

Chapter 17: Somebody's Mother

Choose the best interpretation for each selected line from the poem.

1. "Alone, uncared for, amid the throng"
 - a) The woman enjoys solitude in crowded places.
 - b) The crowd is intentionally avoiding her because she is dangerous.
 - c) She prefers to stand apart from others due to her pride.
 - d) Despite being surrounded by people, she feels isolated and neglected.
2. "Past the woman so old and grey / Hastened the children on their way"
 - a) The children recognize her but are too busy to help.
 - b) The woman intentionally blocks the children's path.
 - c) The boys are in a hurry and fail to notice her need.
 - d) The children fear her appearance and run away.
3. "'She's somebody's mother, boys, you know'"
 - a) The boy scolds his friends for not helping their own mothers.
 - b) He reminds them that the woman deserves respect as someone's beloved family member.
 - c) He claims the woman is related to one of them.
 - d) He suggests the woman is a teacher at their school.
4. "'God be kind to the noble boy, / Who is somebody's son, and pride and joy!'"
 - a) She prays for the boy's kindness to be rewarded, seeing him as a blessing.
 - b) The woman curses the boy for his pride.
 - c) She mistakes him for her own lost son.
 - d) She fears the boy's arrogance will lead to trouble.
5. "The street was wet with a recent snow"
 - a) The snow simply describes the winter setting without deeper meaning
 - b) It represents the purity of the boy's eventual kind act
 - c) The wetness foreshadows the woman nearly falling
 - d) The weather symbolizes the cold indifference of society

6. "Her aged hand on his strong young arm"

- a) Highlights the contrast between youth and old age
- b) Suggests the woman is trying to steal from the boy
- c) Shows the boy is actually weaker than he appears
- d) Means the woman doesn't really need help

7. "Glad in the freedom of 'school let out'"

- a) Shows children's natural selfishness
- b) Reflects the joyful energy of childhood
- c) Implies schools don't teach morality
- d) Suggests the boys are escaping responsibility

8. "Proud that his own were firm and strong"

- a) Reveals the boy's arrogant nature
- b) Means he looks down on the weak
- c) Shows healthy pride in being able to help
- d) Suggests he expects payment

9. "So meek, so timid, afraid to stir"

- a) The woman is pretending to be helpless
- b) Shows she doesn't actually want to cross
- c) Means she recognizes the danger
- d) Portrays the woman's vulnerable state

10. "When her own dear boy is far away"

- a) Suggests universal hope for reciprocal kindness
- b) The woman's son has abandoned her
- c) Means children always leave their parents
- d) Shows the helper will soon leave town

Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the central theme of the poem?

- a) The importance of helping those in need, especially the elderly
- b) The excitement of children playing in winter weather
- c) The dangers of walking on snowy streets
- d) The loneliness of being a school teacher

2. How does the poet describe the woman's condition?

- a) She is wealthy but chooses to dress poorly
- b) She is old, ragged, and struggling to cross the street
- c) She is a teacher waiting for her students
- d) She is lost and asking for directions

3. Why do most children ignore the woman?

- a) They are afraid of her appearance
- b) She explicitly tells them not to help her
- c) They are too busy playing and don't notice her need
- d) They think she is a stranger who might harm them

4. What motivates the boy to help the woman?

- a) He hopes for a reward or money
- b) He recognizes her as his own grandmother
- c) His teacher instructed him to help elders
- d) He feels empathy and offers assistance without hesitation

5. What lesson does the boy share with his friends afterward?

- a) They should always obey traffic rules
- b) The woman could be someone's mother, deserving respect
- c) Snowball fights are dangerous for the elderly
- d) Helping others is a waste of time

6. How does the woman respond to the boy's kindness?

- a) She prays for him, calling him a blessing
- b) She scolds him for interrupting her day
- c) She offers him money as thanks
- d) She reports him to the school principal

7. What literary device is used in "the boys like a flock of sheep"?

- a) Metaphor
- b) Simile
- c) Alliteration
- d) Hyperbole

8. What does the poem suggest about societal behavior?

- a) People are always cruel to the elderly
- b) Children are naturally selfish and unkind
- c) Winter brings out the worst in people

d) Most ignore those in need, but one act of kindness can make a difference

9. The phrase "bent with the chill of the Winter's day" suggests:

- a) The woman is physically weakened by both age and harsh weather
- b) Winter symbolizes the end of the woman's life approaching
- c) The cold makes all pedestrians hunch over while walking
- d) The woman is bowing to greet the passing children

10. The boy's statement "I hope some fellow will lend a hand to help my mother" demonstrates:

- a) Fear that his mother will soon become elderly
- b) Universal empathy by applying the situation to his own family
- c) Belief that only sons should assist elderly women
- d) Pride in being the only helpful child in his community