. But this first clumsy attempt showed her that the imagination itself was a source of secrets: once she had begun a story, no one could be told. Pretending in words was too tentative, too vulnerable, too embarrassing to let anyone know. Even writing out the *she saids*, the *and thens*, made her wince, and she felt foolish, appearing to know about the emotions of an imaginary being. Self-exposure was inevitable the moment she described a character's weakness; the reader was bound to speculate that she was describing herself. What other authority could she have? Only when a story was finished, all fates resolved and the whole matter sealed off at both ends so it resembled, at least in this one respect, every other finished story in the world, could she feel immune, and ready to punch holes in the margins, bind the chapters with pieces of string, paint or draw the cover, and take the finished work to show to her mother, or her father, when he was home.