

ENGLISH CUP 2025/2026 BEST 5 STUDENTS' WORKS

PROSE: FINISH A GOTHIC NOVEL WITH GIVEN FIRST PARAGRAPH (the part in italics)

YOUNGER STUDENTS CATHEGORY

When Elizabeth came back to her family's old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name... Elizabeth tensed as a shiver ran down her spine. She was here alone, or so she thought. She didn't dare to breathe as she listened for any other sign that she wasn't alone. When she didn't hear any, she let out a small laugh and scolded herself for being paranoid.

Right now, she was more interested in the portraits, she didn't know she had such a big family.

Her gaze shifted to a portrait of an old man, his eyes seemed to have a dangerous glint in them. And for a moment, Elizabeth thought his lips curved into an amused smile, but the next moment it was gone. She must be getting tired.

She looked at the nameplate – Alexander Jameson. Hun, that was weird. Her surname is not Jameson. Never mind, that can happen sometimes. Just as she wanted to go upstairs, she could feel someone calling her, but the house was silent. No, it wasn't sound. She could feel it vibrating in her bones like an echo.

She briefly wondered how old exactly the house is – not that much. Not for it to be so many faces trapped on a canvas. She could feel someone watching her, but when she turned around, nothing was there. She could hear the voice now, like it was standing behind her and learning to whisper in her ear. "You are next!" Everything went dark, when she woke up, she was trapped in a painting.

Trying to warn the next one who comes into the house.

Markéta Kurešová, 4KAB

A DARKNESS IN THE BLOOD

When Elizabeth came back to her family's old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name... She made her way upstairs all freaked out preparing for the worst. As Eli looked around the corner of the old and dusty bedroom, she noticed a small skinny crown for a little girl that was running around. She felt the strong need to touch it and pick it up. The moment she did it the whole world started spinning and she passed out.

Eli woke up in a world full of darkness, magic, mystery and power. As she opened her eyes, she slowly looked at the boot that was standing on her hair. Eli brought her gaze up to the man that was there, standing like a king. A tall dark-haired man with enormous dark blue wings all dressed up in black. His eyes looked like the sky on a stormy winter night. He spoke to her with such arrogance slowly pronouncing every single word. "What are you doing here?" Eli was so terrified to speak as she saw the daggers on his belt. He didn't wait for a long time and grabbed her of the ground pulling her hair, a dagger on her neck.

They were heading to a dark palace that looked like the gate of hell. Eli looked around and saw the bloody monsters with their teeth faced out. The whole world was sending shivers down her spine as the cold wind that smelled like

death touched her face. Then she saw it. The fallen angel said: "You must go through this trial or I will let you die a slow and painful death."

Anna Stará, 5KIB

REAL FAMILY

When Elizabeth came back to her family's old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name... She thought that, she has hallucinating but then, she heard it again. Almost like a kids' voice was calling for her. Even though the voices inside her head were shouting to turn around and run, she stayed and with uncertainty in her she slowly walked upstairs. The stairs creaked under her weight with each step she took. She was finally upstairs standing in a long corridor which was covered with dust. With each step she took, a cloud of dust flown in front of her. She could barely breathe because of it and the heavy smell of something rotten. The voice was still calling her now more apparent. It was coming from a lonely door at the end of the corridor. As she got closer, she noticed that the walls were covered in red almost black splashes. When she finally reached the door and tried to open them her hand flinched. The doorknob was covered in something sticky. She looked at her hand which was now covered in blood and grabbed the doorknob. The door creaked open and revealed horrendous scene. The floor was covered with human guts and organs which were extracted with surgical precision from two bodies lying on the floor. As she stepped into the room the door closed shut behind her and she was trapped. When she turned around the last thing, she saw, was a child with a creepy smile covered in blood saying: "Hello sister!"

Ema Lišková, 5KIB

CIPHER OF THE VON SONNBURY

When Elizabeth came back to her family's old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name...

