Passage A

A visit to a gorilla sanctuary

In this passage, the writer recounts his visit, with his friend Lary, to a gorilla sanctuary in the Republic of Congo, which is run by Yvette Leroy.

A young man sprawled in a wicker chair. A small chimpanzee, wearing a nappy, clung to his chest.

‘Hi,’ he said, somnolent with motherhood. ‘Yvette is expecting you. I’m Mark and this is Max. He’s a young pygmy chimp.’

Max, hearing his name, detached a long black right arm from the hugging position and, with the delicate fingers of a dark-brown hand, tousled Mark’s hair.

‘This is the first pygmy chimp I’ve ever seen,’ said Mark, easing Max’s thumb out of his ear. ‘They’re very rare. They live only in Zaire, south of the river. He was brought in by the Forest Service. Someone was trying to sell him as a pet in the market. It’s the babies we get – almost always gorillas. The hunter in the forests kills the mother and takes the baby back to his village for the children to play with. Very occasionally one is rescued and is sent to us, but it’s hopeless. They arrive with machete wounds, dehydrated with dysentery, their stomachs full of earth they’ve scraped up in the village because they’re starving, parasites of all kinds. And gorillas are sensitive, full of emotion – they’ve watched their mothers die in front of them, they’re traumatised, and if they don’t die of disease, they die of grief. They just lose the will to live, they refuse to eat. Twenty-seven gorillas have arrived in the last two years and only four are still alive.’

‘And pygmy chimps?’ asked Lary. ‘Do they die of grief?’

‘Not yet,’ said Mark, putting one arm round Max and stroking his back with the other. ‘I’m treating him for parasites, but otherwise he’s in good shape. He seems much more intelligent even than a common chimpanzee, an ordinary chimp of his age, much more sociable. Very little’s known about pygmy chimps.’

‘Are you a zoologist?’ asked Lary.

‘No, but I’d like to be. I’m here to set up a new gorilla orphanage for a friend in the grounds of Brazzaville zoo. We’ll have a proper vet, everything. We’ll establish a breeding colony and then release them somewhere safe.’

Mark stood up. ‘We must find Yvette. This is the one day of the week when she has enough staff to let Magne out of his cage. He’s her three-and-a-half-year-old gorilla. He’s lively.’ He paused, extracting Max’s right foot from his shirt pocket. ‘See – pygmy chimps have a web between their second and third toes, they weigh twenty per cent less than common chimps, their hair is blacker, their faces are rounder, their ears are smaller and they don’t go bald.’

Mark opened a steel-grilled door and we entered a room full of couches and cushions; children’s toys were strewn across the floor. A Bantu girl in a red dress lay on a bed in a corner, watching a television on the shelf opposite her; a very small, very still gorilla snuggled against her stomach.

‘This is Albertine Ndokila,’ said Mark, introducing us. ‘She looks after one very sad, sick gorilla, eighteen months old’.
The inner door swung open and Madame Yvette Leroy swept into the room with two baby gorillas hanging from her. ‘Quick!’ she said. ‘Bring some chairs! The guards are about to release Magne in the garden. He’s lively! Sit quietly, stay in your chairs and – whatever you do – don’t look into his eyes. Gorillas never stare at each other. It’s a threat.’

There was the sound of a bolt being drawn back, the clang of a cage door, a short, sharp, barking scream, a rumbling noise on the concrete, and round the corner came Magne on all fours, in a hunched, scooting gallop. Big and grey, Magne slapped Yvette on the back, detached the two screaming baby gorillas, roughed them up a bit, banged his chest, tore at the grass and with a sideways glance moved towards the newcomers, us.

‘He’s jealous,’ said Yvette, still out of breath from her blow on the back. ‘He’s jealous of my new babies.’

At that moment Magne’s knuckles arrived on my thighs, followed by his big black man-like feet, as his hands moved up to grip my shoulders.

‘Good boy,’ I said, made stupid by the weight, the solidity of him, the rank musk of his bristly chest-hair. I put both hands up and pushed with all my strength against the surge of muscle; without effort he pressed closer, brought his shiny black face close up to mine and opened his mouth. I was conscious of two upper canines, as big as marlin spikes, a pink cavern and tongue, grinders, spit, a smell as sweet as cow’s breath; and then he bit my ears, carefully, first one side and then the other, growling maniacally the while, a growl which varied in pitch and tempo, as though he were engaged in a very fast, aggrieved conversation with himself.

