

“Seeing Through”

Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

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

Jeffrey brushed quickly past an elderly woman waiting on the platform ahead of him to get onto the subway. He wanted to be sure to get a seat to read his *Financial Times*. As the train screeched out of the station, he lifted his head from business news and stared at the man directly across from him.

A fierce wave – a tsunami – of **antipathy** came over him. Jeffrey knew this man, knew him all too well.

Their eyes locked.



As the train reached full speed, the ruckus of speeding wheels against the winding rails and a wildly gyrating subway car filled Jeffrey’s ears. To this frenetic beat, Jeffrey effortlessly listed in his head all the reasons this man, whose eyes he stared coldly into, was an **anathema** to him.

*He had climbed the upper echelons of his Wall Street firm using an **imperious** manner with his subordinates, always making sure everyone knew he was the boss.*

*Despite his impoverished upbringing, he had become **ostentatious**. Flush with cash from the lucrative deals he had made on Wall Street, he had purchased a yacht and a home in Versailles. He used neither. But, oh, how he liked to say he had them. Meanwhile, Jeffrey knew, this man’s parents were on the verge of being evicted from their run-down tenement apartment in the South Bronx.*

What bothered Jeffrey most about this man was that he never even attempted to make amends for his evil ways.

Could this man change? Jeffrey did not know. He could try though.

The train screeched to Jeffrey’s stop at Battery Park. He gave the man one last hard look. “See you around,” he mumbled to himself. And he knew would, because Jeffrey had been glaring at his own reflection in the subway window.

It would take years of hard work and therapy, but Jeffrey would one day notice this man again on the train and marvel at what a kinder person he had become.

Questions:

1) Which best describes Jeffrey's attitude in this passage?

- A. feral
- B. florid
- C. hapless
- D. impetuous
- E. self-loathing

2) A fierce wave – a tsunami – of antipathy *came* over him. Given the analogy in this sentence, which word would work best instead of *came*?

- A. angled
- B. drizzled
- C. rained
- D. swept
- E. trampled

3) Which is the best antonym for **antipathy**?

- A. ambivalence
- B. desperation
- C. ardor
- D. infatuation
- E. plethora

4) What statement makes the most sense from what is said in this passage?

- A. Jeffrey has few friends.
- B. Jeffrey knows himself well.
- C. Jeffrey has had a difficult life.
- D. Jeffrey is incapable of change.
- E. Jeffrey rides the subway frequently.

5) "*As the train reached full speed, the cacophony of speeding wheels against the winding rails and a wildly gyrating train filled Jeffrey's ears.*"

Which describes a literary technique used in this sentence?

▼ Check two that are correct.

- A. alliteration, characterized by the repetition of an initial letter or sound
- B. analogy, an extended comparison showing the similarities between two things
- C. imagery, characterized by appealing to any sense or combination of senses
- D. irony, characterized by a contrast or incongruity between what is stated and what is meant
- E. personification, characterized by something being described as if it were human

Questions (continued):

6) What is the main conflict in this passage?

- A. man verses man
- B. man verses himself
- C. man verses society
- D. man verses machine
- E. man verses nature

7) Which is the best definition for **anathema**?

- A. a person or thing that is detested
- B. a person or thing that is misunderstood
- C. a person or thing that needs spiritual guidance
- D. a person or thing that demonstrates evil ways
- E. a person or thing that has mental problems

8) What does it mean to have an **imperious** manner with underlings?

- A. to ignore them
- B. to be stoic around them
- C. to openly humiliate them
- D. to not be affected by them
- E. to be domineering toward them

9) Which is the best antonym for **ostentatious**?

- A. assiduous
- B. decadent
- C. modest
- D. miserly
- E. pretentious

10) What is made clear by the end of passage?

▼ Check all that are correct.

- A. that Jeffrey is wealthy
 - B. that the man Jeffrey hates is himself
 - C. that Jeffrey has been staring at a co-worker
 - D. that Jeffrey will eventually become a better person
 - E. that the old woman in the beginning of the passage is actually Jeffrey's mother
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