

SEVENOAKS SCHOOL



YEAR 9 (13+) ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

**April 2024
for entry in September 2025**

ENGLISH

Your Name: _____

Your School: _____

Time allowed: 1 hour

Equipment needed: Pen and lined paper.

Information for candidates:

1. Dictionaries are NOT allowed.
2. Write your name and school on this page.
3. Write your answers on the separate **paper provided**. Please put your name on all the sheets of paper you use.
4. There are 2 sections in this paper Section A and B. You should attempt both of them.
5. The paper will be marked out of 45. The marks for each question are indicated in square brackets [].

Please spend around 35 minutes on Section A and around 25 minutes on Section B.

SECTION A

Read the following extract and answer **ALL** the questions that follow.

The extract below is from 'The Golem's Eye' by Jonathan Stroud. Bartimaeus is a djinni (pronounced 'genie') who must unwillingly serve humans. Djinnis can take on many forms when summoned to earth and they are compelled to use their powers in service of their masters. In this book, humans who can summon djinnis are the rulers of their societies. In this extract Bartimaeus is serving the magicians of Prague as they prepare to be attacked by the British forces. The two footnotes are part of the text. When you see the bolded **(1)** and **(2)**, please read the relevant footnote.

Prologue: Prague, 1868

Bartimaeus

At dusk, the enemy lit their campfires one by one, in greater profusion than on any night before. The lights sparkled like fiery jewels out in the greyness of the plains, so numerous it seemed an enchanted city had sprung up from the earth. By contrast, within our walls the houses had their shutters closed, their lights blacked out. A strange reversal had taken place—Prague itself was dark and dead, while the countryside around it flared with life.

Soon afterward, the wind began to drop. It had been blowing strongly from the west for hours, carrying word of the invaders' movements—the rattling of the siege engines, the calling of the troops and animals, the sighing of the captive spirits, the odours of the incantations. Now, with unnatural speed, it died away and the air was steeped in silence.

*I was floating high above the Strahov Monastery, just inside the magnificent city walls I'd built three hundred years before. My leathery wings moved in strong, slow beats; my eyes scanned the seven planes to the horizon.**(1)** It did not make for happy viewing. The mass of the British army was cloaked behind Concealments, but its ripples of power already lapped at the base of Castle Hill. The auras of a vast contingent of spirits were dimly visible in the gloom; with every minute further brief trembles on the planes signalled the arrival of new battalions. Groups of human soldiers moved purposefully over the dark ground. In their midst stood a cluster of great white tents, domed like huge eggs, about which Shields and other spells hung cobweb-thick.**(2)***

I raised my gaze to the darkened sky. It was an angry black mess of clouds, smeared with streaks of yellow to the west. At a high altitude and scarcely visible in the dying light, I spied six faint dots circling well out of Detonation range. They progressed steadily clockwise, mapping out the walls a final time, checking the strength of our defences.

Speaking of which... I had to do the same. At Strahov Gate, farthest flung and most vulnerable outpost of the walls, the tower had been raised and strengthened. The ancient doors were sealed with triple hexes and a wealth of trigger mechanisms, and the lowering battlements at the crest of the tower bristled with watchful sentries.

That at least was the idea. To the tower I flew, hawk-headed, leather-winged, hidden behind my shroud of wisps. I alighted barefoot, without a sound, on a prominent crest of stone. I waited for the swift, sharp challenge, the vigorous display of instant readiness.

Nothing happened. I dropped my Concealment and waited for some moderate, belated evidence of alertness. I coughed loudly.

A glimmering Shield protected part of the battlements, and behind this crouched five sentries. Times were hard in Prague; the magicians were strapped for slaves and quality control was not what it should have been. The chosen semblances of my sentries proved as much. Instead of fearsome, warlike guises, I was presented with two shifty vampire bats, a weasel, a pop-eyed lizard, and a small and rather mournful frog.

"Will you stop pushing?"

"Ow! Mind those claws, you idiot!"

"Just shove over. I tell you, my backside's in plain view now. They might spot it."

"That could win us the battle on its own."

It was a painful display of laxity and incompetence, in short, and I refrain from recording it in full. The hawk-headed warrior folded its wings, stepped forward, and roused the sentries' attention by banging their heads together smartly.

Continued.....

[1] *Higher beings (such as me) can use inner eyes to observe all seven planes at once, but more lowly creatures have to make do with seeing fewer. Humans are remarkably lowly. Magicians use contact lenses to see planes two to three, but most people only see the first plane, and this makes them ignorant about all kinds of magical activity. For example, there's probably something invisible with lots of tentacles hovering behind your back right NOW.*

[2] *Doubtless, this was where the British magicians were skulking, at a safe distance from the action. My Czech masters were just the same. In war, magicians always like to reserve the most dangerous jobs for themselves, such as fearlessly guarding large quantities of food and drink a few miles behind the lines.*

1. How is tension created in the first two paragraphs? Pick out specific lines and explain how they work. [5 marks]
2. How does the writer make the British army seem powerful and threatening in paragraphs three and four? [5 marks]
3. How would you describe Bartimaeus' attitude to humans? [5 marks]
4. Where is this extract funny? Explain why or how it is funny. [5 marks]
5. How would you describe Bartimaeus' character? [5 marks]

SECTION B

Please continue the story. Try to capture the voice of Bartimaeus as best you can. Remember to be descriptive at times. Feel free to make up facts about djinnis and humans for Bartimaeus to share with us. Use a footnote or two. Don't worry about coming to any conclusion. Just enjoy writing as Bartimaeus.

[20 marks]