1.

This text is about a young girl called Penelope who describes an unusual experience in her home. The story takes place in the early 20th century before electric lights were common in most households.

A Traveller in Time

Ours was a steep, crooked stair, with a handrail on one side, very narrow, with rooms leading off it so suddenly that it was easy to fall headlong as one stepped from a doorway. We had wallpaper with leaves on it, like a green wood in spring, and I used to sit on the stairs, pretending I was in a forest with birds singing around me. I was sitting there one evening, with my feet tucked under me, in a blue dusk, waiting for the lamplighter to come whistling down the street to bring a gleam to the stairway. There was a street lamp near, and this shone over the door and saved us from using our own gas-lamp.



I was suddenly aware how quiet it was. I might have been the only person in the world. Even the clock stopped ticking, and the mice ceased rustling in the wainscot. I turned my head and saw a lady coming downstairs from the upper floor. She was dressed in a black dress which swept round her like a cloud, and at her neck was a narrow white frill which shone like ivory. Her eyes were very bright and blue as violets. I sprang to my feet and smiled up at her, into the beautiful grave face she bent towards me. She gave an answering smile, and her deep-set eyes seemed to pierce me, and I caught my breath as I stood aside to let her pass. I never heard a footstep; she was there before I was aware.

She went by as I leaned against the wall, and I pressed myself against the paper to leave room for her full floating skirts which took all the stairway. I never felt them touch me, and this gave me a curious sensation. Soundlessly she swayed down the stairway, and I stood watching her, smelling the sweet, faint odour of her dress, seeing the pallor of the hands which held her ruffled skirts, yet hearing nothing at all.

I leaned over the rail to watch her, and suddenly she was gone. The clock ticked loudly, the sounds of the street came to my ears, the lamplighter’s whistle, clear and round, fluted through the air, and the bright gleam of the gas danced upon the patterned wall. I ran downstairs and pushed open the door into the sitting room, expecting to see her there. The room was empty, and I went thoughtfully down to the basement where my mother was cooking, and I asked about the lady.



"There is no one, child," she exclaimed. "You’ve imagined her. It is easy to think you see someone in the dusk with flickering street lights falling on the walls. It was the shadow of somebody in the street perhaps."

I was positive I had seen the lady and I described her.

Mother was very quiet, as if she were thinking what to say next. Then she changed the conversation, asking me if I would like to make treacle toffee that night.

2.

1. Look at the first paragraph, beginning: *Ours was a steep…*

Penelope's description of the stairway makes it seem...

Tick **one**.

damp and dark. ☐

cramped and unsafe. ☐

old and dusty. ☐

stylish and never used. ☐

1 mark

2. Why did Penelope like sitting in the stairway?

_____

_____

1 mark

3. Look at the first paragraph, beginning: *Ours was a steep…*

Find and **copy one** word that shows that the evening was getting dark.

_____

1 mark

4. How did Penelope always know when the lamplighter was approaching?

_____

1 mark

5. Look at the paragraph beginning: *I was suddenly…*

What suggests that the lady had seen Penelope?

_____

1 mark

6. Look at the top of page 11.

Give **three** ways you can tell things have gone back to normal.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2 marks

7. Choose the best group of words to fit the sentences.

Draw a circle around your choice.

(a) When Penelope saw the lady, she described...

why the lady was there.	what she could see and smell.	who the lady was.	what she could touch and taste.

1 mark

(b) As soon as the lady went away, Penelope...

felt frightened.	looked for her mother.	felt relieved.	looked for the lady.

1 mark

8. *...I went thoughtfully down to the basement where my mother was cooking…*

What might Penelope have been thinking at this point in the story?

_____

_____

1 mark

9. (a) What was Penelope's mother's explanation for what Penelope had seen?

_____

_____

1 mark

(b) Why might Penelope have been frustrated by her mother's explanation?

_____

_____

1 mark

10. Think about the whole text.

What impressions do you get of Penelope as she describes her unusual experience?

Give **two** impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3 marks

11. The extract you have read is the beginning of a longer story.

Which of these is **most likely** to happen next?

Tick **one**.

Penelope will forget all about the lady.	☐
Penelope's mother will ask lots of questions about the lady.	☐
Penelope will try to find out about the lady.	☐
Penelope and her mother will search the house for the lady.	☐

1 mark

12. Think about the whole text.

How is a mysterious atmosphere created?

Give **two** ways, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3 marks