
ENGLISH

0844/02

Paper 2 Fiction

For Examination from 2018

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This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

Text for Section A, an extract from ‘The Boy Who Talked With Animals’ by Roald Dahl

Standing on the balcony of my hotel room looking out at the dark expanse of sea, I suddenly became aware of a great commotion on the beach. Glancing over, I saw a crowd of people clustering around something at the water’s edge. There was a canoe-type fisherman’s boat on the sand nearby, and all I could think was that the fisherman had come in with lots of fish and that the crowd was looking at it.

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But it wasn’t a haul of fish at all. It was a turtle, an upside-down turtle. But what a turtle it was! I had not thought it possible for a turtle to be as enormous as this. If it had been the right way up, I think a tall man could have sat on its back without his feet touching the ground.

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The fisherman who had caught it had tipped the turtle onto its back to stop it from getting away. There was also a thick rope tied around the middle of its shell, and one proud fisherman stood holding the end of the rope tightly with both hands. Upside down it lay, this magnificent creature, with its four thick flippers waving frantically in the air; its long wrinkled neck stretching far out of its shell.

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The crowd was thrilled and delighted. They were discussing the capture and possible destruction of a creature who seemed, even when upside down, to be extraordinarily dignified. One thing was certain. He was senior to any of them. For probably one hundred and fifty years he had been swimming in these green waters. And now here he was; clearly alarmed by the noise and shouting around him, his old wrinkled neck straining out of its shell; the great head twisting this way and that.

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Suddenly, I heard high-pitched screams. ‘No-o-o-o!’ screamed the scream. ‘No! No! No!’ The crowd froze. Every single person present turned towards where the screams were coming from. Half walking, half running down the beach were three people, a man, a woman and a small boy who was pulling the man along. It was the boy who was screaming. ‘Don’t!’ he screamed. ‘Let him go! Please let him go! You’re horrible and cruel! All of you!’ He threw the words high and shrill at all those adults standing there on the beach. ‘Why don’t you put him back in the sea?’ he shouted. ‘He hasn’t done anything to you!’ He stood small and erect, facing the crowd, his eyes shining like two stars. He was magnificent! The father was embarrassed by his son. ‘He’s crazy about animals,’ he said, addressing the crowd. ‘Back home he’s got every kind of animal under the sun. He talks with them.’

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The boy suddenly let go of his father and ran towards the giant turtle. The huge upside-down head turned to face him. The boy dropped to his knees in the sand and flung his arms around the wrinkled old neck and whispered soft words that nobody else could hear. The turtle became absolutely still. Even his giant flippers stopped moving in the air.

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