

Read the questions carefully then read the passage. Make note of the comprehension terms used in each question. Answer **ALL** questions.

MARY

I met my friend Mary when I was fifteen years old. Our friendship was different from most. Mary was ninety-three years old when I met her. Almost a century separated us.

Mary's family lived far away, and they were considering sending her to a nursing home so she could receive proper care. She, however, desperately wanted to stay in her own little home. My best friend's mother was visiting Mary one day and suggested that someone come into her house to take care of her. Mary asked if she knew anybody who would be interested and my friend's mother told her I might be. I had been looking for a little extra cash.

A couple of days later, my mom and I went over to Mary's to get acquainted. I got the job and we shook hands. After that I came to her house every evening at 6:00 p.m. Our nightly ritual consisted of:

- Her telling me about her day.
- Me telling her about mine.
- Her telling me what she wanted fixed for dinner (every detail).
- Me fixing dinner
- Me serving her dinner, filling up her water glass and getting her pills.
- Watching *Wheel of Fortune*.
- Then, watching *My Three Sons* or *Leave It to Beaver* (I think I've seen every episode by now).
- Me washing the dishes.
- Me sometimes taking out the garbage or washing clothes.
- Me shaking her hand (it became our little ritual) and leaving.
- She saying, "See you tomorrow, Jodi."

This filled up a couple of hours each night. I already had a busy schedule, so my mom would help out and take care of Mary some evenings.

Going to Mary gave me some relief from the pressure-filled world of adolescence. Just being with her gave me a mental rest from my busy life. Also, she was a kindred spirit. She never got angry at me when I boiled the potato instead of baking it, or when I (constantly) set off the fire alarm due to baking challenges. She would tell me stories, and of course she had many. She talked to me about her late husband and her children growing up on their old farm. She knew about everything. Well, she had ninety-three years of experience. She showed me pictures and told me what it used to be like when she was a teenager in the early 1900s. I told her about the changing world and what it was like for me to be a teenager.

About a year and a half later she got sick and had to go to the hospital for a couple of days. The next thing I knew, she had died. It was a shock. Many people in my life have died, but Mary had

become such an everyday part of my life. At her funeral, Mary's daughter thanked all of us who had made it possible for her to stay in her home for the last year of her life. I was thankful that I could be a helping hand. But when I thought about it more, I realized that Mary had helped me. She taught me lessons that school could never teach, and her house was a sanctuary for me during some hard times.

I slipped inside the house to say my good-byes. First, to her family, and then to her. The living room was completely empty, but it still had that indescribable smell. I could picture her in her armchair, smiling. I whispered my good-bye.

Mary was my friend. She didn't care if my hair was messy or if my clothes were not name-brand. I could even go to her house in my PJs. I could be me. And that's the greatest gift a friend can give.

Adapted from *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul on Love & Friendship* 2002

1. How old was Mary when the narrator met her?
(Write the number) _____
2. What is the name of the narrator? _____
3. Which **adjective best describes** Mary's relationship with the narrator? Write the letter in the box.
 - a. Harsh
 - b. Critical
 - c. Accepting
 - d. Demanding
4. The phrase indescribable smell means:
(Write the letter in the box.)
 - a. A smell that is easy to detect.
 - b. Too unusual to be explained.
 - c. A sweet smelling aroma.
5. Mary and the narrator did **ALL** of the following **EXCEPT**:
(Write the letter in the box.)
 - a. Discuss their day
 - b. Have dinner together
 - c. Watch television
 - d. Spend time at the park
6. **Quote** the complete sentence from paragraph **FIVE** that describes the narrator's busy teenage life and the time spent with Mary.

7. Number the sentences 1-5 in the order in which they occur in the passage.
- ___ Mary dies after two days in hospital.
 - ___ Mary's children think about sending her to a nursing home.
 - ___ The narrator sees pictures from the life of Mary's past.
 - ___ Mary is served dinner by the narrator.
 - ___ Final good-byes are said to Mary by the narrator.
8. What is the meaning of the phrase kindred spirits?
(Write the letter in the box.)
- a. Different from everyone else
 - b. People with similar attitudes and interests
 - c. Easily annoyed by other spirits
 - d. Evil spirits that cause confusion
9. What made Mary a good friend to the narrator?
(Write the letter in the box.)
- a. She never judged the narrator, never got angry when she made a mistake and accepted her.
 - b. She allowed her to take care of her and spent time with her in the park.
 - c. They watched movies together and gossiped about the narrator's friends.
10. Why did the narrator take the job caring for Mary?
(Write the letter in the box.)
- a. The narrator was bored.
 - b. The narrator was lonely.
 - c. The narrator needed extra cash.
 - d. The narrator was always helping the elderly.
11. Which word below is an antonym for the word acquainted?
(Write the letter in the box.)
- a. Known
 - b. Familiar
 - c. Unfamiliar