

Paper 1 mini mock: The Terrible Old Man

Source A: The opening of a short story called 'The Terrible Old Man' by H.P.Lovecraft (1920).

- 1 It was the design of Angelo Ricci and Joe Czanek and Manuel Silva to call on the Terrible Old Man. This old man dwells all alone in a very ancient house on Water Street near the sea, and is reputed to be both exceedingly rich and exceedingly feeble; which forms a situation very attractive to men of the profession of Mr. Ricci, Czanek, and Silva, for that profession was nothing less dignified than robbery.
- 5 The inhabitants of Kingsport say and think many things about the Terrible Old Man. He is, in truth, a very strange person, believed to have been a captain of East India clipper ships in his day; so old that no one can remember when he was young, and so taciturn that few know his real name. Among the gnarled trees in the front yard of his aged and neglected place he maintains a strange collection of large stones, oddly grouped and painted so that they resemble the idols in some obscure Eastern
- 10 temple. This collection frightens away most of the small boys who love to taunt the Terrible Old Man about his long white hair and beard, or to break the small-paned windows of his dwelling with wicked missiles; but there are other things which frighten the older and more curious folk who sometimes steal up to the house to peer in through the dusty panes. These folk say that on a table in a bare room on the ground floor are many peculiar bottles, in each a small piece of lead suspended pendulum-wise
- 15 from a string. And they say that the Terrible Old Man talks to these bottles, addressing them by such names as Jack, Scar-Face, Long Tom, Spanish Joe, Peters, and Mate Ellis.
- Those who have watched the tall, lean, Terrible Old Man in these peculiar conversations, do not watch him again. But Angelo Ricci and Joe Czanek and Manuel Silva saw in the Terrible Old Man merely a tottering, almost helpless grey-beard, who could not walk without the aid of his knotted cane,
- 20 and whose thin, weak hands shook pitifully. They were really quite sorry in their way for the lonely, unpopular old fellow, whom everybody shunned, and at whom all the dogs barked singularly. But business is business, and to a robber whose soul is in his profession, there is a lure and a challenge about a very old and very feeble man who has no account at the bank, and who pays for his few necessities at the village store with Spanish gold and silver minted two centuries ago.
- 25 Mr Ricci, Czanek, and Silva selected the night of April 11th for their call. Mr. Ricci and Mr. Silva were to interview the poor old gentleman, whilst Mr. Czanek waited for them and their presumable metallic burden with a covered motor-car in Ship Street, by the gate in the tall rear wall of their hosts grounds.
- As prearranged, the three adventurers started out separately in order to prevent any evil-minded
- 30 suspicions afterward. Mr Ricci and Mr Silva met in Water Street by the old man's front gate, and although they did not like the way the moon shone down upon the painted stones through the budding branches of the gnarled trees, they had more important things to think about than mere idle superstition. They feared it might be unpleasant work making the Terrible Old Man loquacious¹ concerning his hoarded gold and silver, for aged sea-captains are notably stubborn. Still, he was very
- 35 old and very feeble, and there were two visitors. Mr Ricci and Mr Silva were experienced in the art of making unwilling persons voluble², and the screams of a weak and exceptionally venerable³ man can be easily muffled. So they moved up to the one lighted window and heard the Terrible Old Man talking childishly to his bottles with pendulums. Then they donned masks and knocked politely at the weather-
- 39 stained oaken door.
- 1 – loquacious: talkative, chatty. 2 – venerable: respected, honoured

Questions

Q1 – 4 marks – 5 minutes

Use lines 1-4.

☐ 0 ☐ 1 Who did Manuel Silva visit?

Angelo Ricci.

☐

Joe Czanek.

☐

The Terrible old man.

☐

[1 mark]

01 . 3 How is the old man described?

Poor.

☐

Strong.

☐

Weak.

☐

[1 mark]

01 . 4 Why did the men visit?

Out of concern.

☐

To rob the old man.

☐

To help the old man.

☐

[1 mark]

01 . 2 Who does the old man live with?

Alone.

☐

With his family.

☐

With his brother.

☐

[1 mark]

Q2– 8 marks – 10 minutes

Using lines 5-16.

How does the writer use language to the 'Terrible Old Man' and his house?

Q3– 8 marks – 10 minutes

Use the whole source.

How does the writer structure the text to create a sense of character?

Q4 – 20 marks – 25 minutes

Use lines 17-39.

Although the robbers seem like villains and the old man is the victim, it feels like something unexpected 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.