

“Dreams”

Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

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



The relationship between my mother, sister and me had been cold and **inimical** for as long as I could remember.

To me, my mother was irrational, often hurling hurtful **invectives** for the slightest infraction. My sister, five years my senior, seemed not to have a brain in her head. Tammy **dithered** about everything, incapable of making any firm decision. No matter how often my mother **depreciated** her -- “dumb, ugly, fat”—Tammy made futile attempts to fawn her way back into mother’s good graces.

My father would pontificate, “You three are more alike then you know.”

In April of 2000, my mother kicked us both out of the house. (Dad had been exiled many years before.)

My sister and I went our separate ways. It was then that I began having recurring dreams.

In one, I am running to catch up with a woman. Each time I get near, I trip and fall. Another woman comes with great **alacrity** and offers her hand, but when I reach to grab it, she disappears.

In another, a female professor hands me a test. Although I have spent hours studying for it, I know none of the answers. The professor **derides** me for my poor performance.

These dreams were not hard to understand. In fact they were **pellucid**, and absent any knowledge of dream interpretation, I was still able to devise their significance. I knew that they both reflected the **pugnacious** relationship I shared with my mother and sister.

However, there was one dream I could never quite construe. I bite into an apple. All of my teeth fall out. I had this dream far more than any of the others.

Years later, in an effort to heal our fractious relationship, Mom, Tammy and I would elect to go to counseling together. After several sessions, I tell my dream about teeth tumbling out of my head.

“My God,” said my mother. “I’ve had the exact same dream many times.”

“Me too,” said Tammy solemnly.

Breakthrough? No idea. But I was reminded of the words of my now-dead father. Perhaps the three of us are more alike than we know.

Questions:

1) Which is most likely to make a relationship **inimical**?

- A. great pathos
- B. frequent maledictions
- C. magnanimous gestures
- D. ingenuous discussions

2) Which is the best synonym for **invectives** ?

- A. icons
- B. decisions
- C. paragons
- D. accusations

3) If this passage were true, which would best describe it?

- A. a literary essay, based on a piece of literature
- B. a memoir essay, centered on a significant memory from the past
- C. a persuasive essay, characterized by choosing a side and refuting other arguments
- D. an expository essay, meant to acquaint the reader with a body of knowledge

4) What event does the father's comment foreshadow?

- A. Mother is irrational.
- B. Tammy is fawning.
- C. The sisters are both kicked out of the house.
- D. The narrator, mother and Tammy all have the same dream.

5) What is the tone of this passage?

- A. matter-of-fact
- B. mawkish
- C. maudlin
- D. mercurial

6) How does the relationship between the narrator, her mother and sister seem to change from the beginning of passage to end?

- A. from brusque to florid
 - B. from egregious to impassive
 - C. from enervating to rejuvenating
 - D. from destructive to collaborative
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Questions (continued):

7) Which is the best antonym for **pellucid** ?

- A. conspicuous
- B. disquieting
- C. enlightening
- D. incomprehensible

8) *"I bite into an apple. All of my teeth fall out."*

▼ Choose the best way to combine the above sentences.

- A. I bite into an apple, all of my teeth fall out.
- B. As all my teeth fall out, I bite into an apple.
- C. I bite into an apple, and all of my teeth fall out.
- D. While I bite into I bite into an apple, all my teeth fell out.

9) *"The professor **derides** me for my poor performance."*

▼ Choose the best way to rewrite the above sentence.

- A. The professor is in disbelief due to my poor performance.
- B. The professor laughs mockingly at my poor performance.
- C. The professor gives me a failing grade for my poor performance.
- D. The professor gives me a tutorial because of my poor performance.

10) Which words have a negative connotation?

▼ Check all that are correct.

- A. alacrity
 - B. deprecated
 - C. dithered
 - D. pugnacious
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