

## GCSE English

## Unit 4 Imaginative Writing

A Night in the Garden

It had been a hectic day, but all the celebrations had gone well. The only problem that had arisen was that no one believed that it was actually his sixtieth birthday, and that it was just an excuse to throw another extravagant party. It was a mistake easily made, however, as Sebastian looked more like forty than sixty, with fine black hair that flopped over one eye and olive tanned skin. It was midsummer's eve and Sebastian was walking through his rose garden, the most secluded of all of the gardens in the vast grounds that surrounded the manor, contemplating the events of the evening. He had always enjoyed parties, the louder the better; but his age it seemed was catching up on him, and although outwardly he looked forty, he felt more like the sixty-year-old he was. His life had been highly successful, he thought, a whirlwind of parties and balls, consorting with the rich and famous (himself being one of the richest). Yet somehow it lacked fulfilment; he had a large manor house set in the middle of acres of land of rolling hills and tumbling streams, he had a large yacht based in the Mediterranean, owned several villas and gîtes all over the world, and still had more money than he could ever spend, and yet in his heart, he longed for something else.

He was sitting on one of the carved stone benches contemplating this when he heard the clock strike midnight; he had been sitting there for half an hour and was about to go inside when in the corner of his eye he saw movement in the water garden through a gap in the hedge dividing the two gardens. As he rounded the corner of the hedge, he found himself face to face with a being more beautiful than he had ever seen, more

perfect than a blossoming rose. She was dressed all in white, her skin fair like snow with long ebony hair cascading down her back, held from her clear blue eyes with a garland of small white flowers. She laughed lightly, her voice sweet as gentle music, before turning and running through the fountain, her feet barely touching the shallow pool of water beneath it, before sitting on the base of the statue in the middle of it. He followed her as if entranced, expecting to get soaked as he ran through the water, but just as he reached it the water parted to allow him through without getting wet. There she was, sitting on the base of the statue as he had seen from the other side of the water, but she was surrounded by a multitude of others, sitting on lily leaves, playing music and singing. They too were dressed all in white, and all had long dark hair, yet none of them could compete with her; she was the sun and they were merely moons imperfectly reflecting her beauty.

“Who are you?” He asked, his voice full of awe and wonder. She smiled slightly, making her eyes light up like sunlight reflecting off water, before replying, “I am Rhaeadriel, Lady of the waterfall, guardian of the water nymphs.” She indicated to the people around her, “I live in the water in this garden, in the babbling brooks and flowing fountains, under the lilies in the lake and in the swift spring, but mostly under the gentle cascading waterfall hence my title.”

“You live in my garden! Then how is it that I never see you? I’ve spent a long time in this garden yet this is the first time I’ve found you here.” He exclaimed with wide-eyed rapture.

“You humans don’t use your eyes; even if we are just under the surface of the water you don’t notice us. I will show you.” And with that she darted out of the fountain before he could reply, he chased after her out of the fountain, but she was gone. He

called out for her, searching the waters around him at the edge of the lake, staring into the cool water, hoping to catch a glimpse of her, but to no avail.

The next morning, a young under gardener called John found him on the bridge, staring into the lake, obviously delirious as he was muttering about water nymphs. He tried to persuade Sebastian that he had just had a dream, but he was certain of the existence of such creatures. Several famous and renowned psychiatrists were counselled, yet none could account for Sebastian's determined belief in these creatures apart from assuming that he had gone mad. As a result, Sebastian was locked in his room, only let out twice a week with a nurse to walk around the grounds. Yet for some one mad he seemed to retain an amazing awareness of what was going on around him, in fact the only thing that he seemed to get confused about was the fact that water nymphs don't exist. People often tried to persuade him this, but each time he replied quoting from Shakespeare:

“‘Lovers and madmen have such seething brains, such shaping fantasies, that apprehend more than cool reason ever comprehends. The lunatic, the lover, and the poet are of imagination all compact.’ You have just become muddled as to which of the three I am.” He deemed this quote extremely accurate, although he disagreed with the title of the book, suggesting it be called ‘A Midsummer Night’s Reality’. He quoted Shakespeare frequently, especially when talking about Rhaeadriel; his favourite being from Romeo and Juliet:

‘But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the East and Juliet (Rhaeadriel) is the sun!’

This continued for nearly a year, until one night he escaped to the garden, as the maid had not locked the door to his room. There she was under the fountain again, even more beautiful than he remembered her.

“Why did you disappear?” he asked, “I couldn’t find you anywhere.”

“I was there watching you,” she replied sadly, “You did not use your eyes.”

“My eyes are human, I could not see you in the water.”

“So you did not use your brain or your eyes. Why would I go where you could not find me? I was not in the water.”

“Where were you then? There was no where to hide that you could have got to before I would have seen you.”

“I was in the rose garden. You forget that I am not human, I can move faster than the fastest sprinter, and I am more agile too.”

“Why didn’t you answer when I called you then?”

“I was having fun watching you, and the time went so quickly that I didn’t realise that it was almost one o’clock. I am only visible to you for one hour, at twelve o’clock on midsummer’s eve. You are lucky you came here this evening or you would not have found me. But now it is nearing one, and I must go.”

“No, you can’t. I’ve only just found you again! I can’t wait another year, let me come with you.”

“I am only a spirit, you could not exist in my world, only your spirit could.”

“Then take my spirit, I lay down my body as a sacrifice of my love.”

When morning arose, Sebastian’s body was found under the fountain, hands placed across his chest holding a garland of small white flowers.