"Scorpion"

Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

Directions: Read the story. Then answer the questions below.

Soon after Navi got engaged to Roberto, she began learning about his seemingly magical origins.

She had heard many stories of Roberto's birth city of Guanajuato, and they had all **captivated** her. She was spellbound by the many exotic tales he told her about the region. At one time, this colonial city was the source of two-thirds of the world's silver.

"Our family goes to a beautiful church in Guanajuato," Roberto had told her while they courted in the United States. "It is said that silver dust was mixed into the cement building blocks and that is why the church sparkles."

Navi had been enthralled. Roberto always told such wonderful stories. She could not wait to see the city and meet all of Roberto's family. Navi was excited and knew that the trip was sure to be inspirational.

While Roberto had imparted to Navi all the wonders of his beautiful city, it had not occurred to him to mention any dangers. They were young. They were in love. They lived only in the moment.

Navi was speechless when she saw the Oratorio de San Felipe. "It really does sparkle!" she exclaimed.

Navi kissed Roberto on the cheek. "I'll meet you outside," she said, leaving the church.

She pulled her sketchpad and pencils from her bag and went to sit against one of the glorious palm trees outside the church. She began sketching the **colossal** cupola, which extended mightily, three stories above the nave.

Suddenly, a sharp pain took hold of her left shoulder. It felt like an electrical shock. The pain began to **pervade** the rest of her body.

She had been stung by a scorpion!

The last thing Navi remembered was Roberto kneeling by her side. She woke up a week later with him holding her hand and telling her a story. "In Mexico, scorpions are **ubiquitous**. There are more scorpion deaths here than in any other place in the world. And they love palm trees," he said, rubbing her hand with tears of relief in his eyes. "I should have mentioned that before."

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Questions:

1) As used in paragraph 2, which is the best antonym for **captivated**?

A. dishonored
B. enthralled
C. repelled
D. saddened

2) As used in paragraph 8, which is the best antonym for **colossal**?

A. banal
B. microscopic
C. temporal
D. inspiring

3) Based on information in the passage, it can be understood that which of the following conditions may result from a scorpion sting?

I. unconsciousness
II. death
III. paralysis

A. I only
B. I and II
C. II and III
D. I, II, and III

4) Which of the following sentences from the story most clearly foreshadows that something bad is going to happen?

A. They lived only in the moment. *(paragraph 5)*
B. It had not occurred to him to mention any dangers. *(paragraph 5)*
C. "I'll meet you outside," she said, leaving the church. *(paragraph 7)*
D. Suddenly, a sharp pain took hold of her left shoulder. *(paragraph 9)*

5) In paragraph 5, the author writes, "They were young. They were in love. They lived only in the moment." Which of the following is the best way to rewrite these sentences, while keeping their original meaning as used in the story?

A. They were young and in love because they lived only in the moment.
B. They were young and in love; they lived only in the moment.
C. They were young and in love; therefore, they lived only in the moment.
D. They were young and in love; conversely, they lived only in the moment.

6) Where is Guanajuato?

A. Ecuador
B. Cuba
C. Guatemala
D. Mexico

7) As used in paragraph 9, which is the best synonym for **pervade**?

A. numb
B. paralyze
C. permeate
D. sicken

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Questions (continued):

8) How does Roberto seem to feel about not having told Navi about scorpions?

- **A.** questioning
- **B.** perplexed
- **C.** remorseful
- **D.** validated

9) It can be inferred that Navi enjoys

- **A.** surprises
- **B.** writing and storytelling
- **C.** sketching and drawing
- **D.** traveling to various exotic destinations

10) What type of narrator is telling this story?

- **A.** first person, characterized as being a person in the story
- **B.** second person, characterized as speaking directly to the reader
- **C.** third person omniscient, characterized by knowing what all the characters are thinking
- **D.** third person focalized, characterized by knowing only what one character may be thinking

11) As used in the final paragraph, which is the best antonym for **ubiquitous**?

