

## STORY 3

## *The Boy and Mr Katz*

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by Jack Cope

Jack Cope was born in 1913 in KwaZulu-Natal, and went to boarding school in Durban. He became a journalist, but later returned to his father's farm. Here, while working at various jobs, he took up creative writing. He published eight novels, more than a hundred short stories, and three collections of poetry. He also worked as an editor. Many of his stories challenge the apartheid system. He married and had two children, but then separated from his wife and had a relationship with Ingrid Jonker, the famous Afrikaans poet. He died in 1991.

Mr Katz stopped his car on the edge of the quay and he got out and peered down into the dark water. He stood there a long time, his face an ashy smear in the gathering dusk. Then he wiped his forehead, trembling a little, and pulled the hat down again. He stuck his hands in the pockets of his heavy velvet-collared overcoat and as he stepped back his foot caught in the crane track so he stumbled, grabbing at a bollard to support himself while his heart bumped about and his knees went weak. He took the brandy bottle out of his pocket and had the smallest gulp. Feeling calmer, he started off walking slowly along the dockside. The wharves were strangely deserted, the berths empty and only a few ships at moorings away across the harbour. Three healthy young wharfmen in peaked caps and blue overalls loomed up past him and he sank his face lower on his chest; a nondescript paleness was all they would see under the dark hat. He had a shuffling step, sticking his toes outwards, and his knees and insides felt all wobbly.

He turned along one of the piers and the air there seemed to become still and dense, full of fish and pinewood smells and the cold salt scent of the water rising up with the growing darkness. There were rusty old anchor chains and piles of smashed crates and fish baskets on the quay. He sat to rest on an ancient half-sunk ship's cannon; he would go back to the car later and ... well, later, when nobody was about. He did not want any curious people about, and

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**quay** – part of a harbour going into the water

**wharves** – edges of the quay

**berths** – places in the water for boats to park (moor)

**curious** – wanting to know something

it was not yet dark enough.

“Have you come to fish, mister?” a croaky boy’s voice asked him and he started so sharply he nearly lost his balance.

“Fish? No, not me,” he said. He had not seen the boy who was sheltered in an angle made by a pile of fish crates. The boy had his legs spread wide and was busy with a knife splitting a crayfish.

“I got some more line and hooks and you can lend one if you like.”

“No – no – not me,” Mr Katz said.

“No? But why you come here, mister? Gentlemen, they sometimes come to fish an’ all that.”

“Why are you here? Your mamma will give you a good hiding for not being home.”

The boy went off into a husky warm laugh. “Gee mister, you funny.”

“Oh yes, I am one great joke,” Mr Katz said.

“I don’ mean that, sorry mister. You see, I don’ go home, I stay here catch fish.”

“All night?”

“All night, I mean, if I catch ten-twelve bunches, I make enough money tomorrow.”

“What’s that – you catch fish to sell, for a living?”

“Gee!” the boy chuckled. “Course – what else?”

Mr Katz goggled at him. He was about twelve, small for his age, and he had a big gay mouth, dark skin and untidy hair, curly and black. “I go up, sell my fish on the way home. I got to pay Auntie, she’s not my real auntie, I mean, but me and Sus we live there. I got to pay for Sus too.”

“And then?” Mr Katz put in. He was really shocked.

“And then I sell the *Argus* afternoons in Buitengracht Street near the old German Church.”

“*Gewahlt!* When do you sleep?”

“I just sleeps anyways.” The boy laughed.

“And you are not at school?”

“No mister, Sus goes to school.”

Mr Katz shook his head. The boy had his hook baited with a piece of crayfish and he threw out the line, hitting the water with a faint plop. “If you hold the line while I done another hook,” he said hopefully.

“No – no – not me. I’m not fishing, see.”

He watched while the boy gave the line a turn round his big toe. “I mean, the hottentots is *slim*,” the boy said gaily. “Strike quick when you feels the little nibbles or they sucks off your bait.” He went on with his work trying to keep

the feel of the line on his toe while he prepared the second hook, twisting the bait on with a thread of cotton.