She jumped in her spot. It took a moment before she managed to calm down. After she sorted through her internal battles, she reluctantly followed upstairs. Those dirty dust-covered stairs loudly creaked underneath her feet. She felt her legs tremble, her breath catching in her throat, eyes wide as she took each step. After what felt like eternity, she stood on the last step of the stairway. She felt a breath, cold as ice, on her neck, yet she didn't stop. She continued walking through the halls of the old mansion. Suddenly, she felt a cold hand on her face, suffocating her. She tried to fight, but the lack of oxygen made her light-headed. World around Eliza started to blur, her attempts to break free grew weaker and weaker...before she dropped to the ground. It took a while to catch a breath and acknowledge her surroundings. It was an odd room.

Decorated luxuriously with a mahogany table, velvet cushion armchairs and embroidered curtains. In the center of the room creaked a fireplace. The ginger-haired girl stopped inside and closed the heavy door behind her. On the table laid an odd piece of parchment covered with texts. She tried to read through but understood just a few words. But she immediately recognized the name "Vincent von Sonnbury". He was supposed to be the first owner of this house. Liz continued to cipher those words, feeling more and more uneasy. Her ancestor was a parricide. She felt her blood at that idea.

But she felt a new wave of determination filling her. She was going to find out more and who was the woman in black or the being which dragged her and why this room specifically.

Adéla Chladová, 1.B

I'M CALLING, WILL YOU FOLLOW MY VOICE?

When Elizabeth came back to her family's old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name...

Elizabeth prepared herself for that moment on her way into this house. Her family's mansion has always been sort of strange and scary place. That's why she left few years ago. But now she decided to come back. She didn't really know why. It was like the house was calling her, craving for her attention. So, there she was, standing in the hallway. She slowly went upstairs, following the soft voice. It sounded like some little girl. This reminded her of one thing that happened when she was only seven.

Back in those days, she often went out into woods to play with animals and to explore the surrounding of their house. One day she was walking by the river when she heard someone calling for help. It was little girl, she was horrified. Little blond girl she couldn't be more than 5 was hanging from a tree on a rope that was around her neck. She was dead. But what was the worst – someone ripped off the girl's skin, so Elizabeth could see her muscles perfectly. Elizabeth just stood there, shocked. But then, the dead girl suddenly opened her eyes and started singing lullaby in a soft voice. That's when Elizabeth ran away.

She forced herself to focus, while walking down the hallway, following the voice. Is it the same girl? What does she want? Is she mad because I didn't save her? Is this her revenge? She had those questions on her mind, but what surprised her was that she wasn't scared of the little girl's revenge. She was oddly satisfied with the strange feeling that went through her body and into her bones. She didn't know what comes next. Maybe she will die? She couldn't tell. And that satisfied her the most. Yes, she was a bit strange and most people called her a psycho but she didn't mind.

She walked into her parents' bedroom. It was a huge room, with dark furniture, huge windows and portraits on walls. Everything seemed alright at first, but then she started to notice some strange details. She walked closer to the walls. What seemed as red paintings at first, was actually blood. And when she carefully lifted one painting, there was a lot more blood. And in the corner, there was written a small number. She lifted each painting and found number under every single one. So, she had six numbers. She realized that it must be a code. She ran into another room. There was big iron door. She always wondered what was behind it. And today, she'll finally figure it out. After almost an hour she managed to open the door. She stepped into a dark room. She switched the light on and what she saw shocked her. There were three suits. But not some normal, from some expensive fabric. Those were made from skin. Human's skin. It was too late when she realized someone was standing behind her.

A loud shot echoed the old house...

Nela Papežová, 5KIB

YOU'RE NOT REALLY HERE

When Elizabeth came back to her family's old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange,

frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name...

Elizabeth remained calm. She felt an odd sense of comfort from that voice as it started humming a soft melody. Her eyes drew to the wooden stairs covered in spider webs and the dark space that waited for her at the end. She started to walk towards them without even intent to. It was like two magnets waiting to glue to each other. Her legs took the first steps up and she got slowly consumed by the total void of darkness.

