



SHREWSBURY SCHOOL

SIXTH FORM ENTRANCE EXAMINATION 2024 ENTRY

Drama (1 Hour)

Instructions to candidates:

Read the extract from *Bluebird* by Simon Stephens.

Answer all of the following questions on lined paper.

Jimmy and Claire are sitting in the front seat of a taxi. 1990s.

JIMMY: There's this guy. And one night he's driving home from a meeting. And the meeting had gone very badly. So on the way home from the meeting, he stopped in a pub. And in the pub, he drank three pints of beer. And on the way home from the pub he got scared, because he had to tell his wife about the way he couldn't pay the mortgage anymore. Or for that holiday they'd just booked. Or for the supermarket shop that week. And he had no idea what he was going to say, or what he was going to do. So he stopped off at an off-licence. On the way home. And he bought a quarter bottle of very cheap whiskey that he didn't even like, but he bought it so he'd have the courage to tell her and he sat in his car outside the off-licence and he drank it. And drove home. And it's a very warm night –

CLAIRE: Jimmy –

JIMMY: – and he knows as he's driving that he's drunk. But he doesn't stop. Because he's very close to his home now and he knows that if he goes straight home, right now, he'll be able to tell her. And he turns into his road, and the houses look the same as they always do and the sun is out and then, just as he's arriving at his house, the one that he can't afford to pay for anymore, he sees that his daughter is playing outside his house.

CLAIRE: Don't.

JIMMY: And she looks very beautiful in the sunshine. She has this curly red hair that reminds him of her mother. And she looks up from the game she's been playing. Sees her dad coming home.

CLAIRE: Don't, Jimmy. For God's sake.

JIMMY: And he even thinks. It only takes half a second. But in that half a second he thinks – don't let me see her. Don't let her be there. But he can't slow down.

CLAIRE: Jimmy.

JIMMY: It was an accident.

CLAIRE: Jimmy.

JIMMY: I went to stay at the Great Northern Hotel in King's Cross. Kept drinking. I found myself talking to Alice. One night, I drank so much that I actually almost blinded myself. I still talk to her. Even now.

CLAIRE: What do you tell her?

JIMMY: I tell her about the people that I drive. Some of them are extraordinary. I tell her that I'm sorry.

CLAIRE: Does she talk back?

JIMMY: Sometimes. Sometimes she doesn't say anything. Do you talk to her?

CLAIRE: All the time.

JIMMY: I knew you would. What do you say to her?

CLAIRE: Mostly I tell her that I miss her.

Pause.

JIMMY: Do you think you'll be happy? With Andrew?

CLAIRE: He's a good man. He's a kind man. We look after each other. We're a good team.

JIMMY: You deserve to be happy.

CLAIRE: I know.

JIMMY: I'd like to meet him.

CLAIRE: I'm not sure you'd like each other.

JIMMY: Probably not.

CLAIRE: Do you think it's possible to forgive somebody for something you can never forget?

JIMMY: No.

CLAIRE: No. Neither do I.

Pause.

JIMMY: I've got something for you.

CLAIRE: What is it?

JIMMY: It's quite embarrassing.

CLAIRE: Christ.

JIMMY: You have to promise me you won't be embarrassed.

CLAIRE: I'm not sure.

JIMMY hands her a bag.

JIMMY: Open it.

CLAIRE: What's in it?

JIMMY: Have a look.

CLAIRE opens the bag. It is full of money.

JIMMY: Are you embarrassed?

CLAIRE: I can't take this.

JIMMY: Of course you can.

CLAIRE: There must be...

JIMMY: It's a hundred grand.

CLAIRE: Where did you get all this?

JIMMY: I earned it.

CLAIRE: What?

JIMMY: I've been driving four and a half years. Every day. Twelve hours a day. After a while it gets quite lucrative.

CLAIRE: But –

JIMMY: I don't want it. I don't need it.

CLAIRE: Jimmy –

JIMMY: This isn't a bribe, or an apology. It isn't some kind of attempt to compensate for what I did. I know I can never do that. It's just something that I have that I don't need or want and I thought I would get in touch with you so you could have it. I wanted to see you, Claire. I'm glad you came.

CLAIRE: I don't know what to say.

JIMMY: Please. Just take it.

CLAIRE: I hated you. I hated you so much.

JIMMY: I know.

CLAIRE: She was so young, Jimmy.

JIMMY: I know.

Pause.

CLAIRE: What will you do now?

JIMMY: Carry on.

CLAIRE: Carry on driving?

JIMMY: I like it. It makes me happy.

CLAIRE: What? And sleep in your car and eat nothing but pork pies?

JIMMY: I like pork pies.

CLAIRE: I'm being serious.

JIMMY: So am I.

CLAIRE: Will I see you again?

JIMMY: Here. This is the number of the cab firm I work for. If you ever need a taxi, ask for driver 42.

CLAIRE: Can't I ask for you by name?

JIMMY: I don't think they know my name.

End of Extract. Please turn over for questions.

ANSWER ALL THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Section A

Choose FIVE lines spoken by Claire. As the actor playing Claire, explain how you would deliver each of these lines to create your intended effects for the audience. For each line, you should explain how you would use:

- Vocal skills (accent, pitch, pace, pause, volume, intonation)
- Physical skills (facial expression, posture, gesture, gait)
- Proxemics
- Interaction with props and set. [20]

Section B

Sketch and annotate a costume design for Jimmy. You should consider:

- his age and character; and
- his profession. [10]

30 marks