“Here, give over that line to me,” Mr Katz said at last. He got down and sat near the boy, and soon he was holding two lines while the young fisherman busied himself with a third. As the last evening glow drained away, the mountain darkened until its vast looming shape seemed to heave above the daze of city lights and its outline sheared into the lilac sky. Then, a while later, the moon came up in their faces, reddish-yellow and huge among a tangle of boat masts and rigging across the fish harbour. From time to time Mr Katz felt a faint tug and he jerked excitedly. But when he pulled up the line he found a bare hook.

“Night’s the best time, I mean, but they not biting yet. Those is tiddlers,” the boy said. “The bigger ones is shy, or else seals chase them away. They’ll come back later, don’t worry. We might get a stockfish or a cob. Don’t worry, mister.”

“I’m not worrying,” Mr Katz shivered. The air was so dark and drenched with the breath of the cold sea water. Ripples lapped on the piles and black things seemed to emerge above the surface only to slide back. He gazed down in a sweat of horror. Then he looked at the moon again and felt calmer. The boy had nothing on but a khaki shirt and shorts and a man’s baggy waistcoat.

“Did you eat anything for supper, sonny?”

“No mister. I make a fire just now. I cook a fish.”

“But you caught no fish yet.”

Stiffly Mr Katz rose to his feet, dragging himself on the cannon, and he walked off at his slow shuffle. He was away a long time and when he returned he had a piece of bread and sausage and cucumbers he had fetched from the harbour café. They made a fire with broken wood and Mr Katz sat back against a crate watching the boy with a grey throbbing envy. Now he could see in the firelight the wide green eyes and the face that every minute sparkled with a mischievous life. Mr Katz held a line in one hand but he had forgotten all about it. The boy finished eating and said again, “Oh gee, thanks mister!”

They heard steps along the quay and the boy whispered something hurriedly to him. A moment later he was looking up into the face of a policeman.

“Catch anything?”

“No, what do you know, the stupid fish – they don’t want to bite,” Mr Katz said, feeling foolish and his heart thumping.

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**mischievous** – naughty

“I don’t know – they were running well last night,” the policeman said. “If you don’t mind sir, have you got a permit to fish here?”

Mr Katz thought for a few seconds. “Yes, constable. Now why are you asking me? Of course I have a permit.”

“Could I just have a look at it?”

Slowly Mr Katz pulled from his pocket the half-full bottle and reached out with it. The policeman took it, his eye fixed somewhere near the moon in the low sky. His fingers unscrewed the stopper and throwing back his head he took a long gurgling pull. He handed back the bottle.

“Your permit is in order, sir,” he said. “But don’t make such a big fire. They can see it all the way from Caledon Square.”

The boy stood over the fire and damped it the best way he knew while Mr Katz looked on. “Gee mister! Gee you clever.”

“I am not so stupid,” Mr Katz said.

They went back to the lines and the boy pulled them up one by one to renew the bait. Then he cracked open another crayfish. The bait was not so fresh and Mr Katz felt nauseated, but he said nothing. After a while he took out of his inside pocket a closed envelope.

“*Nu*, look here, sonny, I’m going to give this to you and I want you to do something for me, eh?”

“Well, all right.”

“I want you to hand it to the police tomorrow.”

“Polis? Yuss-ter-day!”

“What is it – you’re not scared of them?”

“Why not give it to the polisman *now*?”

“I said tomorrow, and tomorrow I ... well, if you don’t want to do a little thing like that.”

“No. I give it to them, mister, I promise.” He took the letter and tucked it in his waistcoat pocket, saying again, “I promise. Why mister – you going away, eh?”

Mr Katz said nothing. Suddenly he was thrown in a muddle. The boy was yelling at him, “*Gaats!* Man, look at your line – *die donner!*” The cord jerked and whipped, running hot through his nerveless fingers. He grabbed in time to save the reel going over the edge. On the line was a vigorous succession of heavy tugs. Now he had the presence of mind to hold on tightly. The boy was dancing on the quay edge in a craze of excitement. “Man, that’s a fish. Hold him mister, Ooh! Start pulling him in, not so faaast – Cheee!”

