

I. Read an extract from a book written by a Yeoman Warder.

Darkness now completely covered the Tower. I stopped in the centre of Tower Green and called out in raven-ish. Merlina didn't reply. I looked for Merlina in her favourite places to see if she was playing hide-and-seek as she likes to do when she wants to hold me up (задержать). First I searched the holly tree – no sign of her. Then I searched both Christmas trees on Tower Green. I'd seen her climb up the centre of them a number of times during December and pop the light bulbs with her beak. Again nothing. I decided to climb the steps of the Bloody Tower to see if she was on top of Raleigh's Walk. (She likes to watch the boats going up and down the Thames.) But Merlina wasn't up the wall.

Time was getting on. At this rate, I was going to miss my birthday meal. Our table was booked for 21:00. I had less than an hour to find the raven, get ready for the night out, and get to the restaurant. Not absolutely impossible but my window of opportunity was closing fast.

I walked towards Tower Green again. Suddenly I heard a sound, then again. It was Merlina. "Fantastic!" I thought. "I have found her." It was a Christmas miracle (чудо). But the miracle was short-lived when I realised where she was. She had got into an 8-inch gap under the platform that leads into the lower part of the Wakefield Tower. I had no idea how I was going to get her out. The platform sits above a big cesspit (выгребной ямой) that collects rainwater and tourist rubbish. And now it stood between me and my birthday celebrations. I had to lie down on the wet grass but at this stage Communicative area: testing your reading, listening, and speaking skills I didn't care. My legs hurt as I had walked what seemed miles looking for Merlina. I was wet to the skin... What more could possibly go wrong?

The raven was sitting right at the back of a tiny crack and I couldn't get her. I had to go into the pit, something I certainly didn't want to do as I had no desire to drop into cold dirty water. Then I saw a set of narrow steps. I lowered myself onto the first step to see if it could take my weight. No problem. Second step. Good. Third step. Crack! The next thing I remember was sinking down into the water.

When I got out of the freezing water I couldn't believe my luck – Merlina had left her hiding place and was directly above me. I've seen it many times in my life: when things just can't get any worse, for some reason you just start laughing. And this was one of those moments.

My wife and I never got out for my birthday dinner. Fortunately, she saw the funny side of the story. We stayed in that night for an unromantic meal of beans on toast for two. That's another thing you need as a Ravenmaster: a sense of humour.

II. Which title fits better?

- 1 Did Merlina Fly Away to Paris?
- 2 The Raven Rescue Mission: A Birthday Miracle
- 3 How Tower Green Became a Haven for Lost Ravens

III. Pick the right answer!

What is the narrator's main concern as the text begins?

- A Finding a place to hide
- B Missing a birthday meal
- C Looking for a raven
- D Climbing the Bloody Tower

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Why did the narrator have to lie down on the wet grass?

- A To take a nap
- B To get closer to Merlina
- C To avoid the rain
- D To find a hidden treasure

How did the narrator finally manage to get Merlina out of her hiding place?

- A By climbing a tree
- B By dropping into water
- C By calling her name
- D By using a ladder

What happened to the narrator's birthday dinner?

- A They went out to a fancy restaurant
- B They celebrated with friends
- C They had an unromantic meal at home
- D They forgot about the dinner

What quality does the narrator mention as important for a Ravenmaster?

- A A fear of heights
- B A sense of humor
- C A dislike of birds
- D A love for rainy weather

IV. True / False

- 1 The narrator found Merlina in the holly tree.
- 2 Merlina was on top of Raleigh's Walk.
- 3 The narrator missed their birthday meal because they couldn't find Merlina.
- 4 Merlina was stuck in a gap under the platform that leads into the lower part of the Wakefield Tower.
- 5 The narrator had to go into a cesspit to rescue Merlina.
- 6 The narrator's wife was upset about missing the birthday dinner.

V. Answer the questions?

1. Where did the author search for Merlina first?

2. Why did the author climb the steps of the Bloody Tower?

3. Where was Merlina hiding when the author found her?

4. How did the author finally manage to get Merlina out of her hiding place?

5. What happened to the author's plans for their birthday dinner?