

Dear Santa by Anne Donovan

Question 1

At least three of:

- Alison makes several failed attempts at beginning her letter (because she wants to ask Santa to make her mother love her more) (1)
- Alison's mother comes into her bedroom and encourages Alison to finish her letter (1)
- Alison writes a letter, asking for toys (1)
- Alison's mother tucks Alison into bed (1)
- Alison asks her mother why her hair is a different colour (1)
- Alison's mother kisses Alison and says good night (1)

Question 2

The narrator does not state her feelings explicitly, but various techniques - questions, word choice - are used to show her irritation.

Mood or atmosphere:

Uncertain, frustrated (1)

Writer's use of language (one of):

- 'It's hard tae find the words' (1) - finding it hard to express herself (1)
- Incomplete, failed attempts (1) - 'Please could you' (1)
- Questions (1) - 'But what is it ah'm tryin tae say?' (1)
- 'That's no Santa's job' (1) - becoming upset (1)
- 'there's nae point' (1) - loses heart, feels it is futile (1)
- 'If there is a Santa' (1) - doubt (1)
- 'the sky's dirty grey' (1) - sad, gloomy (1)

Question 3

Any combination of two bullet points for four marks

Relationship - strained, distant:

- 'Are you no asleep yet?' (1) - impatience (1)
- 'Look, there's Katie, soond' (1) - unfavourable comparison to sister (1)
- 'she cannae be bothered wi that' (1) - irritation (1)
- 'a dry kiss, barely grazin ma cheek' (1) - lack of affection (1)

Relationship - Alison's affection for mother:

- 'Ah love stroking her hair' (1) - touchy-feely (1)
- 'ah wisht ah had hair like yours' (1) - admires mother (1)

Question 4

The words 'in your opinion' make clear that you must give your own response here. You must also back up this response with evidence as no marks are awarded for merely stating your opinion.

Alison feels content, happy (one of):

- 'she looks at me mair soft like'(1) Alison's mother has mellowed (1)
- 'leavin a wee crack of light fallin across the bedclothes' (1) - positive imagery of 'light', thoughtful act (1)

OR

Alison feels disappointed (one of):

- 'Go tae sleep hen...'- mother still impatient (1)
- 'a dry kiss, barely grazin ma cheek'- lack of affection (1)

Question 5

A strong answer here will deal not only with the similarity of the characters and relationships but also the use of techniques like narrative voice. You might refer to some of the following in your answer. However, there are other possibilities that you could discuss.

- This story, like *All That Glisters*, deals with miscommunication between the generations: here a young girl feels a lack of affection from her mother.
- The story *Away in a Manger* also features a mother and daughter.
- The Christmas setting is also similar to *Away in a Manger*.
- *A Chitterin Bite* deals with the difference between children and adults by looking at the same character during childhood and adulthood.
- *Virtual Pals* also deals with miscommunication.
- The use of Scots in both dialogue and the first person narrator's voice is similar to *All That Glisters*..