The melody suddenly stopped and got switched by a heavy breathing that came somewhere from her left. She didn't feel calm anymore, on the opposite. Her hands started to tremble and she realized, that her memory of how she got here vanished.

"Help!", a muffled voice said silently. Elizabeth was deciding for a moment if she should just run or look who or what it was. After a while she braced herself up and came to a dark shadow in the corner.

There was a little boy sitting on the cold floor. His eyes were sparkling with a gold and she soon realized who it was. There's no way she would ever forget the soft arch of his eyebrows, the pointy nose and freckles covering his cheeks. It was her brother who vanished 7 years ago and no one ever found him. Tears filled her eyes, she tried to touch him but he was like a ghost. Transparent.

"What happening?!" she said, panicking. Her hands tried one more time to reach for his arm but it didn't work. That smile she knew so well turned to an evil smirk out of nowhere. It wasn't him. Now all that she could see were black eyes that stared at her coldly and empty.

She started to choke on air. Looking at the ceiling while trying to move with a horror in her body. That monster grabbed her by her arms and cut symbols into them. The pain she felt almost made her pass out. Loud ringing consumed her hand and everything turned into a chaos. She was powerless. In a time that felt endless everything stopped. Elizabeth opened her eyes and found herself standing beside her own limp body covered in blood.

Matylda Smatanová, 1.A

OLDER STUDENTS CATHEGORY

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

When Elizabeth came back to her family's old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name... She gasped with startle. As far as she is aware, she should be alone in the mansion, but Elizabeth knew deep down that the abandoned house was an entity of its own, always listening, watching and feeding itself on their fear. Elizabeth remembered all the nights, when she lay frozen in bed, sweat dripping down her forehead. Those sleepless nights were the worst. The house hiding monsters in the shadows, trying to conceal the footsteps and shouts even her dolls and teddy bears blinking in fear with their dead eyes.

Elizabeth carefully approached the stairs, the foot-prints of her kiddy shoes still decorating the stairs. The stairs creaked and moaned as she took them one by one. They were whispering her name, the portraits threw their suspicious eyes at her and she felt all the memories rushing back to her. To engulf her in flames of misery, fear and anguish her feet were made of lead but she did not dare to stop.

The first room that she entered was her old bedroom. At first glance a room that every little girl would dream of but Elizabeth knew better. She knew that hiding her favorite pillow to her ears helped to drown the screams. Their home was always angry and terrible. All those times she would sit at her desk trying to study but ultimately, she always ended up hiding in her closet. Elizabeth wanted to hug that girl now.

But her torment was not over as she entered her parent's bedroom. This is where she finally broke, her heart weeping in anger and injustice. This is where she saw it for the first time, the monster, the head of the family, the king of the house – her **father**. The way he lifted his claw and slashed her mother's face in anger. Those dead, hungry eyes, forever etched into her brain. He would later turn this all-consuming anger on his own daughter. Her father used to be a good man, she heard. Elizabeth only remembers him angry. Elizabeth left the first chance she got. She left her mother behind, now the sole target of her husband's cruelty.

Elizabeth often thinks that if she had stayed, maybe her mother would still be alive. Miserable, yes, but alive. Her mother died at the hands of her father but Elizabeth can't help feeling responsible. She feels hands wrap around her neck. Maybe her mother came for revenge.

Khulan Dolgormaa, 3. B

REVENGE

When Elizabeth came back to her family's old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name...

"Elizabeth, Elizabeth, oh my dear Elizabeth."

Turning around terrified, seeing nothing but her own reflection in a dusty and shattered mirror. The broken pieces were all over the wooden floor, covered with fresh blood.

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.

Her ears were buzzing, her brain telling her to run as far as possible and never look back. But her curiosity got ahead of her. Determined, she slowly walked up the creaky stairs which led her up to her old childhood bedroom. The wind from the broken windows opened the creaky door for her, as if it was inviting her in.

