FOREST SCHOOL

ENGLISH ENTRANCE/SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION

Section A: Reading

ANSWER BOOKLET

25 minutes

Name	
Candidate number	

Instructions to Candidates

- Write your name and candidate number clearly on the front of this booklet.
- Once the reading time is over, you have 2**5 minutes** to complete the questions in the spaces provided.
- You should answer all the questions in this section.

Mark out of 20: ____

Peri and his brother Helgis are outside their village. Peri is trying to train a difficult falcon (a large bird of prey) to be an obedient hunter.

"I tell you, Peri, my bird is sickening for something."

Helgis tugged the back of his brother's sleeveless leather jacket to get his attention, his small dark face and dark eyes bleak with anxiety. "She's off her food and her feathers look dull. You've always told me that's a bad sign."

Peri kept his eye on the distant falcon, flying over the crag. The ground under his boots squelched as he readied himself to swing the lure, but he paid no attention to the discomfort of wet feet.

"I'll take a look at her when I've finished here," he promised, his voice as calm and melodious as always. There was something about him – his air of being utterly centred – that appealed to all creatures, especially winged ones. Even Helgis's anxiety eased listening to his brother's words. "Now stand back: I need room."

"Please don't take too long. I'm really worried about her."

"I know – and it's natural. Goldie's your first bird. We all worry too much about our first."

Helgis sighed, realising his brother was not going to come with him until he was good and ready. He often complained that Peri was as immovable as the peak of Mount Bandor; even now, as he stood ankle-deep in the mud, his shoulder-skimming black hair tied back with a leather thong, his long limbs relaxed, there was no budging him until he was finished. Yet Peri had a sure hand with the birds that kept even the tricky ones, like the falcon he was now flying, obedient to his will. Helgis wished he had even a fraction of his patience, or his skill with the falcons.

Peri caught his brother's envious look and smiled inwardly. He knew his little brother thought he was always the capable one. Helgis had announced only the night before that he wanted to be exactly like Peri when he grew up, much to the amusement of the rest of the family. They all anticipated that Helgis's hot temper might not allow it. But Peri loved his little brother dearly and hoped he could live up to the high opinion Helgis held of him.

"You'd best move to a safe distance," Peri said gently.

"I'll get out of your way then." Helgis jumped from tussock to tussock to reach the shelter of a rock. "I'm clear."

Peri slowly began to spin the lure[1] above his head, the piece of rabbit meat tied to the end humming in the wind to tempt the falcon on the wing. He put aside the problem of Helgis's sparrowhawk for later attention, concentrating on the task at hand. Would the bird respond? The crotchety falcon had been almost impossible to train so as a last resort had been given to him to straighten out. Peri guessed a previous handler had mistreated the creature or failed to be consistent with his rewards; it had developed an unpredictable and malevolent streak, as likely to dive for the trainer as the meat lure.

"Come on, beauty," he urged the hunter. He was the bird's last chance: if it didn't respond to him, then it would be destroyed, a thought which made Peri want to rage at the unfairness of life.

With a contemptuous loop over the crag, the peregrine flaunted its superb flying skills. It skimmed along the ridge, teasingly suggesting that it planned to continue on until it was out of sight. Then, finally, as if sensing that even Peri's patience was running out, it turned and rocketed towards the lure, as fast as an arrow from a longbow. It made a perfect grab for the meat, landing it on the grass.

Now the test: could the handler separate it from the lure? If the falcon ate the kill, it would never do as a hunter. It had to be trained to let go of what it had captured. Peri moved closer, slipping off his jacket, then threw it over the lure, making it seem to the falcon that it had 'disappeared'. He then cast a small chunk of meat within easy reach. Would the falcon let go of the prize it still gripped but could not see, in favour of the reward that his trainer had offered?

The falcon raised its ebony eyes, its expression one of resentment, but then hopped off the lure to pluck the titbit from the grass. Next Peri held out his gauntleted[2] hand with another larger piece of meat. Rogue gave him a cold look but flapped up to snatch this reward too, allowing Peri to secure the bird in place by the jesses attached to its legs. Back under the falconer's control, Rogue was too busy eating his treat to worry that Peri was putting away the much larger feast on the end of the lure.

"Phew!" exclaimed Helgis, jumping out from behind his refuge. "I never thought I'd see Rogue follow orders."

Usually unruffled by anything that happened on the training grounds, Peri could not disguise his delight. "I didn't think I'd live to see it either. He's been the most difficult bird I've ever had to train."

55

60

1: *lure* – this is a piece of meat attached to the end of a long rope used to train the falcon to hunt
2: *gauntleted* – Peri is wearing a thick leather glove to protect his arm from the falcon's talons

1. **Reread lines 1-4.** Write down two clues that Helgis is worried. **(2 marks)**

(1)

(2)

2. **Reread lines 8-21.**

a) What promise does Peri make in this extract? **(1 mark)**

b) Write down the simile in this extract. **(1 mark)**

c) What does this simile tell us about Peri's character? **(1 mark)**

3. **Reread this sentence from lines 33-4:** "The crotchety falcon had been almost impossible to train so as a last resort had been given to him to straighten out."
   a) What does "to straighten out" mean **in this sentence? (1 mark)**

   b) In your own words, explain what "as a last resort" means **in this sentence**. **(1 mark)**

   c) What two things does Peri suspect may have happened to the falcon before it came to him? **(2 marks)**

   (1)

   (2)

4. In lines 35-6, the author writes that the falcon "had developed an unpredictable and malevolent streak".
   a) What does she mean by this? **(2 marks)**

b) Why did Peri agree to take on the training of this difficult bird? Give two reasons. **(2 marks)**

5. How does the author make Peri an interesting character in this passage? You should use quotations from the passage in your answer. **(5 marks)**

6. How do Helgis and Peri feel at the end of the passage? **(2 marks)**

FOREST SCHOOL

Section B: Writing

40 minutes

Name	
Candidate number	

Instructions to Candidates

- Write your name and candidate number clearly on the front of this booklet.
- Once the reading time is over, you have **40 minutes** to complete the questions in the spaces provided.
- You should answer all the questions in this section.

Mark out of 20: ____

Section B – Writing

Marks Available: 40

You must answer the question set. You should not write out an answer from memory. Answers which are written from memory often do not get very high marks.

You should include details from your reading of the passage to inform your writing.

Choose <u>one</u> of the following questions:

EITHER

(1) Write the next chapter of the story, exploring what happens to Peri.

OR

(2) Imagine you are Helgis. Write the scene with the falcon from your point of view.