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nauseated – sickened

tugs – pulls

Mr Katz was on his knee near the crane track and he felt dizzy and amazed. Half the time he did not know what the boy was shouting, but he could feel the fish struggling and it was something he had never experienced before. Then there was no weight on the line, no tugs, “Oi, oi, oi!” he wailed. “What do you know – he got away.” But the fish swung and he could feel it once more, this time much weaker. He felt a little disappointed that the fight was over and paid in the cord hand over hand.

“There he is, mister, a real fish, careful, ai, careful.”

Mr Katz pulled the struggling and whipping fish over the edge and it fell against the front of his overcoat, leaving a big glistening slimy patch. It was a hottentot of four or five pounds and it lay quivering in the moonlight while the boy stamped his feet and crowed out his delight. Mr Katz took out his handkerchief and wiped the slimy patch on his coat. Then he thought, Ach, why do I do that? And he put away the handkerchief.

The boy caught the next fish, but only a small one. Then Mr Katz pulled up two more in quick succession.

“My, but you good. The *hotnots* is *skelm* but you more *skelm*, mister,” he said.

“Oh yes, I’m very *skelm*.”

“They biting good and strong now. We get enough by morning, mister, we go halves.”

“Half? But that is not good business,” Mr Katz said.

“All right, you take all you catch, I take my ones. Fair enough.”

Mr Katz smiled at him, thinking of his own two sons when they were boys. Now they were grown up and he was alone and sick and empty. One had gone overseas and the other was in Johannesburg and he never saw them. “Nu look sonny, you employ me on commission, you give me twenty per cent, two fish out of the ten. With your profits you go into the market, buy fish off the boats, sell it at twelve-and-a-half mark up – that’s undercutting the trade but you build up turnover that way, understand? You don’t sell the *Argus* yourself by the church, that’s chicken-feed. You get a claim on the beat and you muscle in on more beats. Then you let in other boys in your territory and take twenty-five per cent cut on profits, see – that’s business.”

“Gee, mister.”

“You take munnah.”

“Oo ja.”

“And when you are my age – you throw yourself in the harbour.”

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*skelm* – (Afrikaans) clever in a cunning way

The boy shrilled and cackled with husky laughter. “My! Mister, but you are clever.”

“Yes, maybe I’m not so stupid.”

They did not catch again for a long while. And then Mr Katz saw the boy had slid back where he sat and was flat on his back, asleep. The moon shone on his parted lips and the long eyelashes lying on his brown cheeks. The line had slipped out of his fingers. Bad business, Mr Katz said to himself, taking off his overcoat and covering the young fisherman. He put more planks on the fire to keep himself warm and then went back to his task. Splitting up the pieces of crayfish tail for bait nearly made him sick and he pricked his trembling fingers on the hook, but he had got roughly into the way of it. The tide was flowing and he could listen to the slow lap and surge of the water and smell the sea-scents in cold waves. He did not like to look down in the water any more, but for long eternities of time he gazed at the moon now well up in the sky above the city and the evening star following it. Some birds flew over, calling to one another. Across the water from the South Arm he heard women laughing.

The tug on his line brought him back to himself and he pulled up another small hottentot. Its spiny back pierced his palm as he unhooked it but he was glad to see the bait still intact. He cast again and almost at once had a strong strike. It was quite a big fish, though not as big as that first one. He put them alongside each other and he had a peculiar sensation in the top of his stomach – pride or something. Sure he was proud in a way of catching a big fish; it belonged to nobody and you just pulled it up out of the water for free, then it belonged to you. Of course you had to be clever to do that, *skelm*. He glanced at the boy who had now rolled on his side, head on arm, facing the fire. The light was warm on his placid face. Mr Katz thought about waking him, he would not want to miss things now the fish were running. Besides he could bait the hooks, which was a nasty business anyway. But, Mr Katz let the boy sleep and threw out the line again, listening for the soft plop as it hit the black water way down there. He listened only, did not look.

This time it was quite a while before he had another bite and he got to looking up in the sky and thinking about nothing. The next fish he caught was a small cob, brisk in its struggle and shining a bright silver when he had it laid out in the moonlight. He was feeling the cold without his overcoat and again put planks on the fire. The boy muttered and licked his dry lips in his sleep. Now and again Mr Katz took a gulp from the bottle and the heat inside balanced up with the heat outside from the fire. He felt quite comfortable and the stiffness went out of his joints. He noticed the moon had gone over the top and was moving down behind him and it was strange to him that the

same star kept following it, very gold and small up there now. He hadn't been counting the fish he pulled up at intervals, and nothing more happened. He did not know if he went to sleep or where he was at all and it did not matter; he no longer minded the stink of the stale crayfish bait.

