



**OUNDLE**

School

2021 Non-Common Entrance Examination

Third Form Entry

**English**

Time allowed: 1 hour

Instructions

- **Dictionaries are not allowed.**
- Answer on lined paper. Clearly mark your name at the top of each sheet of paper you use.
- Answer ALL the questions in Section A. Answer ONE question from Section B. **You should divide your time equally between both sections.**
- You are expected to write clearly and accurately in your answers. Write in full sentences. You should leave some time towards the end of the examination to check your work carefully.
- The maximum number of marks for this paper is 50.

## Section A: Comprehension

Spend about 30 minutes on this section

In this extract, the writer, Emma Ford, who runs a Bird of Prey centre which accepts injured and unwanted animals, is given a new and unusual bird and describes her experiences of training it. Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow. Leave yourself enough time to answer the last question in full detail.

The box was a sight to behold. Three feet square, it was constructed from heavy ply and bound every six inches by thick bands of steel. What terror could be lurking within it?

With some difficulty, I prised open the lid and a pair of large, brown eyes looked up at me, fringed by extremely long and angelic-looking eyelashes. I inserted my gloved hand carefully. There was a raucous yell from the interior and something slashed at my arm. Hastily I withdrew, but I had an appendage. Hanging from my sleeve by its beak was the most extraordinary bird I had ever seen. 5

Its beak was white and its face was bare red skin, giving it the appearance of a clown. It had a glossy black crest, below which lay ivory feathers, finely banded with black. This variegated mantle extended down over the bird's shoulders, blending into black feathering on the lower back and wings. The tail and wing feathers were white, finely barred with black. A pair of long, bright yellow legs swung beneath it. This exotic creature rejoiced in an equally exotic name. It was an Audubon's caracara. 10

A friend in Yorkshire had sent it, telling me that in contrast to those of other birds of prey, its large yellow feet were as harmless as a chicken's but, he had warned, its beak was like a chainsaw, hence the reinforced box. Stupidly, I had decided that this was probably an exaggeration. The bird was a female but, her sex notwithstanding, I determined to call her Cuthbert. 15

I had read up on our latest acquisition. Audubon's caracaras live on savannahs and pampas from Florida to the Argentine. They have wide-ranging tastes, feeding on live and dead fish, mammals, rotting meat, eggs, young or wounded birds, insect larvae, live shellfish and iguanas. Their tendency also to attack young livestock makes them unpopular. Nowhere, however, did my reference book mention a liking for human flesh. 20 25

As I lowered my appendage gently on to the kitchen floor, she reared back and slashed into my upper arm with a vicious blow, removing a piece of flesh. Pausing briefly, a thoughtful expression on her face, Cuthbert proceeded to swallow the bloody morsel, smacking her beak like a food-lover relishing a particularly fine mouthful of fillet steak. 30

I leapt back in shock, clasping my wounded arm, and eyed Cuthbert darkly. Cuthbert eyed me in turn. I got the uncomfortable feeling that she was trying to work out which portion of my anatomy would yield the most tender snacks. Edging my way round her to the door, I left the room, returning armed with a thick bath towel. As I circled her, towel at the ready, it was hard to determine who was stalking whom. 35

Her crest raised, she padded menacingly round the floor on her stubby yellow feet. The boiler murmured behind her and, momentarily distracted, she glanced over her shoulder. Seizing my opportunity I threw the towel over her head and rugby tackled her.

Despite the thickness of the material, several splits appeared in the towel as her razor-sharp beak stabbed away blindly. I lowered the bundle on to the table and passed a few extra turns of the material around it. Temporarily subdued while I attached jesses to her feet, Cuthbert contented herself by issuing a volley of ear-splitting yells. 40

Contrary to my expectations, she proved exceptionally quick to train, but I gained scars at a rate to match the progress. She used her beak indiscriminately, removing her first set of jesses within hours and reducing her thick nylon leash to a pile of threads. Her jesses I replaced with the thickest leather I could find and, after chewing fruitlessly at them for an hour or so, she turned her attention to gardening, hacking up the turf around her perch in search of insects and worms. 50

She could raise or lower her crest at will, leaving me in no doubt whatsoever about her mood at any given time. When she was annoyed, her red face would flush yellow and her strident voice expressed her displeasure in unmistakable terms. In the early days of training, she frequently threw what can only be described as tantrums, throwing herself off the glove and spinning upside down, snapping as she rotated. 55  
Despite the warmth of the spring weather, it was not safe to handle her without long sleeves.

Cuthbert's saving grace was that, in common with many extroverted individuals, she could be charming company when the spirit moved her. When at peace with herself and me, she would plant her feet widely on the glove and gaze trustingly into my eyes with an expression of kindly friendliness. I quickly came to realise that she was not really hostile, she just could not resist sampling different tastes and putting her best asset, her fearsome beak, to work whenever possible. 60

Despite her comical appearance, she flew with grace but spoilt it by dropping on to the ground half-way to my fist and covering the remaining distance on foot. Visitors adored watching her – she had quite a turn of speed on the flat, but invariably she would get her long legs in a tangle and trip over. Picking herself up, she would raise her crest and glare at the spectators before trotting over to me and hopping up for her reward. Sometimes she would stop *en route* to snip the head off a daffodil or rummage through the handbag of a tourist, picking out vanity mirrors and handkerchiefs. 65  
Discovering to her disappointment that the objects were not edible, she would discard them on the ground and continue on her way, leaving the crowd convulsed with laughter. 70

1. Look again at lines 1-8. How does the writer convey a sense of mystery and suspense in these lines?  
*(3 marks)*
  
2. Write down any two words or phrases from anywhere in the passage that you feel are particularly effective at describing the power of the bird. Comment on how these words or phrases create a clear impression of power for the reader.  
*(4 marks)*
  
3. Look again at lines 26-44. How does the writer create a vivid picture of what happens here?  
*(4 marks)*
  
5. Look again at lines 51-73. Are there any examples of comedy in these lines?  
*(4 marks)*
  
6. Looking at the passage as a whole, what do we learn about the character of the writer? You should use brief quotations to support your answer.  
*(10 marks)*

*(Total: 25 marks)*

End of Section A

## Section B: Composition

**Spend about 30 minutes on this section**

Answer ONE of the following questions. You are reminded of the importance of clear and accurate written English and of careful presentation in your answers. All questions carry equal marks.

1. Describe an occasion in your life when you received an unexpected gift. Write in a way that creates a clear picture for the reader of what you did and how you felt.

*(25 marks)*

2. 'The box was a sight to behold.' Write a story that begins with these words.

*(25 marks)*

3. 'The natural world must be respected'. Use this title as EITHER:

a) the headline for an article for a wildlife magazine

OR

b) a speech to present to your school assembly.

*(25 marks)*

**END OF QUESTIONS**