

AQA GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing

SET L

Insert

The source that follows is:

Source A: 20th Century prose-fiction

Goodbye, Mr Chips by James Hilton

An extract from a novella published in 1934

Source A

This extract is from the middle of a novella by James Hilton. In it, Mr Chippings (Chips), a retired classics teacher, looks back on his life teaching in a fictional English public school called Brookfield. In this extract, he recalls a holiday in the Lake District where he meets his future wife, Katherine.

One day, climbing on Great Gable, he noticed a girl waving excitedly from a dangerous-looking ledge. Thinking she was in difficulties, he hastened toward her, but in doing so slipped himself and wrenched his ankle. As it turned out, she was not in difficulties at all, but was merely signalling to a friend farther down the mountain; she was an expert climber, better even than Chips, who was pretty good. Thus he found himself the rescued instead of the rescuer; and neither role was one for which he had much relish. For he did not, he would have said, care for women; he never felt at home or at ease with them; and that monstrous creature beginning to be talked about, the New Woman* of the nineties, filled him with horror. He was a quiet, conventional person, and the world, viewed from the haven of Brookfield, seemed to him full of distasteful innovations.

Her name was Katherine Bridges; she was twenty-five — young enough to be Chips's daughter. She had blue, flashing eyes and freckled cheeks and smooth straw-coloured hair. She too was staying at the farm, on holiday with a girl friend, and as she considered herself responsible for Chips's accident, she used to bicycle along the side of the lake to the house in which the quiet, middle-aged, serious-looking man lay resting.

This was how she thought of him at first. And he, because she rode a bicycle and was unafraid to visit a man alone in a farmhouse sitting room, wondered vaguely what the world was coming to. His sprain put him at her mercy, and it was soon revealed to him how much he might need that mercy. She was a governess* out of a job, with a little money saved up; she read and admired Ibsen; she believed that women ought to be admitted to the universities; she even thought they ought to have a vote. In politics she was a radical, with leanings toward the views of people like Bernard Shaw and William Morris. All her ideas and opinions she poured out to Chips during those summer afternoons at Wasdale Head; and he, because he was not very articulate, did not at first think it worthwhile to contradict them. Her friend went away, but she stayed; what *could* you do with such a person, Chips thought. He used to hobble with sticks along a footpath leading to the tiny church; there was a stone slab on the wall, and it was comfortable to sit down, facing the sunlight and the green-brown majesty of the Gable and listening to the chatter of — well, yes, Chips had to admit it — a very beautiful girl.

Within a week they were head over heels in love; before Chips could walk without a stick, they considered themselves engaged; and they were married in London a week before the beginning of the autumn term.

Glossary

**New Woman = a feminist ideal that emerged in the late 19th century*

**governess = a woman employed to teach children in a private household*

**Ibsen = a playwright known for challenging social norms*

End of source