

*Read the passage and answer the questions carefully*

For perhaps the tenth time since the clock struck two, Sylvia crosses to the front-facing window of her apartment, pulls back the blue curtain, and looks down at the street. People hurry along the sidewalk. Although she watches for several long moments, she sees no one enter her building.

She walks back to the center of the high-ceilinged living room, where she stands frowning and twisting a silver bracelet around and around on her wrist. She is an attractive young woman with a narrow, delicate face and light brown hair held back by a barrette. She is restless now, because she is being kept waiting. It is nearly two-thirty, and a woman named Lola Parrish was to come at two o'clock to look at the apartment.

She considers leaving a note and going out. The woman is late, and besides, Sylvia is certain that Lola Parrish will not be a suitable person with whom to share the apartment. On the phone she had sounded too old. However, the moment for saying the apartment was no longer available slipped past, and Sylvia found herself agreeing to the two o'clock appointment. If she leaves now, as she has a perfect right to do, she can avoid the awkwardness of turning the woman away.

Looking past the blue curtain, however, she sees the sky is not clear but veiled by a white haze, and the air is still. She knows that the haze, the stillness, and the heat are conditions that often precede a summer thunderstorm—one of the electrical storms that have terrified her since

she was a child. If a storm comes, she wants to be at home in her own place.

She walks back to the center of the room, aware now that the idea of sharing the apartment, which was never appealing, has actually begun to alarm her. Still, she knows she will have to become accustomed to the notion, because her savings are nearly exhausted. She has a low-paying job, and, although she has considered seeking another (perhaps something connected with music—in her childhood she had played the flute and people had said she was gifted), she finds she has no energy to do that.

Besides, although her job pays poorly, it suits her. She is a typist in a natural history museum with an office on the top floor. The man for whom she works allows Sylvia to have the office to herself, and from the big window to her left, she can look out on a peaceful, park setting.

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1. Which of the following adjectives best describes Sylvia's mood as depicted in the story?

- a. anxious                      b. angry
- c. meditative                  d. serene

2. Based on the tone of the passage and the description of Sylvia at this moment, which of the following is the most likely reason Sylvia's job "suits her"?

- 1. Her office is tastefully decorated.

2. She likes her employer at the museum.
3. She is musical and enjoys listening to the birds sing.
4. She is able to work alone in a space that feels open.

3. When Sylvia looks out her apartment window, the weather appears

- a. gloomy.
- b. ominous.
- c. spring-like.
- d. inviting.

3. Based on the story, which of the following would most likely describe Sylvia's behavior in relationship to other people?

- a. distant
- b. overbearing
- c. dependent
- d. malicious

4. Which of the following images is most appropriate for describing Sylvia's state of mind as she waits for Lola?

1. a child eagerly digging for buried treasure
2. a dog joyfully rolling on its back in fresh, green grass
3. a rat trapped in a maze
4. a forest fire



5. The word “exhausted,” underlined in paragraph 5, most nearly means

- a. tired.
- b. weakened.
- c. spent.
- d. sick.

6. The description of Sylvia’s physical appearance in paragraph 2 might be said to foreshadow the rest of the story because

- 1. silver jewelry suggests wealth and self- confidence.
- 2. her youth and attractiveness make her perfect.
- 3. her delicate appearance reflects her shy, reserved personality.
- 4. the frown indicated tragic plot developments.

7..What is the best word to describe Sylvia in paragraph 3?

- a. timid
  - b. curious
  - c. irritated
  - d. sad
- .....

## ECOSYSTEMS

An ecosystem is a group of animals and plants living in a specific region and interacting with one another and with their physical environment. Ecosystems include physical and chemical components, such as soils, water, and nutrients. These components support the organisms living in the ecosystem.

Ecosystems can also be thought of as the interactions among all organisms in a given habitat. These organisms may range from large animals to microscopic bacteria and work together in various ways. For example, one species may serve as food for another.

People are part of the ecosystems where they live and work. Human activities, such as housing developments and trash disposal, can greatly harm or even destroy local ecosystems. Proper ecosystem management is crucial for the overall health and diversity of our planet. We must find ways to protect local ecosystems without stifling economic development.

## QUESTIONS

1. Which sentence best expresses the main idea of this passage?
  1. Our actions can have a great impact on our ecosystems.
  2. Ecosystems have been badly managed in the past.
  3. Humans must clean up their trash.
  4. Ecosystems interact with one another.
  
2. Which of the following best sums up the activities within an ecosystem?
  - a. predator-prey relationships
  - b. interactions among all members
  
  - c. human-animal interactions
  - d. human relationship with the environment
  
3. An ecosystem can most accurately be defined as
  - a. a specific place.
  - b. a community of plants and animals.
  - c. a group of animals working together.
  - d. a protected environment.