St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Entrance Assessment 2018

Year 8 English:

Time allowed: 1 hour

Name: ……

Section A

Spend 30 minutes on this section.
Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow

Billy is in his final year of secondary school. He lives with his mother and his older brother, Jud. When Billy finds and trains a wild kestrel bird, Jud kills it out of spite. He has spent Jud's money buying food for it instead of gambling it on a horse race for him.

'Where is it, Jud? What you done wi' it?'
He turned away to the fireplace and replaced the poker flat in the hearth.
'It's in t'bin.'
Billy broke from between them, out through the kitchen to the dustbin at the side of the garage.He yanked the lid off and peered down. It was black inside so he reached down, fingers feeling lightly amongst the rubbish. Then he stopped feeling, and straightened up quickly, holding the bird in his hand.

He carried it into the kitchen and stood with his back to the living-room door to inspect it. Brown eyes open. Glass eyes. Curved beak ajar, tongue just visible in the slit. Head lolling downwards, swinging whichever way he turned it to brush away the dust and ashes from the feathers. Blowing the feathers clean, raising them with his breath, then smoothing them gently into place with his fingers.

He opened one wing like a fan, and on the underside of it, slowly drew a finger down the primaries, down to the body, as though the wing was a feathered instrument, its note toosoft for human hearing. He refolded the wing carefully across its back, then carried it through to the living-room.

Jud was standing with his back to the fire. His mother was standing at the table, pouring tea.
'Look what he's done, mam! Look at it!' He held the hawk out to her across the table, yellow legs upwards, jesses dangling, its claws hooks in the air.

'I know, it's a shame, love; but I don't want it.'
She sat down, bringing her face on a level with the hawk.
'Look at it, though! Look at what he's done!'…
She looked at it, curling her top lip, then turned to Jud.
'It wa' a rotten trick, Jud.'
'It wa' a rotten trick what he did, wasn't it?'
'I know, but you know how much he thought about that bird.'
'He didn't think half as much about it as I did about that ten quid.'
'He thought world on it though. Take it away from t'table then, Billy.'
'It wasn't worth ten quid was it?'

'I know, but it wa' a rotten trick all t'same. Take it away from my face then, Billy, I've seen it.'

Billy tried to get close to her with the bird, but she wouldn't let him.

'It's not fair on him, mam! It's not fair.'

'I know it's not, but it's done now so there's nowt we can do about it is there?'

'What about him though? What you goin' to do to him? I want you to do summat!'

'What can I do?'

'Hit him! Gi' him a good hiding! Gi' him some fist!

Jud snorted and turned round to look at himself in the mirror above the mantelpiece.

'I'd like to see her.'

'Talk sense, Billy, how can I hit him?'

She looked down at her magazine and raised her cup. Billy clenched his free hand and swung at it, fisting it clean off its handle across the room, shooting out a tongue of tea. Jud, watching the scene through the mirror, was too slow to interpret the reverse order of events, and before he had time to turn or step aside both cup and tea hit him Smack between the shoulder blades.

Billy was screaming and crying into Jud's ears. Jud was trying to reach over and grasp him by the hair, but every time his hand came back Billy swayed backwards or sideways out of its reach. Then, with a quick duck Jud flicked him over his head.

They both went for him. Billy stood up, and, holding the hawk by the feet, swung it at them. Its wings opened, and the open eyes and the rush of the feathers before their faces halted them long enough for Billy to hurdle the upturned settee and dart out between them, banging both doors behind him.

1. Read again the first part of the passage from **lines 4 to 7**.

   List **four** things that Billy does in this part of the passage. **(4 marks)**

2. Look in detail at this extract from **lines 8 to 16** of the passage:

> He carried it into the kitchen and stood with his back to the living-room door to inspect it. Brown eyes open. Glass eyes. Curved beak ajar, tongue just visible in the slit. Head lolling downwards, swinging whichever way he turned it to brush away the dust and ashes from the feathers. Blowing the feathers clean, raising them with his breath, then smoothing them gently into place with his fingers. He opened one wing like a fan, and on the underside of it, slowly drew a finger down the primaries, down to the body, as though the wing was a feathered instrument, its note too soft for human hearing. He refolded the wing carefully across its back, then carried it through to the living-room.

   How does the writer use language here to describe the dead bird and Billy's inspection of it?
   You could include the writer's choice of:

   - words and phrases
   - language features and techniques
   - sentence forms. **(6 marks)**

3. Focus this part of your answer on the second half of the passage from **line 17 to the end**.

   A student said, 'This part of the text where we learn about the poor relationship between Billy and his family explodes into inevitable violence.'

   To what extent do you agree?

   In your response, you could:

   - consider your own impressions of his poor relationship with his family
   - evaluate how the writer creates a sense of inevitable violence
   - support your response with references to the text. **(15 marks)**

Section B

Spend 30 minutes on this section

Describe an occasion when family or friends were important to you. Focus on the thoughts and feelings you had at the time.

Remember to plan your account and to use interesting language to engage your reader.

(25 marks)