Satisfied that he had improved my manners and taught me not to stare, Magne paused and looked about his kingdom.

Imagine you are the writer's friend, Lary. Write a letter to a member of your family after your visit to the gorilla sanctuary.

In your letter you should:

- make the chimps and gorillas sound interesting and lovable;
- give your impressions of Mark and of Madame Yvette;
- persuade your family to support the work of the sanctuary.

Base your answer on what you have read in Passage A.

You should write between 1½ and 2 sides, allowing for the size of your handwriting.

Up to fifteen marks will be available for the content of your answer, and up to five marks for the quality of your writing.

[Total: 20]

Re-read the descriptions of:

(a) the sounds as Magne approaches the room and his behaviour when he enters, in lines 39 to 43;

(b) the writer’s impressions of Magne in lines 48 to 54.

Select words and phrases from these descriptions, and explain how the writer has created effects by using this language.

[Total: 10]
Part 2

Question 3 is based on both Passage A and Passage B.
Read Passage B carefully, and re-read Passage A.

Passage B

Deforestation and the Orang-utan

Borneo is the world’s third largest island and home to one of the oldest, most precious tropical rainforests. The World Wildlife Fund is taking action now to protect a large area, the Heart of Borneo, from being destroyed. We need your help to make this happen.

Over the past ten years, more than 360 new species of plants and animals have been identified – and we know there are many more still waiting to be discovered.

Unless we step in, these species could be lost forever. Deforestation is sweeping across this incredible island and threatening its jewel, the Heart of Borneo. Commercial logging – much of it illegal – and clearance for agriculture and palm oil plantations cause most of the damage. Fires, deliberately started to prepare land for the plantations, are also a serious and recurrent hazard.

Why is it so important to protect the Heart of Borneo? Thousands of the species are unique to the island, making their extinction a real possibility. The forests are also home to a rich diversity of plant species that could provide future treatments and cures for diseases. Lastly, the region is home to 500,000 people, plus a dwindling population of the ‘man of the forest’, otherwise known as the orang-utan.

The only great apes found outside Africa, orang-utans once roamed freely around the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. They spend most of their time in the treetops, feeding and sleeping. If the trees are removed, the orang-utans lose both their home and their food source.

Female orang-utans usually give birth to one baby, before taking care of it for up to six years. Orang-utans have the slowest reproductive cycle of all great apes, an average of eight years between births. Sadly their slow reproduction cannot keep the population from declining because of the impact of deforestation and poaching.

Palm oil production is very profitable. It is a main ingredient in all kinds of everyday products such as ice cream. The climate and landscape of Borneo make the island a magnet for plantation developers, but to get to the soil they have to clear the trees. Being exotic hardwoods, the trees themselves are also valuable.

In 2001, the World Bank predicted that all unprotected Sumatran rainforest would disappear by 2005; this happened.

In 2005, the World Wildlife Fund predicted an uncertain future for the remaining rainforest in Borneo. Without protection, by 2020 the rainforest could become too fragmented to ensure the long term survival of the orang-utans.

Scientists believe that up to half of the orang-utan population has been lost over the past ten years. If their annual death rate increases by just two per cent, orang-utans face extinction in the next thirty years.

Despite legal protection, there’s a thriving underground market for orang-utans as pets. Up to three a day are taken for this reason alone. Orang-utans are also killed for their meat.
By building roads into the rainforest, the illegal loggers make it easier for poachers to hunt and kill one thousand orang-utans each year. In nearly every case the poacher has to kill the mother to capture the baby. This means that for every baby kept as a pet, at least one adult is lost.

Clearly the first problem to tackle is deforestation. If we halt the logging and tree clearing, it will not only protect the habitat but help save the orang-utan.

3 Summarise:

(a) the dangers that exist for orang-utans, according to Passage B;

(b) the care and understanding demonstrated by Yvette Leroy and her staff for the pygmy chimp and the gorillas in Passage A.

Use your own words as far as possible.

You should write about 1 side in total, allowing for the size of your handwriting.

Up to fifteen marks will be available for the content of your answer, and up to five marks for the quality of your writing.

[Total: 20]