

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

Insert

The source that follows is:

Source A: 20th Century prose-fiction

The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

An extract from the beginning of a novel published in 1952.

Please turn the page over to see the source

Thursday 23rd
March 2023

AM Session

Source A

This extract is from the beginning of a novel by Ernest Hemingway. It is set in a fishing village in Cuba, an island in the Caribbean. An old man called Santiago is returning from a fishing trip at sea.

1 He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-
four days now without taking a fish. In the first forty days a boy had been fishing with him.
But after forty days without a fish the boy's parents had told him that the old man was
5 unlucky, and the boy had gone at their orders in another boat which caught three good fish
the first week.

It made the boy sad to see the old man come in each day with his skiff empty and he
always went down to help him carry either the coiled lines or the gaff and harpoon and the
sail that was furled around the mast. The sail was patched with flour sacks and looked like
the flag of permanent defeat.

10 The old man was thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. The brown
blotches the sun brings from its reflection on the tropic sea were on his cheeks. The
blotches ran well down the sides of his face and his hands had the deep-creased scars
from handling heavy fish on the cords. But none of these scars were fresh. They were as
old as erosions in a fishless desert. Everything about him was old except his eyes and they
15 were the same colour as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated.

16 "Santiago," the boy said to him as they climbed the bank from where the skiff was hauled
up. "I could go fishing with you again. We've made some money."

The old man had taught the boy to fish.

"No," the old man said. "You're with a lucky boat. Stay with them."

20 "But remember how you went eighty-seven days without fish and then we caught big ones
every day for three weeks."

"I remember," the old man said. "I know you did not leave me because you doubted."

"It was papa made me leave. I am a boy and I must obey him."

"I know," the old man said. "It is quite normal."

25 "He hasn't much faith."

"No," the old man said. "But we have. Haven't we?"

"Yes," the boy said. "Can I offer you a beer on the Terrace and then we'll take the stuff
home."

"Why not?" the old man said. "Between fishermen."

30 They sat on the Terrace and many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was
not angry. Others, of the older fishermen, looked at him and were sad. The successful
fishermen of that day were already in and had butchered their marlin* and carried them laid
full length across two planks, with two men staggering at the end of each plank, to the fish

house where they waited for the ice truck to carry them to the market.

35 "Santiago," the boy said.

"Yes," the old man said. He was holding his glass and thinking of many years ago.

"Can I go out to get sardines for you for tomorrow?"

"No. Go and play baseball. I can still row the boat and Rogelio will throw the net."

"I would like to go. If I cannot fish with you, I would like to serve in some way."

40 "You bought me a beer," the old man said. "You are already a man."

"How old was I when you first took me out fishing in a boat?"

"Five and you nearly were killed when I brought the fish in too early and it nearly tore the boat to pieces. Can you remember?"

45 "I can remember the tail slapping and banging and the noise of the clubbing. I can remember being in the bow of the boat where the wet coiled lines were and feeling the whole boat shiver and the noise of you clubbing the fish like chopping a tree down."

"Can you really remember that or did I just tell it to you?"

"I remember everything from when we first went fishing together."

The old man looked at him with his sun-burned, confident eyes.

50 "If you were my son I'd take you out fishing and gamble," he said. "But you are your father's and your mother's and you are in a lucky boat."

END OF SOURCE

Glossary

* Marlin – large fish found in warm seas

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