“Oh my – “

Big dolls that were gifted to her for her seventh birthday now sat on the ground all facing her. Their expression smiley and witty. But there was one thing that made her screams building up in her throat, wanting to escape. Once innocent dolls now had their curious eyes poked out. Soulless and gone.

A hand landed on her mouth. Turning around, fears in her eyes, was her twin sister.

“What are you – “

Her chest throbbed in pain. Looking down and seeing a sharp knife on the left side on her breasts, made her knees weak. Falling down, heartbeat filling her ears, all she could hear was her sister’s malicious voice, blaming her for everything and how she will celebrate her death. Her eyelids felt droopy and she finally gave in. For the first time in her live she wasn’t scared anymore.

Le Khanh Huyen, 2.B

THE GIRL IN THE PAINTING

When Elizabeth came back to her family’s old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name...

It was so enchanting, the rain reminded her at the sirens as she felt completely hypnotized. One foot after another he walked up the stairs. In front of her was a huge painting with a vintage frame. There was an adorable girl standing with her short blond hair around her face, that almost looked like a halo and big piercing black eyes, which were framed with soft delicate lashes. Elizabeth unwillingly stopped to admire the beauty, although she was scared. The girl in the painting suddenly opened her eyes, Elizabeth was stunned. “I can grant wishes to whoever promises me, to be my friend!” she said.

“Paintings usually don’t talk” replied Elizabeth while squinting her eyes.

“Did all the paintings that you’ve met grant wishes? Your wish?” asked the blonde. Elizabeth thought of all the times, when her little brother annoyed her, made fun of her just because he was a boy.

“I want my brother to disappear.” She murmured and touched the painting. Red light illuminated the room, as she lost consciousness.

Elizabeth woke up laying in her bed. She excitedly ran up to the painting, but instead of the girl she found her little brother laying dead in front of the empty frame. His intestines were missing, eyes opened and full of horror. She started to scream, cry, she heard her throat making animalistic sounds of grief. She turned to the painting and with her eyes closed she slammed her entire body weight onto it to break it.

Shattered pieces of the antique mirror fell on her hair, cutting into her face, neck and arms. She took a quick look at them.

They were stained all, with the blood of her brother.

Anna Slobodina, 2.B

A HAUNTING PICTURE

When Elizabeth came back to her family's old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name...

She thinks she must have been imagining the calm voice she has known as well as her own in the past. She closes her eyes and travels back into her childhood for a moment. She remembers life being simple and always having her family close. She remembers her soft skin and the smell of cinnamon that never left her clothes. Ever since the plague took her beloved mother, nothing has been the same for Elizabeth. She spends most nights thinking about what she could've and would've done if she was still here. She never even said goodbye.

Elizabeth opens her eyes and with tears rolling down her checks makes her way upstairs. Suddenly, a small gust of cold air blows against her, as if something were warning her. She brushes over it and keeps going, since she had a really long day and just wants to lay down. To avoid the memories, she decides to rest in her parents' bedroom instead of the room she grew up in. She thought she wasn't strong enough to do that, but nothing could prepare her for the sign she was about to behold.

She opens the door with her sight still a little blurry and she was. The face she once known was dull, still and grey. Her body cold and disgustingly skinny. The smell of cinnamon gone. After all this time, she can say her last goodbye, even though none will say it back.

Tereza Bělová, 3.B

LURING

When Elizabeth came back to her family's old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name...

Her feet moved on their own, leading her closer and closer to the long staircase. The wood cried under her weight. Upon reaching the last step, darkness consumed her entire being, the ancient material getting to its limits and giving in, crumbling to splinters. A deafening thud eclipsed for what felt like an eternity after her limp body made contact with the mossy cobblestone.