The big thing that happened was a pull on his line that nearly jerked off his little finger. He felt the sharp pain and for a moment he was all stupid and full of confusion. The line was streaking out of his hands but he saved it in time. He pulled and pulled, not daring to go too near the edge. Ach – what was this? he thought. His heart was doing strange things – was he getting a heart attack? He was scared and he was quite *crazy*, excited. For a moment he wanted to shout to the boy to wake up and help him, but he had brought up that first big hottentot alone and whatever this was he wanted to get it himself, if the line held. When Mr Katz at last managed to draw it to the surface he heard the mad thrashing on the water down below there and he wanted to peep over; he must look. The edge of the stone quay had a horror for him and the water so black and sliding. Still, he had to see, he must think out how he was going to get the fish up. It was churning and jerking on the line. On hands and knees, gripping the cord and looping it around his palm, he crept gradually forward. The fish would be quite still a moment, only to lash out more furiously. He got at last to the edge and took one timid look over. Then he sank down weakly on his stomach. God, let me only catch this one, he whispered to himself. As soon as he felt his nerves a bit steadier he began with all the care he could summon into his shivering and aching hands to pull up the line. He reckoned it must be half-way up the side of the granite quay wall – a good deal more pulling, but he was making it. Then he heard a long amazed hiss of breath. The boy was leaning over the edge.

“Cheee! Oo gee mister, oo my! *Daar's water!*”

The fright it gave Mr Katz nearly made him let go altogether and the fish slipped back with a jolt on the line.

“Oooo *hemel – aarde*, mister, don' lose him man,” The boy was quivering all over. Mr Katz wanted to say something but his throat was too dry. He started pulling again at the cord which chafed over the edge of the sea-wall. “Slow, mister, careful. More, more, a leetle more ... I soon get my hands in his gills.”

He pulled again. Then there was simply no weight on the line, and an instant later a big splash. “Oi, oi ...” he gasped faintly. He laid his forehead down on the cold stone. He wanted to weep and he lay there on his stomach listening to the moans and cries of the boy. “O *die donner!* Shame. Oooo – that was a fish.”

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**confusion** – not knowing know what to do

The boy examined the line carefully. “Gee, mister, look. The hook broke. So it wasn’t your fault, honest. Be brave mister, take a look.”

Mr Katz sat up and tried to get his eyes focused in the moon-darkness on the thin shank of the hook. “Well, so the hook broke. Sure – everybody will just love to believe that when I tell them.”

“But it’s true. It’s not your fault, mister, it’s really my fault.”

“Don’t talk silly now, it was nobody’s fault.”

They built up the fire again and the boy began to count over the fish catch. “Haai! There’s eleven bunches, that big one’s a bunch all by himself. I only catch three-four, enough for one bunch. A kabeljou too! Why you let me sleep, man! All these fish is yours.” He was twisting the strips of split cane to tie the bunches through the gill and mouth.

Mr Katz did not see himself as a hawker tooting a horn through the city streets with his bunches of fish. “They are yours, sonny, you can take them all and sell them,” he said. The boy turned down his big green eyes and went on with the tying.

“I mean it, don’t be stupid now,” Mr Katz said warily. “It was your lines and hooks and bait. Go on, I’m not a fisherman. I’m a business man.”

A tear gathered in the boy’s eye and he brushed it angrily away.

“No mister, you catch them.”

“Ach, what’s that – I like this fishing, see.”

“Gee – thanks. Mister is a king.”

Mr Katz snorted and coughed peevishly into his handkerchief. “But if I had got that last one, now ...”

“Haai!” the boy sighed, thinking that Mr Katz might have given it to him too.

The moon was setting and the masts of the fishing vessels beginning to show against the cool paling sky above the city when the boy and Mr Katz put out the fire and swept the ashes carefully over the edge. Then the boy dumped the fish bunches in the boot of the car and climbed in the seat and watched Mr Katz give a kind of shudder as he started the motor. The boy still had in his pocket the note to the police, but neither of them thought of it.

