



Key Stage 3

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing
Year 8 Pack 2

Insert

The Source that follows is:

Source A: 20th Century prose-fiction

It is an extract from the novel *A Kestrel for a Knave* by Barry Hines, published in 1968.

It tells the story of Billy Casper, a troubled working class boy from a mining area who finds and trains a kestrel.

**Please turn the page over
to see the Source**

Source A

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.

- 1 '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.'
- 4 Billy broke from between them, out through the kitchen to the dustbin at the side of the garage.
5 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
7 bird in his hand.
- 8 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
10 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
15 human hearing. He refolded the wing carefully across its back, then carried it through to the
16 living-room.
- 17 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, jesses¹ dangling, its claws
20 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.
25 '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.'
30 '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?'
35 'What about him though? What you goin' to do to him? I want you to do summat to him.'
'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.'
40 '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.

- 45 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.

- 50 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.

jesses¹ - short straps fastened around the legs of a hawk

END OF SOURCE

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Source A: Barry Hines, *A Kestrel for a Knave*, Penguin Books

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