

TEST DE RECRUTEMENT

POUR L'ENTREE EN SECTION INTERNATIONALE AUSTRALIENNE (LYCEE)

EPREUVE ECRITE

Sophie beamed. 'That's great news. Right, so, today. One of you needs to go across to Spadgers Creek to pick up some meat. You'd better do that, Matt. And Luke, you might take a swing down along the coast road, check things out. The station rang last night. Bruce Hansen says there's a fire burning somewhere along it – he thinks it might be on our country.'

Tilly was surprised. 'How? It couldn't be a lightning strike, not in May!'

'No,' Sophie agreed. 'Has to've been lit. Fishermen, illegals, tourists even. What matters is stopping it before it spreads. Bit hard to pinpoint from eighty-odd kilometres away. Give me a call on the radio once you know. Bruce said he'd send the grader across if we needed it. Oh'—she looked at Tilly—'and I almost forgot. We've got a guest coming sometime this week. A botanist from the uni in Darwin. He'll be staying for a bit, camping round the sanctuary and making the homestead his base, so he'll need the spare room, Till.'

'Okay, I'll get it ready for him. You don't know what day he's coming?'

'It was a message on the answering machine. Bit light on details. His name's'—she wrinkled her brow—'Colin . . . Carl? Something starting with a c. We'll find out when he gets here.'

'Okay.' Tilly piled cup and plate together and carried them to the sink. 'Your lunches will be ready in ten, boys. Luke, you didn't bring your thermos back.'

'Sorry. I'll get it. It'll be in the vehicle.' He folded his last slice of toast about the rest of the bacon and took a large bite as he left the room, calling, 'Back in a tick, oh slave driver.' When they had all dispersed, the men to the vehicle shed and Sophie to the office, Tilly cleared away and washed up, then moved on to the morning's tasks, the first of which was feeding the injured animals. Mickey's mince had thawed by then. She had a margarine container of diced carrot and apple for the possum, and another of cubed meat for Harry the brolga, whose injury was permanent in that he had somehow managed to snap off the front half off his top beak.

'Like he'd stuck it in a dog trap,' Luke had said angrily when he'd brought the young, malnourished bird back to the homestead soon after Tilly's arrival. 'I can't see how else it could've happened.'

Traps were illegal within Binboona's boundaries, of course, but there was little the rangers could do about enforcing the rule. They would have needed to find proof first, and then the culprit – something they all knew to be impossible. Lacking the ability to dig or even to drink properly, Harry would certainly have starved if it hadn't been for the ranger's intervention. He'd be a permanent guest, Tilly mused, tossing him his breakfast, one piece at a time. She'd tried letting him take it from her hand, but his enthusiastic lunges hit her fingers as often as they did the target, as if the damage done to him had also addled his judgement. The possum, being nocturnal, required no effort beyond removing last night's empty container from the cage and replacing it with the full one. It was almost ready for release, the injury to its front paw having healed and the fur almost grown back.

The garden was her next chore. Wearing a wide straw hat and gardening gloves, Tilly entered the netted enclosure, methodically watering her way along the rows, picking a lettuce for lunch and, when the hose had been coiled out of the way again, filling the crown of her hat with beans. It was a productive piece of ground and she enjoyed the work. In Cairns she had grown tropical shrubs and

African violets, but since taking over the plot from the men's hit-and-miss efforts, the vegetable garden had prospered.

'You've got a natural green thumb, Tilly,' Sophie had said admiringly.

'I like it.' She found a soothing rhythm in gardening, a thoughtless peace where for a little while she could forget everything but the task before her. With her hands in the earth, time seemed to flow over her without the constant reminders that accompanied the rest of her day. Only in the garden were the ghosts of the lost absent from her thoughts. Sitting back on her heels, Tilly smeared a muddy glove across one cheek to brush away a stray hair and looked about her with satisfaction. Weeding carrots was finicky work but she'd got most of them out, thinning the rows as she worked.

Kerry McGinnis, *Croc Country*, 2020

COMPREHENSION

- 1/ Who are the two main characters? What do we know about them? Use your own words, justifying from the text.
- 2/ Who are the other characters mentioned?
- 3/ Where is the story set? Pick out elements mentioned in the text to justify your answer.
- 4/ What are the different threats mentioned? Who or what causes them?
- 5/ Who are the different "guests"? What brings them to this place?
- 6/ In your own words, describe what and how Tilly feeds the different animals. Justify by quoting from the text.
- 7/ Why does Sophie say "You've got a natural green thumb"?
- 8/ What activity does Tilly find the most comforting? Explain in your words and justify by quoting the text.
- 9/ Describe the different emotions evoked in the text.

WRITING:

Treat both subjects. On the whole, you should write approximately 300-350 words. Please indicate the number of words you used at the end of each subject.

Up to ten points are available for the content of your answer, and up to ten points for the quality of your writing. Please do not write your name anywhere in your answers.

- 1/ The protagonist writes a letter to a local newspaper to explain how she takes care of wounded animals until they are back in shape. She argues why it is important to deter hunters.
- 2/ If you worked for a charity, what cause would you defend and why?