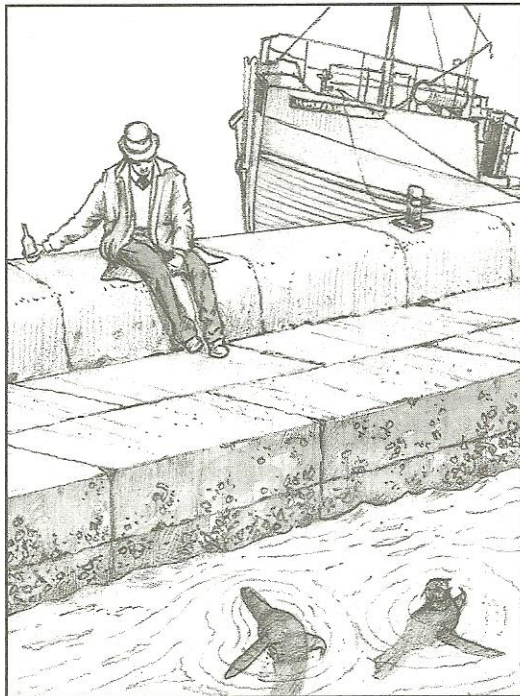
As they came to a halt at the Customs barrier Mr Katz remembered something. Poking his haggard face out at the car window he asked the duty officer: “Nu, where is the place to be getting a permit – you know what I mean – to fish?”

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**haggard** – looking tired, worried



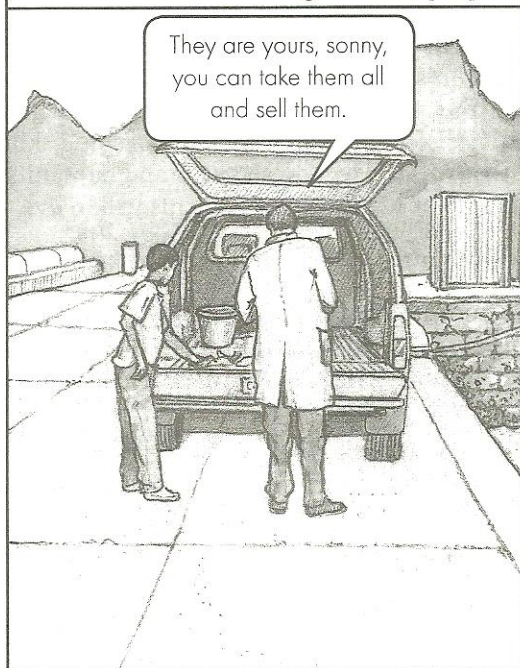
Summary in pictures



**1. Mr Katz on the edge of the quay**



**2. Mr Katz catches a fish**



**3. They load the fish into his car**



**4. Enquiring about a permit**

# The Boy and Mr Katz

Jack Cope

## Glossary

**quay** - part of a harbour alongside the water where boats can be tied up

**bollard** - a short stone or metal post at the edge of the quay for tying boats to

**wharves** - edges of the quay

**moorings** - where the boats are tied up to prevent them floating out of the harbour

**berths** - places in the harbour for boats to park (to moor)

**curious** - wanting to know something

**goggled at him** - looked at him in surprise

**sheared** - cut

**mischievous** - naughty

**Caledon Square** - a police station in the city part of Cape Town

**nauseated** - sickened

**vigorous** - quick

**tugs** - pulls

**paid** - pulled

**skelm** - (Afrikaans) clever in a cunning way

**confusion** - not knowing what to do

**chafed** - rubbed

**warily** - cautiously

**peevisly** - complainingly

**haggard** - looking tired, worried

## Summary

Mr Katz is a lonely and sad man who comes to the harbour one evening. It seems that he has come to commit suicide by driving his car off the edge of the harbour. At the harbour he meets a poor, lively and friendly young boy who is fishing. Mr Katz spends the night fishing with him, catching many fish himself. When the boy falls asleep Mr Katz gets a huge fish on his line but the hook breaks. The fish gets away. The next morning Mr Katz gives the boy all his fish to sell. He does not commit suicide after all. When he drives out of the harbour he asks the official where to get a permit to fish. He has completely forgotten about his suicide note that he had asked the boy to deliver at the police station the following day.

