



OUNDLE

School

2020 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

As a small boy, the writer of this passage went to the docks with his friend, Robert. Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow. Leave yourself enough time to answer the last question in full detail.

Robert McCartney was a small boy. Robert's height and slight build meant that he had no interest in the boisterous games in school. But Robert was fascinating. After many months of this playground friendship Robert asked me if I would like to go to the docks with him so he could help his dad with the unloading.

I am not sure what I expected as we reached the dock. I had an idea of a harbour lined with ships, but instead I found myself in a great shed big enough to swallow up half a dozen of the houses from the street I lived in. The place was full of men and only a few kids. There was an air of viciousness about them like dogs waiting to attack. I was dreading having to walk past them, but my school chum strode past me like he owned the place. Sheepishly I followed. Everyone seemed to be shouting or laughing in a loud way. Boxes were banged about, handcarts collided as their owners cursed and threatened one another. One carter in a hurry to pass us called out, 'Are you two frozen or what? Move, come on!' The violence of this command petrified me, but McCartney was having none of it. 'Move yourself, you old fool!' I was stunned. I had never heard such brazen bravado in my friend before. At school he was quiet and shy: here he was altogether a different creature. The little boy who sat beside me at school was suddenly ten feet tall, growling and snarling back at anyone who gave us offence.

Winding our way through the deafening pandemonium was terrifying; whatever insults were slung from one man to another they just filled up the chaotic babble of the place.

'See that big brown horse there – that was my granda's when it was a foal,' Robert said. The brown horse looked nothing like a horse to me. More like a statue of a horse. It was immense. We both walked over to the great beast. 'You stay here while I go off and get you a stick,' my pal ordered.

The massive beast held me hypnotized. It was everything a horse shouldn't be. It was bulky and still. The big black collar around its neck must have weighed more than I did. Its eye was as big as a cricket ball and its coarse eyelashes looked like the bristles on a yard brush. The size of its head stunned me. I thought it was three times the size of any horse I had ever seen. I could only imagine the weight of it and gasp. The animal's big black eyeball never moved. The whole attitude of the creature suggested that it has long tired of the world and had concluded that mankind was a confused species which spent all its time and energy making as much noise and fuss as was possible for no reason. I approached, full of nervous awe. It shifted its weight from

one huge foot to another; amidst all the competing bustle and noise trapped inside the shed the movement appeared elegant and graceful for a creature of such tonnage.

35

At first I was too enraptured by the horse to notice its handler. 'What's its name, Mr?' I eventually asked. 'Hercules,' he said. 'He's the biggest, strongest workhorse in the whole of Belfast, but blind as a bat. He can't see more than a few feet in front of him. He likes you to talk to him ... and after a while, when he gets to know you, and like you – he's very choosy, you know – he even talks back to you!'

40

I was momentarily caught up in a whirlpool of fascination about this gigantic horse and what I was supposed to say to it when Robert suddenly appeared. 'Come on,' he urged. 'They'll be offloading soon.'

Already men were lined up along the makeshift clearway that led from the gangplank. Robert's instructions were direct: 'make sure nothing gets past you.' I was so overwhelmed by how he became a different person in this noisy aggressive world. I felt myself becoming tougher and stronger as if I too was a part of this strange new world.

45

At the head of the gangplank I heard an explosion of noise. It was an inarticulate mix of roaring and grunting, and squeaking and swearing. Suddenly the gangplank was alive with dozens of pigs skidding and stumbling over one another. It was as if a giant broom had swept them there. The smell they brought with them confirmed how sickening the sea journey must have been. I gagged, and felt sick and nervous.

50

Paralysed with fear, I watched as the squealing, foul mass of pig flesh hurtled towards me. I wanted to run away, but I was trapped in the appalling din of the animals and the fanatical men around me. I heard Robert shouting urgently, 'Don't let it out, don't let it out!' I looked in front of me and was confronted by a pig that had all the dimensions of a baby rhinoceros. It tossed its head and bellowed out the most terrifying and unearthly sound I had ever heard. The brute was enraged and determined to break out of the cordon of men. I was the weakest point in the wall that enclosed it. The deranged rhinoceros had chosen to savage me to escape. I stood motionless, hearing the bedlam about me diminish.

55

60

Brian Keenan (born 1950)

1. Look again at lines 5-8. How does the writer convey the size of the shed to the reader?

(3 marks)

2. Write down any two words or phrases from anywhere in the passage that you feel are particularly effective at describing the noise at the docks. Comment on how these words or phrases create a clear impression of the noise for the reader.

(4 marks)

TURN OVER

3. Look again at lines 21-43. How far, and in what ways, is Hercules the horse presented as unusual?
(4 marks)
4. Look again at lines 49-62. How does the writer create a vivid picture of the events here?
(4 marks)
5. Looking at the passage as a whole, what do we learn about both the character of the writer and his friend Robert? You should use brief quotations to support your answer.
(10 marks)

(Total: 25 marks)

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 went somewhere that was very busy. Write in a way that creates a clear picture for the reader of what you did and how you felt.
(25 marks)
2. 'I am not sure what I expected.' Write a story that begins with these words.
(25 marks)
3. 'The wonderful and frightening world of animals'. Use this title as EITHER:
- a) the headline for an article for a teenage magazine
- OR
- b) a speech to present to your school assembly.
(25 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS