Extract from Evil Star

There was something wrong about the house in Eastfield Terrace. Something unpleasant. All the houses in the street were more or less identical: redbrick, Victorian, with two bedrooms on the first floor and a bay window on either the left or the right of the front door.

Some had satellite dishes. Some had window boxes filled with brightly coloured flowers. But looking down from the top of the hill at the terrace curving round St Patrick’s church on its way to the Esso garage and All-Nite store, one house stood out immediately. Number twenty-seven no longer belonged there. It was as if it had caught some sort of disease and needed to be taken away.

The front garden was full of junk, and as usual the wheelie bin beside the gate was overflowing, surrounded by black garbage bags that the owners had been unable to stuff inside. This wasn’t uncommon in Eastfield Terrace. Nor was it particularly strange that the curtains were permanently drawn across the front windows and, as far as anyone could tell, the lights were never turned on. But the house smelled. For weeks now there had been a rotten, sewagey smell that had seemed at first to be coming from a blocked pipe but that had rapidly got worse until people had begun to cross the street to avoid it. And whatever was causing it seemed to be affecting the entire place. The grass on the front lawn was beginning to die. The flowers had wilted and then been choked up by weeds. The colour seemed to be draining out of the very bricks.

The neighbours had tried to complain. They had knocked on the front door, but nobody had come. They had telephoned, but nobody had answered. Finally, they had called the borough council at the Ipswich Civic Centre but of course it would be weeks before any action was taken. The house wasn’t empty. That much they knew. They had occasionally seen the owner, Gwenda Davis, pacing back and forth behind the net curtains. Once – more than a week ago – she had been seen scurrying home from the shops. And there was one other piece of evidence that there was still life at number twenty-seven: every evening the television was turned on. Gwenda Davis was well known in the street.

Highlight the following words in the passage above:

Lawn telephoned rotten curtains

Satellite disease occasionally rapidly

Now answer the questions below:

Literal questions

1. What was the name of the street in the story?

1 mark

1. Who owns the dilapidated house?

1 mark

1. Why did people start to cross the street to avoid number twenty-seven?

1 mark

Inferential questions

1. Do you think the houses on the street are generally well looked after? Why do you think this?

2 marks

1. What do you think the author means when it says ‘it was as if it had caught some sort of disease’?

2 marks

Evaluative questions

1. What do you think the neighbours thought of the owner of the house? Why do you think that?

3 marks

1. Do you think the borough council are effective in sorting out problems? Why do you think this?

3 marks

Mark Scheme

There was something wrong about the house in Eastfield Terrace. Something unpleasant. All the houses in the street were more or less identical: redbrick, Victorian, with two bedrooms on the first floor and a bay window on either the left or the right of the front door.

Some had satellite dishes. Some had window boxes filled with brightly coloured flowers. But looking down from the top of the hill at the terrace curving round St Patrick’s church on its way to the Esso garage and All-Nite store, one house stood out immediately. Number twenty-seven no longer belonged there. It was as if it had caught some sort of disease and needed to be taken away.

The front garden was full of junk, and as usual the wheelie bin beside the gate was overflowing, surrounded by black garbage bags that the owners had been unable to stuff inside. This wasn’t uncommon in Eastfield Terrace. Nor was it particularly strange that the curtains were permanently drawn across the front windows and, as far as anyone could tell, the lights were never turned on. But the house smelled. For weeks now there had been a rotten, sewagey smell that had seemed at first to be coming from a blocked pipe but that had rapidly got worse until people had begun to cross the street to avoid it. And whatever was causing it seemed to be affecting the entire place. The grass on the front lawn was beginning to die. The flowers had wilted and then been choked up by weeds. The colour seemed to be draining out of the very bricks.

The neighbours had tried to complain. They had knocked on the front door, but nobody had come. They had telephoned, but nobody had answered. Finally, they had called the borough council at the Ipswich Civic Centre but of course it would be weeks before any action was taken. The house wasn’t empty. That much they knew. They had occasionally seen the owner, Gwenda Davis, pacing back and forth behind the net curtains. Once – more than a week ago – she had been seen scurrying home from the shops. And there was one other piece of evidence that there was still life at number twenty-seven: every evening the television was turned on. Gwenda Davis was well known in the street.

**Must highlight all 9 words in the passage for 1 mark**

1. **Eastfield Terrace [1 mark]**
2. **Gwenda Davis [1 mark]**
3. **People started to cross the road to avoid the house because the house smelt/ The house smelt/ The house smelt of sewage/ There was a strong rotten smell coming from the house/ There was a bad smell coming from the house/ The house had a bad smell which had got worse. [1 mark]**
4. **No I don’t think all of the houses are well looked after on East field Terrace because the author has said it ‘wasn’t uncommon’ for rubbish to overflow from the wheelie bins on the street/ No I don’t think all of the houses are well looked after on the street as it says ‘nor was it particularly strange to see curtains permanently drawn’ which suggests that people neglect the appearance of their houses/ rubbish often overflows on the street and people don’t open their curtains which shows people aren’t that bothered about their houses**

**Yes, I think the houses are generally looked after on the street as all the houses were described as being ‘identical’ on the street apart from number 27/ Yes, I think the houses are looked after on the street as number 27 stands out compared to the other houses and that house is not looked after/ Yes I think the houses on the street are generally looked after as many houses have satellite dishes/ have colourful flowers which shows that people care about their houses. [must give a valid reason whether they have stated ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to gain 2 marks]**

1. **The author means that the house stands out from the other houses because it is run down/smells/is neglected/ seems infected and needs to be sorted out. The house is described as having a disease because the garden is run down, the house smells bad and looks different to the other houses on the street, almost as if it has been infected and needs to be ‘cured’.**
2. **I think the neighbours think the owner of the house is a little bit strange/odd as she is still able to stay in the house despite the horrendous smell coming from the house/ the neighbours think Gwenda is lazy as she is able to go to the shops and watch television but she won’t clean up her house and sort out the bad smell/ the neighbours think that the owner of the house is rude/inconsiderate/disrespectful/thoughtless/ as she won’t answer the door or the telephone and isn’t doing anything to sort out the state of the house.**
3. **No they are not effective in sorting out problems because in the text it says ‘but of course it would take weeks before any action is taken’ which shows that it is common for the council to take a while to sort any problems out/ No they are not quick to sort out problems because the bins are not emptied on the street regularly –‘This wasn’t uncommon in Eastfield Terrace’ and therefore sorting out number 27 house is likely to take a while.**

Test is out of 14