## Explanation and analysis

### Background and setting

- **Cape Town harbour**
- **Night time**

The story is set in Cape Town harbour over one night. The details of the setting, such as the backdrop of Table Mountain, the boy selling *The Argus*, the fish market, give it a vivid flavour and feeling of Cape Town.

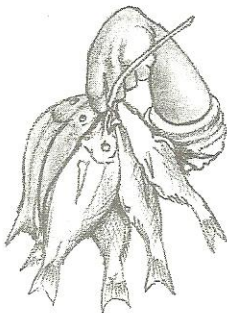
It is told in the third person by an **omniscient narrator** mainly from Mr Katz's point of view. We hear all of his feelings and thoughts.

### Key quote

... he would go back to the car later and ... well, later, when nobody was about. He did not want any curious people about, and it was not yet dark enough.

### Key quote

Mr Katz smiled at him, thinking of his own two sons when they were boys. Now they were grown up and he was alone and sick and empty.



## Themes

- **Revival of humanity and the will to live**

The main theme is that of the revival of humanity and the will to live as a result of companionship and shared experience. The evening Mr Katz spent with the boy revived his hope and faith in life and in people. He shared the boy's fishing experience. They developed a bond of fellowship and companionship. He cared for the boy, buying him food, covering him with his overcoat when he fell asleep and giving him business advice. The boy cared about him, teaching him to fish and praising him when he caught a fish.

## Character

- **Mr Katz:** lonely and sad; renewed will to live
- **The boy:** lively, enthusiastic, survivor, unselfish, trusting

At the beginning of the story **Mr Katz** is a lonely and sad man. His children are grown up and he never sees them. His life has lost its meaning and he sees suicide as the only solution.

The story is told mainly from Mr Katz's point of view. The writer uses a lot of direct speech which reveals character. Throughout the story, many of Mr Katz's replies to the boy are not just about their fishing, but also about his own view of himself. This slowly changes as the story develops. For example, Mr Katz says "And when you are my age – you throw yourself in the harbour." And, "My! Mister, but you are clever." "Yes, maybe I'm not so stupid."

**The boy** is lively and has a firm grip on life. He is a survivor, making his living – and supporting his sister – on the money he makes from fishing and from selling the *Argus*. He is enthusiastic about his livelihood and unselfish in his willingness to share his fishing skill and his fishing patch with Mr Katz. He represents life and humanity to Mr Katz and is the reason for Mr Katz regaining his will to live.

## Plot

The first part of the story introduces the problem of Mr Katz's loss of the will to live and his intention to commit suicide. As the story develops we see Mr Katz regaining his will to live as he shares the boy's company and he fishes with him.

The story ends with Mr Katz's question – "Nu, where is the place to be getting a permit – you know what I mean – to fish?" This is a satisfying resolution as the story ends on a note of hope.

## Symbols

- The **fish** are obvious symbols. They symbolise life, in themselves and for Mr Katz. It is through the catching of fish that he regains his will to live.

## Language

There are many **colloquialisms**, exclamations and direct speech, which bring the story and the scene alive. Colloquialisms: man, gee, ja, cheee, *hemel – aarde*, *die donner*, haai, *slim* and *skelm* are all from Afrikaans.

The writer describes the evening in vivid language, for example, the mountain's "vast looming shape seemed to heave above the daze of city lights and its outline sheared into the lilac sky"; the moon was "reddish-yellow and huge among the tangle of boat masts".

## Exam preparation

### Sample contextual question

This question contains TWO extracts. Answer the questions set on both extracts.

#### Extract 1

Read the extract from "*Slowly Mr Katz pulled from his pocket the half-full bottle*" to "*Why mister – you going away, eh?*" and answer these questions:

- 1.1 Where are the boy and Mr Katz? (1)
- 1.2 What activity are they busy with? (1)
2. "*the half-full bottle ...*"
  - 2.1 What was in the bottle? (1)
  - 2.2 Why did Mr Katz have it with him? (1)
3. "*Your permit is in order, sir.*"
  - 3.1 State whether the following is true or false: Mr Katz had a permit to fish. (1)
  - 3.2 Give a reason for your answer. (2)
4. "*... all the way from Caledon Square.*"
 

Where and what was "Caledon Square"?

