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 **25 minutes** to complete the questions in the spaces provided.
- You should answer all the questions in this section.

Mark out of 20: ____

This story is set in ancient Rome. Threptus, a beggar boy, has gone out to seek his fortune.

Although it was only an hour after dawn, the forum[1] was already crowded. Threptus jumped up onto the base of a marble statue of a man on horseback, and hooked his elbow around one of the horse's painted legs. From this vantage point he could scan the forum for danger, which usually came in the form of an older boy named Naso. But Threptus could not see Naso's red hair anywhere.

His nostrils flared at the scent of meat from the morning sacrifices cooking on charcoal braziers. He could also smell incense from the lofty temple of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva over to his left. He could hear the jingle of a tambourine from within the temple of Rome and Augustus on his right, probably a dedication. The bankers and money-changers had set up their tables in the shade of the colonnade and were already doing brisk business. He could hear the clink of coins and the deep bark of one of their watchdogs. A steady stream of people were making their way to the basilica: today was one of the days when cases could be heard.

Threptus nodded with satisfaction: it was business as usual in the forum of Ostia. He jumped down from the statue base and made his way to the notice board.

Threptus couldn't read, but he could eavesdrop. Most Romans read out loud, so he could just cock an ear and listen as they muttered their way through the various announcements of news: imperial edicts, court cases, births and deaths, lost and found.

Sometimes people even drew pictures of what they were looking for. Today, for example, someone had drawn a kind of eagle, or perhaps a vulture. This was strange. Vultures were not common in Ostia[2]. In fact, Threptus had never seen a real vulture, only a fresco of one in the Temple of Isis. There was writing next to the picture on the notice board. Threptus didn't know letters but he did know the numbers one through ten. And he knew the sign for a sestertius: two standing up lines connected by a short flat line next to a snake-shaped squiggle: HS. In front of the sign for sertertius were the crossed leaning lines that meant ten. So whoever found the vulture would get ten sesterces.

That was a lot of money.

Threptus held up both hands – fingers spread – and examined them. Ten sesterces was more money than he had ever had in his life. It must be a very valuable vulture.

He was trying to think where a vulture might hide in Ostia, when the sound of children chanting caught his attention. It came from one of the nearby colonnades, the one near the office of the lamplighters' guild. This was the forum school.

A few steps took him to the colonnade. The boys and their teacher met in a shady walkway between some columns and a blank wall. The school was hidden from view by three rush screens propped up between the columns. In this way, the many distractions of the forum were blocked. Threptus padded forward on his bare feet and slowly brought his face close to one of the screens, close enough to peep through a crack between the reeds.

Ten boys, aged four to eleven, sat on stools with their backs to the smooth wall. They all had large wax tablets on their knees. Three older men stood nearby. Threptus knew they were paedagogi. Their job was to accompany a boy to school and make sure no harm came to him. Only prosperous families could afford such a slave. Most boys had to do without.

Threptus could hear the teacher's raspy voice, but he couldn't see him, so he moved to the screen at the end of the colonnade. Now he could see him: a short, bald man with a beard like a billy goat. His name was Lucius Furius Caper, but everyone called him by his nickname: Magister Flagellum. Master Whip. He was holding a whip at the moment. It was made of three flexible reeds bound together at one end to make a handle.

Magister Flagellum stopped the boys from chanting with an upraised hand.

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[1] *forum* - the main square and meeting place in a Roman town

[2] *Ostia* - the town in Italy where the story is set

"Porcius?" said Magister Flagellum in his raspy voice. "Will you continue?"

One of the older boys nodded, and began to mumble something.

"Louder!" commanded Magister Flagellum. "We can't hear you. When you are pleading a case you will need to enunciate."

But Porcius's problem was not that his voice was too soft. It was that he hadn't memorised the passage.

"What did I tell you about not doing the homework?" said the teacher, rattling the whip so that the three reeds rattled against each other.

"I'm sorry, sir," said Porcius. "But one of our slaves was ill and I had to help Father this morning."

"No excuses!" barked Magister Flagellum. "As the eldest of us, you must set an example."

1. **Reread lines 1-5.** Give one quotation to show what Threptus is afraid of. **(1 mark)**

2. **Reread lines 6-13.** Give three examples of things Threptus can see or smell in the forum. **(3 marks)**

   (1)

   (2)

   (3)

3. **Reread lines 30-47.** Choose three quotations which tell you something about the forum school, and explain what they show you about the school. **(6 marks)**

(1)

(2)

(3)

6. **Reread lines 43-48.**

a) What is "Magister Flagellum"'s real name? **(1 mark)**

b) Identify the simile in this paragraph. **(1 mark)**

a) What impression does it give us of the schoolmaster? (**1 mark)**

7. **Reread these sentences:**

"Louder!" commanded Magister Flagellum. "We can't hear you. When you are pleading a case you will need to enunciate."
What does Magister Flagellum mean by this? **(2 marks)**

1. What impressions does the author give you of Threptus's character in this passage? You should use quotations in your answer. **(5 marks)**

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Section B: Writing

40 minutes

Name	
Candidate number	

Instructions to Candidates

- Write your name and candidate number clearly on the front of this booklet.
- Choose **ONE** question and write your response in the space provided.
- You have **40 minutes** for this section.

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Mark out of 40: ____

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 Threptus.

OR

(2) Imagine you are Porcius. Write the scene in the school from your point of view.