

*In this extract, Darren and his friend Steve have been sneaking around at night exploring an old building in which a freak show performs.*

1 There was no name outside the door, and no cars parked nearby, and no waiting line. We stopped out front and bent over until we got our breath back. Then we stood and looked at the building.

It was tall and dark and covered in jagged grey stones. Lots of the windows were broken, and the door looked like a giant's open mouth.

5 I looked at Steve and licked my lips nervously. "What do you think we should do?" I asked.

He stared back at me and hesitated before replying.

"I think we should go in," he finally said. "We've come this far. It'd be silly to turn back now, without knowing for sure."

10 We took a deep breath, crossed our fingers, then started up the steps (there were nine stone steps leading up to the door, each one cracked and covered with moss) and went in.

We found ourselves standing in a long, dark, cold corridor. I had my jacket on, but shivered anyway. It was freezing! We started to walk. There was a light down by the other end, so the farther in we got, the brighter it became. I was glad for that. I don't think I could have made it otherwise: it would have been too scary! The walls were scratched and scribbled on, and bits of the ceiling were flaky. It was a creepy place. It would have been bad enough in the middle of the day, but this was ten o'clock, only two hours away from midnight!

15 "There's a door here," Steve said and stopped. He pushed it ajar and it creaked loudly. I almost turned and ran. It sounded like the lid of a coffin being tugged open!

Steve showed no fear and stuck his head in. He said nothing for a few seconds, while his eyes got used to the dark, then he pulled back. "It's the stairs up to the balcony," he said.

20 "Do you think we should go up?" I asked.

He shook his head. "I don't think so. It's dark up there, no sign of any sort of light. We'll try it if we can't find another way in, but I think..."

"Can I help you boys?" somebody said behind us, and we nearly jumped out of our skins!

25 We turned around quickly and the tallest man in the world was standing there, glaring down on us as if we were a couple of rats. He was so tall, his head almost touched the ceiling. He had huge bony hands and eyes that were so dark, they looked like two black coals stuck in the middle of his face.

Q1 - Lines 1-4 List four details about the building. [4 marks]

Q2 - How does the writer use language to create a scary atmosphere for the reader? [8 marks]

Q3 - How has the writer used structure to interest the reader [8 marks]

Q4 - A student having read the extract said 'The boys in the story seem to be worried about going to the Cirque Du Freak, they are putting themselves in danger.'

To what extent do you agree with the student?