(2)
5. What were the boy and Mr Katz using for bait? (1)
6. "*Mr Katz felt nauseated.*"
 

Write down just the letter of the correct answer. Mr Katz felt:

  - a. excited
  - b. depressed
  - c. expectant
  - d. sickened

(1)

*(To answer a multiple-choice question, find the option that is MOST correct. It's easier if you cross out incorrect answers first.)*
7. "*... he took out of his inside pocket a closed envelope.*"
  - 7.1 What was in the envelope? (1)
  - 7.2 What did Mr Katz want the boy to do with the envelope? (2)
  - 7.3 State whether the following is true or false: At first the boy was reluctant to do what Mr Katz asked him to do. (1)
  - 7.4 Give a reason for your answer. (1)

8. What was the reason for Mr Katz's loneliness and depression? (2)  
*(You won't find this answer in this extract. You need to know the story.)*
9. "Why mister – you going away, eh?"  
 Why, in the context of the story, is this ironic? (2)  
*(Look up the meaning of "irony" in the glossary on page 230.)*

[20]

AND

Extract 2

Read the extract from "Mr Katz did not see himself as a hawker" to "you know what I mean – to fish?" and answer these questions:

10. "Mr Katz did not see himself as a hawker"  
 Write down just the letter of your answer. Mr Katz did not really think he was:  
 a. a fisherman  
 b. an expert on birds of prey  
 c. a seller of fish  
 d. an accountant (1)  
*(Remember to cross out the incorrect answers first.)*
11. "You can take them all and sell them."  
 11.1 How did the boy react at first to Mr Katz's offer to give him all of his fish? (1)  
 11.2 How did he react subsequently to this offer? (2)
12. "But if I had got that last one, now ..."  
 What is Mr Katz referring to? (2)  
*(You won't find the answer in this extract. You need to know the story to answer this question.)*
13. "Mr Katz said warily."  
 Write down just the letter of your answer. Mr Katz spoke:  
 a. cautiously  
 b. impatiently  
 c. affectionately  
 d. sadly (1)  
*(Remember to cross out the incorrect answers first.)*
- 14.1 Write just the letter of your answer. The relationship between the boy and Mr Katz was:  
 a. uneasy and suspicious  
 b. affectionate and companionable  
 c. professional  
 d. awkward (1)  
*(Remember to cross out the incorrect answers first.)*
- 14.2 Give a reason for your answer. (2)
15. "Mr Katz gave a kind of shudder ..."  
 Why did Mr Katz "shudder" when he started his car? (2)  
*(Try to think how you would feel if you were Mr Katz and started the car*

*at this point. Remember how he felt when he first arrived at the harbour the evening before.)*

16. “... his haggard face.”

Write just the letter of the correct answer. Mr Katz’s face was:

- a. smiling
- b. pale
- c. tired-looking
- d. inquisitive

(1)

17. “Nu, where is the place to be getting a permit – you know what I mean – to fish?”

What does this question tell us about how Mr Katz’s state of mind has changed in the course of the story?

(2)

*(Remember how he felt when he first arrived at the harbour the evening before?)*

[15]

**Total marks: 35**

### Sample essay question

Write the following essay as well as the two paragraphs:

#### Structured essay

- A** His relationship with the boy gave Mr Katz the will to live. Discuss this statement. Refer to incidents in the story. (Length: 100–120 words)

[15]

*Before you begin writing, be clear about how Mr Katz felt at the beginning of the evening – why he came to the harbour in the first place. Jot down all the interactions he had with the boy that made him feel better, or closer to the boy, or useful. Read the last part of the story carefully to see how his state of mind had changed.*

AND

#### Paragraph questions

- B** Write a paragraph of 80–100 words describing the boy’s character. Refer to incidents in the story to support your description.

