

“Ursula Pugh”

Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

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

Ursula Pugh was at an earlier time in her life – before injuries, before a disastrous marriage, before the death of her beloved sister – a glorious dancer.

Now, she was regarded by many as an angry has-been and horrible teacher.



I was not **cognizant** of these details as I made my way through the doors of The Ursula Children’s Theater with my three rambunctious boys in tow. And had I had such information it would not have **biased** my decision in the least.

I was looking for a *safe haven* in the neighborhood for the boys to hang out after school until I got off work. Staying at home by themselves was not an option. They definitely needed adult supervision if I expected my home to still be standing when I got home from work. The children’s theater, much to my boys’ **chagrin**, was more convenient for me to get to than the karate studio.

“No Mama, we want karate,” the boys had implored pitifully. I’m glad I wasn’t swayed though I would not realize until much later what a **fortuitous** decision this was.

Ms. Pugh looked up over her glasses as we arrived at the studio. “Boys!” she exclaimed before I could even introduce myself. “Wonderful.”

It turned out that Ms. Pugh’s program was woefully short of boys and mine were immediately thrown into every production possible at the theater.

The rumors were right, in some respects. Ms. Pugh could be brusque and rude with her charges and did not tolerate any signs that a student was not fully dedicated to the program.

My boys flourished in this environment. *My wild, rough boys, who were often so rude that they embarrassed me in public, gradually became a different species.*

They will certainly never be world class dancers, but Ms. Pugh’s strict ways taught them to be respectful and on time. Moreover, it taught them to follow directions and always strive to do their best.

Questions:

- 1) Which idea can be supported from the first paragraph?
- A. Ms. Pugh is a bitter woman.
 - B. Ms. Pugh is an old woman.
 - C. Ms. Pugh has been through a lot.
 - D. Ms. Pugh was a world class ballerina.
 - E. Ms. Pugh has become a dance teacher.
- 2) Which is the best antonym for **cognizant**?
- A. aware
 - B. forgetful
 - C. ignorant
 - D. mindful
 - E. resentful
- 3) What does the term *safe haven* imply?
- A. a refuge
 - B. a theater program
 - C. a religious building
 - D. a healthy alternative
 - E. an inexpensive activity
- 4) Which is the best antonym for **chagrin**?
- A. ambivalence
 - B. calm
 - C. confusion
 - D. delight
 - E. ignorance
- 5) Which is the best antonym for **biased**?
- A. awkward
 - B. impartial
 - C. concerned
 - D. attentive
 - E. determined
- 6) Why was the narrator's decision **fortuitous**?
- A. The children's theater was close to her home.
 - B. Her sons learned many valuable life lessons.
 - C. She expected her sons to become good dancers.
 - D. She got to see Ms. Pugh's bad temper first hand.
 - E. There were not many boys in the program for her sons to get in trouble with.
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