

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 6

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for each section of this course assessment component. The candidate was awarded **9 marks**.

Genre: Creative – prose fiction
Title: Inner Demons
Subtitle: Calling Sam Hendrix to Court Number One.

Paragraph one consists of a description of the nightmares which “began in earnest” for the narrator “at the age of seven” and the comfort provided by the narrator’s mother: “My mum was the best. She would snuggle up under the Fireman Sam Duvet with me ...”. There is a shift in time and to a third person narrator; establishing the dual narrative structure which continues throughout the remainder of the piece, helpfully reinforced by the change of font. The second narrative includes details which evoke the atmosphere of the court room with some thoughtfulness: the judge wearing “one of those puffy, curly-haired wigs”; the journalist with a biro, “... a black one with the end chewed slightly”.

The paragraphs which tell us about the narrator’s past follow the order of his growing up: “At the age of 10, my father suggested moving house”; “The monsters had stopped at the age of twelve”; “At the age of thirteen I stopped telling the psychologist things ...” and this progression is intercut in the intervening paragraphs with continuing descriptions of the court room scene in the present: “The carpet was blue and sticky”; “He had seen two lawyers. They wore long black robes. Like crows.”

The piece includes an account of the “Xbox marathon” that goes wrong as the boys invited over to the house end up screaming in fear. Once again the narrator’s mother comes to the rescue “it’s alright the plumbing makes that sound sometimes ...”. There is also rising tension evident in the parallel narrative in the courtroom: “He reached the stand ... He would tell them. They needed to know.”

The two narratives come together with the reference to “... only dreams, nightmares!” in the court room narrative and in the account of events immediately prior to the court case in the final paragraph of the first person narrative. Here we are presented with the final twist that the apparently loving mother is in fact the perpetrator of the grisly crimes heard by the narrator through an interior wall in the house.

Content

This piece melds two familiar tropes: the court room drama and the torture dungeon found in many examples of contemporary crime fiction and TV series.

These are well worn ideas and utilised in a rather straightforward way in the story. The treatment of these ideas reveals some thoughtfulness and imagination.

Structure

The dual narratives and the culmination of the story in its revelation of the cause of the narrator's nightmares are evidence of shaping and sequencing with some impact.

Tone/mood

An appropriate tone/mood is used throughout the piece revealing an identifiable and appropriate authorial voice. Although the two narratives are meant to be distinct, there is not always too much difference between them as the third person narrative is related entirely from Sam's point of view.

Expression

There is a consistently accurate use of style, technique and language in this piece. Some description is rather clichéd "... the old, creaky broken house"; "... made a cold sweat break out across my forehead" but overall there is evidence of some originality.

The piece can be placed in the 9-7 range. It fully meets the standard described.

Mark: 9