

# DAME ALICE OWEN'S SCHOOL

## ENGLISH ENTRANCE EXAMINATION 2002

Time allowed: One hour.

Surname: .....

First name(s): .....

Registration No: .....

**Read these instructions before you start:**

1. Read the passage very carefully before you answer any of the questions.
3. Write clearly and accurately.
4. Dictionaries are not allowed.
5. You may use a pen or pencil for this paper.

Mark	Percentage

N.B. The text is very long and it is assumed that there are cuts. The introduction is similar to the original. About half of the questions follow the text; they are very close to the original.

## PASSAGE

### from VET IN A SPIN by James Herriot

*In the following passage, Mr. Herriot, a veterinary surgeon, has been called urgently by a farmer, Will Hollin, to calm a sow called Gertrude which is giving birth; he has already given her one injection of Soothe-it. The farmer asks for reassurance that the injection takes effect within twenty minutes.*

I was about to make a comforting reply when Gertrude popped out another pink, squirming piglet. The farmer leaned over and gently nudged the little creature towards the udder as the sow lay on her side, but as soon as the nose made contact with the teat the big pig was up in a flash, all growls and yellow teeth.

He snatched the piglet away quickly and deposited it with the others in a tall cardboard box. 'Well, you see how it is, Mr. Herriot.'

'I certainly do. How many have you got in there now?'

'There's six. And they're grand pigs, too.'

I peered into the box at the little animals. They all had the classical long-bodied shape. 'Yes, they are. And she looks as though she has a lot more in her yet.'

The farmer nodded and we waited.

It seemed to take a long time for the twenty minutes to pass but finally I lifted a couple of piglets and clambered into the pen. I was about to put them to the sow when one of them squealed. Gertrude rushed across with a ferocious roar, mouth gaping, and I leaped to safety with an agility which surprised me.

'She don't look very sleepy,' Mr. Hollin said.

'No...no...she doesn't, does she? Maybe we'd better wait a bit longer.'

We gave her another ten minutes and tried again with the same result. I injected a further ten cc of the Soothe-it, then about an hour later a third one. By nine o'clock Gertrude had produced fifteen beautiful young pigs and had chased me and her family from the pen six times. She was, if anything, livelier and fiercer than when I started.

'Well, she's cleansed,' Mr. Hollin said gloomily. 'So it looks like she's finished.' He gazed, sad-faced, into the box. 'And now I've got fifteen pigs to rear without their mother's milk. I could lose all this lot.'

'Nay, nay.' The voice came from the open doorway. 'You won't lose 'em.'

I looked round. It was Grandad Hollin, his puckish features set in their customary smile. He marched to the pen and poked Gertrude's ribs with his stick.

She responded with a snarl and a malignant glare and the old man's smile grew broader.

'Ah'll soon fettle the awd beggar,' he said.

'Fettle her?' I shifted my feet uncomfortably. 'What do you mean?'

'Why, she just wants quietin', tha knaws.'

I took a long breath. 'Yes, Mr. Hollin, that's exactly what I've been trying to do.'

'Aye, but you're not doin' it the right way, young man.'

I looked at him narrowly. The know-all with his liberal advice in a difficult situation is a familiar figure most veterinary surgeons have to tolerate, but in Grandad Hollin's case I didn't feel the usual irritation. I liked him. He was a nice man, the head of a fine family. Will was the eldest of his four sons and he had several farmer grandsons in the district.

Anyway, I had failed miserably. I was in no position to be uppity.

'Well, I've given her the latest injection,' I mumbled.

He shook his head. 'She don't want injections, she wants beer.'

'Eh?'

'Beer, young man. A drop o' good ale.' He turned to his son. 'Hasta got a clean bucket, Will, lad?'

'Aye, there's a new-scalded one in t'milk house.'

'Right, ah'll slip down to the pub. Won't be long.' Grandad swung on his heel and strode briskly into the night. He must have been around eighty but from the back he looked like a twenty-five-year-old – upright, square-shouldered, jaunty.

Will Hollin and I didn't have much to say to each other. He was sunk in disappointment and I was awash with shame. It was a relief when Grandad returned bearing an enamel bucket brimming with brown liquid.

'By gaw,' he chuckled. 'You should've seen their faces down at t'Wagon and Horses. Reckon they've never heard of a two-gallon order afore.'

I gaped at him. 'You've got two gallons of beer?'

'That's right, young man, and she'll need it all.' He turned again to his son. 'She hasn't had a drink for a bit, has she, Will?'

'Naw, I was goin' to give her some water when she'd finished piggin' but I haven't done it yet.'

Grandad poised his bucket. 'She'll be nice and thirsty, then.' He leaned over the rail and sent a dark cascade frothing into the empty trough.

Gertrude ambled moodily across and sniffed at the strange fluid. After some hesitation she dipped her snout and tried a tentative swallow, and within seconds the building echoed with a busy slobbering.

'By heck, she likes it!' Will exclaimed.

'She should,' Grandad murmured wistfully. 'It's John Smith's best bitter.'

It took the sow a surprisingly short time to consume the two gallons and when she had finished she licked out every corner of the trough before turning away. She showed no inclination to return to her straw bed but began to saunter round the pen. Now and then she stopped at the trough to check that there was no more beer in it and from time to time she looked up at the three faces overhanging the timber walls.

On one of these occasions I caught her eye and saw with a sense of disbelief that the previously baleful little orb now registered only a gentle benevolence. In fact with a little effort I could have imagined she was smiling.

As the minutes passed her perambulations became increasingly erratic. There were times when she stumbled and almost fell and finally with an unmistakeable hiccup she flopped on the straw and rolled on to her side.

Grandad regarded her expressionlessly for a few moments, whistling tunelessly, then he reached out again and pushed his stick against the fleshy thigh, but the only response he received from the motionless animal was a soft grunt of pleasure.

Gertrude was stoned to the wide.

The old man gestured towards the cardboard box. 'Put the little 'uns in now.'

Will went into the pen with a wriggling armful, then another, and like all newborn creatures they didn't have to be told what to do. Fifteen ravenous little mouths fastened onto the teats and with mixed feelings I gazed at the sight which I had hoped to bring about with my modern veterinary skill, the long pink row filling their tiny stomachs with the life-giving fluid.

Well, I had fallen down on the job and an eighty-year-old farmer had wiped my eye with two gallons of strong ale. I didn't feel great.

Sheepishly I closed the box of Soothe-it phials and was beating an unobtrusive retreat to my car when Will Hollin called after me.

'Come in and have a cup o' coffee afore you go, Mr. Herriot.' His voice was friendly, with nothing to suggest that I had made no useful contribution all evening.

### Section A

1. How many piglets had been born by nine o'clock?
2. How many injections of Soothe-it does the sow have altogether?
3. Why does Mr. Herriot like and respect Grandad Hollin? What does this tell you about Grandad Hollin's character?
4. What is meant by "wiped my eye with two gallons of strong ale"?
5. How do you think Mr. Herriot felt when Grandad Hollin wiped his eye with two gallons of strong ale?
6. What do you learn about Mr. Herriot's character?
7. What do the following words mean as used in the passage?  
a. deposited      b. tentative      c. saunter      d. ravenous

### Section B

8. Imagine that you are one of the people in the Wagon and Horses when Grandad Hollin orders two gallons of ale, and have come home to tell the tale. What would you say to your family and how would your family react?