[10]

*Before you write your paragraph, jot down all the points about the boy that you can find, from his first meeting with Mr Katz to the end of the story when Mr Katz offers him all the fish he, Mr Katz, had caught. Jot down words you can use to describe his character, for example “friendly”, “trusting”.)*

AND

- C** Describe in detail the incident where Mr Katz gave the policeman his brandy. Include the boy’s reaction to this incident. (Length: 80–100 words)

[10]

*Before you write your paragraph, jot down all the points of this incident. Note that you have to REPORT this incident so you must not use direct speech. Remember to USE YOUR OWN WORDS.*

**Total marks: 35**

total marks: 35

## The Boy and Mr Katz (page 72)

### Contextual question

#### Extract 1

- 1.1 They are on the docks of Cape Town harbour.✓ (1)
- 1.2 They are busy catching fish.✓ (1)
- 2.1 Brandy✓ (1)
- 2.2 To give him courage to commit suicide.✓ (1)
- 3.1 False✓ (1)
- 3.2 He offered the policeman a bribe of brandy✓ to overlook the absence of a permit.✓ (2)
4. The main police station✓ in Cape Town.✓ (2)
5. Crayfish tails✓ (1)
6. d✓ (1)

- 7.1 Mr Katz's suicide note✓ (1)
  - 7.2 He wanted the boy to deliver it to the police station✓ the following day.✓ (2)
  - 7.3 True✓ (1)
  - 7.4 The boy exclaimed✓ and also suggested Mr Katz give it to the policeman there and then.✓ (2)
  8. His sons had grown up,✓ they lived elsewhere and he never saw them.✓ (2)
  9. It is ironic as Mr Katz, at this point in the story, is planning to commit suicide✓ and exit from his life.✓ (2)
- [20]

#### Extract 2

10. c✓ (1)
  - 11.1 He was reluctant to accept them.✓ (1)
  - 11.2 He was overjoyed✓ and grateful to Mr Katz.✓ (2)
  12. The huge fish that Mr Katz had hooked✓ but that got away.✓ (2)
  13. a✓ (1)
  - 14.1 b✓ (1)
  - 14.2 They enjoyed fishing together✓ and during the course of the story developed a friendship.✓ (2)
  15. At the beginning of the story he had planned to commit suicide✓ by driving his car off the quay.✓ (2)
  16. c✓ (1)
  17. He enjoyed the night of fishing✓ and is no longer depressed and no longer wants to commit suicide.✓ (2)
- [15]

Total marks: 35

### Essay question

#### A Structured essay

In the course of a night spent fishing with the boy Mr Katz regained his will to live.

When he first arrived at the harbour he felt lonely and depressed. He fully intended committing suicide by driving his car off the quay into the water. Before he could do this he came across the boy fishing. The boy invited him to help him fish.

Mr Katz ended up fishing all night with the boy. When he caught some big fish, the boy became excited and praised him. Mr Katz began to find fishing enjoyable and exciting. He developed a friendship with the boy, bought him food and covered him with his coat when the boy fell asleep.

In this way he was able to care for another human being and so reduce his feeling of loneliness. By morning he had regained hope and faith in

humanity and his will to live. As he left the harbour he asked the Customs official where to buy a permit to fish. [15]

#### Paragraph questions

**B**

The boy is friendly, open and trusting. He tells Mr Katz about his life and means of livelihood. He trusts Mr Katz with his fishing lines. He is cheerful and lively. Even though he has had a hard life, he is good-humoured. He laughs a lot and gets excited about fishing. When Mr Katz catches a big fish he exclaims with pleasure and praises Mr Katz. He has a sense of fairness. When Mr Katz offers him all the fish he has caught he at first refuses the offer. He is resourceful. After a night's fishing he sells fish in the morning, and in the afternoon he sells newspapers to make money to support himself and his sister. [10]

**C**

The boy and Mr Katz were totally absorbed in catching fish. They heard steps behind them. A policeman appeared and asked if they had caught anything. He asked Mr Katz if he had a permit to fish in the harbour. Mr Katz replied that he had a permit to fish. He then produced his brandy bottle from his pocket and offered it to the policeman. The policeman drank from the bottle. He then told Mr Katz that his permit was in order but that they should damp down their fire so it could not be seen from the police station. The boy was very impressed with the way in which Mr Katz had handled the situation and praised him enthusiastically. [10]

**Total marks: 35**