

Don't be dead, blackbird!

Have you ever done something that you wished you hadn't? Something that you wish you could take back? Yeah... me too! Well, I have a confession, and this is the first time I've ever told anyone. I want to tell you so it's off my chest, probably because I know we'll never meet.

After I'd done it, he lay there in garden. He just lay there. I went back many times to see if he'd moved or flown away, he hadn't. I knew he wouldn't, but I kept going back anyway... hoping.

I was a teenager with a gun, it was just an air rifle, but still enough to kill something. I loved animals, everyone knew that, so I used to practise on paper targets that had different coloured circles on them.

I was getting quite good at shooting so my dad encouraged me to join a gun club - a safe environment for my hobby. The only problem was that my gun had iron sights so trying to be pin-point accurate was difficult. Eventually, after much nagging and the promise of saving my pocket money to help with the cost, my dad bought me a telescopic sight. Now, I wish he hadn't.

On the evening that I did it I was in my parent's bedroom. It was a loft conversion, so I was quite high up. The garden next door was slightly higher than ours but had lots of shrubs in the way. The garden after that, however, was a good metre higher than next door's and was much longer and more open. I knew I shouldn't have been shooting across gardens (that was dangerous) but something drew me to that garden that day. He just stood there, still, looking at me. Did he really know that I was there? Could he see me? Was he daring me to take the shot to see if I really was that good?

I loaded my air rifle then rested it on the window sill, perching myself on the edge of the bed. I looked down my new telescopic lens and lined the cross up on his chest. He just stood there, still, looking at me. Did he really know that I was there? Could he see me? Was he daring me to take the shot to see if I really was that good? I breathed out as I squeezed the trigger. In an instant, he was dead. I knew he was dead even though I didn't want him to be. I wanted to go back in time and stop myself, but I couldn't. I wanted that lead pellet to suck itself back up the barrel of the rifle, but it couldn't.

For many years after, he haunted my dreams. His bright yellow beak smiling at me. Even in death he taunted me, almost like he knew I'd never forgive myself. Almost like he knew he'd have power over me. A power much deadlier than the rifle that took his life, he had the power of being on my conscience for all these years.

I'm so sorry, blackbird. How I wish that you weren't dead.

Don't be dead, blackbird! Pg 1

Circle the correct answer.

The boy in the story had a...

Concussion

Conviction

Confession

Concession

Why do you think that the author had never told anyone before? (1)

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Tick true or false

The boy was really good at shooting.

He loved shooting animals as well as targets

The boy's father owned a gun club.

The boy's gun had iron sights originally.

The blackbird was pretending to be dead.

T	F

(3)

Why do you think that shooting across gardens is dangerous? (1)

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Don't be dead, blackbird!

Why do you think that the author chooses to repeat these lines? (1)

*'He just stood there, still, looking at me. Did he really know that I was there?*

*Could he see me? Was he daring me to take the shot to see if I really was that good? '*

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Number these statements to put them in the correct order.

To boy breathed out and pulled the trigger.

The boy went to his parent's bedroom to try out his new sights.

The black bird seemed to be staring at the boy.

The boy went back to see if the bird had flown away.

The boy lined the sights up with the blackbird's chest.

The bird visited the bot in his dreams.

1

(1)

*'Why do you think that the author chooses to use the word 'perching' when describing how he sat on the edge of the bed? (1)*

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Don't be dead, blackbird!

Draw lines to match the statements.

Only the male blackbird

to pull worms out of their burrows.

They have strong bills

is actually black

Female blackbirds

raise their tails once they've landed.

Blackbirds are known to

are often mistaken for Thrushes.

In the fact file about blackbirds, some words are in bold type.

Explain why.

(1)

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Where would you find these type of words in a non-fiction book? (1)

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What does the word 'broods' mean?

(1)

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Don't be dead, blackbird!

List three features of non-fiction writing that can be seen in the fact file about blackbirds. (1)

*E.g, Heading*

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Give two reasons why a male blackbird '*bobs it's tail*'. (2)

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What are the two main causes of death for blackbirds? (2)

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Blackbirds are a very successful species of bird in this country (3)  
Explain your choice using evidence from the text.

True/False

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