

Paper 1 mini mock: The Splendid Cannibals

Source A: The opening of a short story titled 'The Splendid Cannibals' by Ransom Riggs written in 2016.

- 1 The peculiars in the village of Swampmuck lived very modestly. They were farmers, and though they didn't own fancy things and lived in flimsy houses made of reeds, they were healthy and joyful and wanted for little. Food grew bountifully in their gardens, clean water ran in the streams, and even their humble homes seemed like luxuries because the weather in Swampmuck was so fair, and the
- 5 villagers were so devoted to their work that many, after a long day of mucking, would simply lie down and sleep in their swamps.
- Harvest was their favourite time of year. Working round the clock, they gathered the best weeds that had grown in the swamp that season, bundled them onto donkey carts, and drove their bounty to the market town of Chipping Whippet, a five days' ride, to sell what they could. It was difficult work. The
- 10 swampweed was rough and tore their hands. The donkeys were ill-tempered and liked to bite. The road to market was pitted with holes and plagued by thieves. There were often grievous accidents, such as when Farmer Pullman, in a fit of overzealous harvesting, accidentally scythed off his neighbor's leg. The neighbor, Farmer Hayworth, was understandably upset, but the villagers were such agreeable people that all was soon forgiven.
- 15 That very year, just after the festival had ended and the villagers were about to return to their toil in the swamps, three visitors arrived. Swampmuck rarely had visitors of any kind, as it was not the sort of place people wanted to visit, and it had certainly never had visitors like these: two men and a lady dressed head to toe in lush brocaded silk, riding on the backs of three fine Arabian horses. But though the visitors were obviously rich, they looked emaciated and swayed weakly in their bejeweled saddles.
- 20 The villagers gathered around them curiously, marveling at their beautiful clothes and horses. "We're on a journey to the coast of Meek," explained one of the visitors, a man who seemed to be the only one strong enough to speak. "We were accosted by bandits some weeks ago, and, though we were able to outrun them, we got badly lost. We've been turning circles ever since."
- "You're nowhere near the Roman Road," said Farmer Sally. "Or the coast of Meek,"
- 25 "We'll never make it," the man said darkly. At that, the silk-robed lady slumped in her saddle and fell to the ground. The villagers, moved to compassion despite their concerns about disease, brought the fallen lady and her companions into the nearest house.
- "Give them space!" said Farmer Pullman. "They're exhausted; they need rest!"
- "No, they need a doctor!" said Farmer Sally.
- 30 "We aren't sick," the man said. "We're hungry. Our supplies ran out over a week ago, and we haven't had a bite to eat since then." Farmer Sally wondered why such wealthy people hadn't simply bought food from fellow travellers on the road, but she was too polite to ask. Instead, she ordered some village boys to run and fetch bowls— but when it was laid before the visitors, they turned the food away. "I don't mean to be rude," said the man, "but we can't eat this."
- 35 "I know it's a humble spread," said Farmer Sally, "but it's all we have."
- "It isn't that," the man said. "Grains, vegetables, animal meat — our bodies simply can't process them. And if we force ourselves to eat, it will only make us weaker."
- The villagers were confused. "If you can't eat grains, vegetables, or animals," asked Farmer Pullman, "then what can you eat?"
- "People," the man replied.

Questions

Q1 – 4 marks – 5 minutes

Use lines 1-6.

☐ 0 ☐ 1 What jobs did the villagers have?

They were farmers.

☐

They were unemployed.

☐

They were peculiar.

☐

[1 mark]

0 1 . 2 What were their houses made from?

Wood.

☐

Bricks.

☐

Reeds.

☐

[1 mark]

0 1 . 3 What did the villagers want?

Nothing.

☐

Food.

☐

Water.

☐

[1 mark]

0 1 . 4 How did they entertain themselves after work?

They went to sleep.

☐

They partied.

☐

They ate dinner.

☐

[1 mark]

Q2– 8 marks – 10 minutes

Using lines 7-14.

How does the writer use language to describe the villager's work?

Q3– 8 marks – 10 minutes

Use the whole source.

How does the writer structure the text to interest to create tension?

Q4 – 20 marks – 25 minutes

Use lines 16-40.

The arrival of the visitors seems exciting and unusual for the villagers, but the writer makes us think that something strange is going to happen.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

In your response, you could:

- write your own impressions about the characters
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with references to the text.