

The Narrow Road to the Deep North by Richard Flannigan.

In this extract, the narrator, describes Dorrigo's first day at Launceston High school.

Dorrigo was the only one of his family to pass the Ability Test at the end of his schooling at the age of twelve and so receive a scholarship to attend Launceston High School. He was old for his year. On his first day, at lunchtime, he ended up at what was called the top yard, a flat area of dead grass and dust, bark and leaves, with several large gum trees at one end. He
5 watched the big boys of third and fourth form, some with sideburns, boys already with men's muscles, line up in two rough rows, jostling, shoving, moving like some tribal dance. Then began the magic of kick to kick. One boy would boot the football from his row across the yard to the other row. And all the boys in that row would run together at the ball and—if it were coming in high—leap into the air, seeking to catch it. And as violent as the fight for the
10 mark was, whoever succeeded was suddenly sacrosanct. And to him, the spoil—the reward of kicking the ball back to the other row, where the process was repeated.

So it went, all lunch hour. Inevitably, the senior boys dominated, taking the most marks, getting the most kicks. Some younger boys got a few marks and kicks, many one or none.

15 Dorrigo watched all that first lunchtime. Another first-form boy told him that you had to be at least in second form before you had a chance in kick to kick—the big boys were too strong and too fast; they would think nothing of putting an elbow into a head, a fist into a face, a knee in the back to rid themselves of an opponent. Dorrigo noticed some smaller boys
20 hanging around behind the pack, a few paces back, ready to scavenge the occasional kick that went too high, lofting over the scrum.

On the second day, he joined their number. And on the third day, he found himself up close to the back of the pack when, over their shoulders, he saw a wobbly drop punt lofting high
25 towards them. For a moment it sat in the sun, and he understood that the ball was his to pluck. He could smell the pissants in the eucalypts, feel the ropy shadows of their branches fall away as he began running forward into the pack. Time slowed, he found all the space he needed in the crowding spot into which the biggest, strongest boys were now rushing. He understood the ball dangling from the sun was his and all he had to do was rise. His eyes
30 were only for the ball, but he sensed he would not make it running at the speed he was, and so he leapt, his feet finding the back of one boy, his knees the shoulders of another and so he climbed into the full dazzle of the sun, above all the other boys. At the apex of their struggle, his arms stretched out high above him, he felt the ball arrive in his hands, and he knew he could now begin to fall out of the sun.

35 Cradling the football with tight hands, he landed on his back so hard it shot most of the breath out of him. Grabbing barking breaths, he got to his feet and stood there in the light, holding the oval ball, readying himself to now join a larger world.

As he staggered back, the melee cleared a respectful space around him.

40 Who the hell are you? asked one big boy.

Dorrigo Evans.

SECTION A: COMPONENT 1

The Narrow Road to the Deep North by Richard Flannigan.

In this extract, the narrator, describes Dorrigo's first day at Launceston High school.

45 That was a blinder, Dorrigo. Your kick.

The smell of eucalypt bark, the bold, blue light of the Tasmanian midday, so sharp he had to squint hard to stop it slicing his eyes, the heat of the sun on his taut skin, the hard, short shadows of the others, the sense of standing on a threshold, of joyfully entering a new universe while your old still remained knowable and holdable and not yet lost—all these things he was aware of, as he was of the hot dust, the sweat of the other boys, the laughter, the strange pure joy of being with others.

SECTION A: 40 marks

55

Read lines 1-5

A1: List five things we learn about the character Dorrigo [5]

Read lines 10-19

60 A2: How does the writer show the lively nature of the football game? [5]

You must refer to the text to support your answer.

Read lines 16-37

A3 How does the writer try to make these lines dramatic and exciting? [10]

65 *You should write about:*

- What is dramatic and exciting in these lines
- The writer's use of language to show drama and excitement
- Effects on the reader

70 **Read lines 43-57**

A4: What impressions do you get of the boys in this extract and how does the writer present them?

You must refer to the text to support your answer. [10]