- **A.** scarce
- **B.** benevolent
- **C.** harmless
- **D.** omnipresent

"Tattoo"

Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

Directions: Read the story. Then answer the questions below.

Justin's mom had set down the house rules with aplomb. Only the most **obtuse** person would have failed to understand: no tattoos, no body piercings, and no co-ed sleepovers while living in the house of Elaine Tucker Brown.

Still, the day Justin turned 18, he lied to his mother about where he was going and headed straight to the tattoo parlor, as if **impervious** to his mother's wrath. He got a light blue heart the size of an orange permanently etched on his arm. Above this work of art was the word "Blessed."

No, Justin was not stupid, but he was obstinate.

Elaine saw this as an act of sheer defiance. She was incensed, her anger **exacerbated** by the fact that Justin had breezed into the house, found her in the kitchen, taken off his shirt with a smile, and said, "Got it!"

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"No, Justin. Let me tell you what you've got," Elaine said angrily. "You've got five minutes to go upstairs and pack a bag. I'm taking you to Pop-Pop's."

The ride to Pop-Pop's house was chilly, to say the least. Elaine berated Justin for everything she could think of, which wasn't much because he was a straight-A senior with a full academic scholarship to his top college pick. He had a kind heart and had started a foundation in the ninth grade, which donated used sporting equipment to underprivileged kids in South Africa.

Elaine pulled up to her father's door and ordered Justin out. Not 10 minutes later, her cell phone rang.

"Elaine, have you lost it? *You are kicking a boy who is as good as him out of the house for a tattoo – that says 'Blessed,' no less?"* her father asked, incredulous. "You will miss him so much. Don't *cut off your nose to spite your face*, Elaine.
Come pick this young man up."

Elaine, having grown up obeying most of her parents' demands, turned her car around and went back to pick up her son. Justin was surprisingly **contrite**. "Sorry for being so disrespectful, Mom," he said earnestly. "I will try to follow house rules from now on."

Questions:

11) What other title would best fit this passage?

A. "House Rules"
B. "Visiting Pop-Pop"
C. "Straight A's"
D. "Body Piercings"

12) As used in paragraph 1, which is the best antonym for **obtuse**?

A. foolhardy
B. intelligent
C. passionate
D. stubborn

13) Which of the following proverbs does Elaine seem to learn by the end of the story?

A. much ado about nothing
B. familiarity breeds contempt
C. no arguments will give courage to the coward
D. if words suffice not, blows must follow

14) Which of the following proverbs does Justin seem to learn by the end of the story?

A. look before you leap
B. pleasure bought with pain hurts
C. youth's first duty is reverence to parents
D. if men had all they wished, they would often be ruined

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15) In the final paragraph, the author writes, "Justin was surprisingly **contrite**." Which of the following is the best way to rewrite the above sentence while keeping its original meaning the same?

A. Justin was surprisingly relaxed.
B. Justin was surprisingly remorseful.
C. Justin had surprisingly lost his bad attitude.
D. Justin had surprisingly become somber.

16) What was Justin's attitude when he showed his mother the tattoo?

A. willfully defiant
B. cautiously jubilant
C. convincingly contrite
D. obviously melodramatic

17) As used in paragraph 2, which is the best antonym for **impervious**?

A. elated
B. impenetrable
C. invigorated
D. vulnerable

18) As used in paragraph 4, which is the best antonym for **exacerbated**?

A. intensified
B. evened
C. extinguished
D. decreased

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19) "*You are kicking a boy as good as him out of the house for a tattoo – that says 'Blessed,' no less?"*

The above sentence from the story has a grammatical error. Which of the following correctly identifies this error?

A. good should be well
B. him should be he
C. 'Blessed,' should be "Blessed,"
D. less should be lest

20) Using the passage as a guide, which is the best interpretation of the idiom, "cut off your nose to spite your face," as used in paragraph 8?

A. calling something bad that is not
B. trying to teach something too difficult
C. loving a person less for what he has done
D. pursuing revenge and hurting yourself in the process

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