Immediately losing consciousness, her limb splayed out, chest slowly lifting in irregular sequences. Her eyes fluttered open, her mother's figure towering over her, gently shaking her shoulders. Elizabeth's face lit up with pure relief, but as she attempted to prop herself on her elbows, she quickly realized her arms wouldn't move.

Her expression changed into one of utter horror when she noticed something was terribly wrong with the person kneeling right next to her. Their left eye was red and bloodshot, while the other was loosely hanging from its socket, barely holding down their cheek, staining Elizabeth's white blouse. She was paralyzed by fear, unable to comprehend this bizarre situation. Air's been knocked out of her lungs, any words died on her tongue.

“Leave, leave while you can. Don’t let them lure you...” Her eyes opened and her body jolted awake. Her body was curled on the last step, she must’ve collapsed, it’s the lack of sleep she tried to reassure herself. Until her hand touched a sticky red stain on her stomach.

Marie Klabochová, 6SXB

THE SECRET OF THE BLACK BOOK

When Elizabeth came back to her family’s old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name...

Elizabeth froze. Her head slowly turned towards the staircase. It looked old and unstable. As she slowly ascended the wooden steps, she could only focus on the loud creaky sound echoing through the house. With each step, she grew more reckless. Was that really someone whispering her name or was her mind playing tricks on her?

Stood atop of the stairs, Elizabeth stared down the hall. The sound of her own heart beating felt like the loudest thing in the world each “thump” was as if someone had struck a set of drums. Suddenly, the door at the end of the hall opened, inviting her inside. Elizabeth didn’t know why her legs started moving, but some invisible force was pulling her towards the now exposed room. She stepped inside, full of expectations. She felt petrified. As she glanced around, she felt almost disappointed – nothing was quite out of the ordinary. Elizabeth’s gaze turned towards the bookshelf on the opposite side of the room. She was intrigued by one specific book.

It’s black color stood out in the sea of greyish-greed around it. She took a step towards it. BOOM! The majestic bookshelf fell. The black book rolled out, opening in front of Elizabeth. In it was a picture of the woman in black.

At first there was a scream, then Elizabeth turned around and started to run down the hall. She had almost reached the frond door, when it skimmed shot in front of her.

She was never seen again. The house has been abandoned ever since – no one’s dared to explore it. But some say that sometimes, you can still hear her terrified screams.

Nela Klimešová, 7SPA

WHAT THE DARK REVEALS

When Elizabeth came back to her family’s old house on the lonely hill, the fog was so thick she could hardly see her own breath. The house stood silent, its tall towers and sharp roofs reaching into the dark sky like cold, stony fingers. As she stepped inside, the door creaked open on its own. The air was heavy with dust and something that smelled faintly of old blood. On the walls hung portraits of her ancestors – faces that seemed almost alive, with strange, frozen smiles. When she moved closer to one painting, she felt the eyes of the woman in black following her. Then, just as she looked away, a quiet whisper came from upstairs, softly calling her name...

Cold sweat ran down Elizabeth’s spine as she spun around to face the stairway. Convincing herself it’s just her own imagination, she took a deep breath. She reminded herself the reason she even entered this god-forsaken place. With new-found strength the woman took a few more confident steps down just to reach the first of the many stairs. Looking up into the empty darkness, she felt a slight breeze, even though no windows were open... The loud creaking of the old wooden stairs broke the silence. Elizabeth stopped in her track her heartbeat almost as loud as the sound of screaming she could still hear in her head. She kept waiting but didn’t know what for. Waiting for something that heard and will show itself. Waiting, until her breath calmed a little, her head spun a little less.

Each step was torture in itself. She felt like a burglar, instead of the owner of this shack. The smell became unbearable as she reached the first floor. She finally came face to face with her worst nightmare – guts spilling out, decay taking over as bugs devoured the flesh around. A milky shadow over the one eye that was left the other somewhere in the splash of blood on the nearby wall.

Elizabeth knew what she had to do. She had to hide mother before someone found her like this.

Karolina Vlčková, 7SPA