

“Hearts and Hands” by O. Henry
“The Fish” by Elizabeth Bishop

Selection Test

Critical Reading

In the blank, write the letter of the one best answer.

- _____ 1. Based on this paragraph from “Hearts and Hands,” choose a logical prediction.
At Denver there was an influx of passengers into the coaches on the eastbound B. & M. express. In one coach there sat a very pretty young woman dressed in elegant taste and surrounded by all the luxurious comforts of an experienced traveler. Among the newcomers were two young men, one of handsome presence with a bold, frank countenance and manner; the other a ruffled, glum-faced person, heavily built and roughly dressed. The two were handcuffed together.
- The men will pose some threat to the young woman.
 - The young woman is very haughty and will refuse to ride with a criminal.
 - One man is a prisoner; the other is a law officer.
 - The men will not be allowed to sit in the same coach with the young woman.
- _____ 2. Of the following details from “Hearts and Hands,” which might O. Henry have included to mislead readers as he builds toward his surprise ending?
- Passengers are boarding the train in Denver.
 - The woman is described as an experienced traveler.
 - One man is “handsome” and “bold”; the other is “glum-faced” and “roughly dressed.”
 - The two men are handcuffed together.
- _____ 3. Suppose you are beginning to read “Hearts and Hands” for the first time. Which of the following conclusions about the young woman are logical based on the second sentence of the paragraph above?
- The young woman’s servants will wait on her during the train ride.
 - The young woman is wealthy.
 - The young woman is traveling with her parents.
 - The young woman will play an important part in this story.
- a. I and II b. I and IV c. II and III d. II and IV
- _____ 4. When Miss Fairchild speaks to Mr. Easton, the narrator tells us he “roused himself sharply.” Why is this a clue that he might not be a marshal?
- If he were a marshal, he would be acting “bold” and “frank.”
 - If he were a marshal escorting a criminal, he would be alert and watchful.
 - If he were a marshal, he would have already greeted the young woman out of courtesy.
 - If he were a marshal, he would have kept his prisoner away from a respectable-looking young woman.
- _____ 5. In “Hearts and Hands,” how is the presence of the handcuffs explained?
- Mr. Easton just raises his right hand and laughs.
 - Mr. Easton says he needed money to keep up with the Washington crowd and tried counterfeiting.
 - The glum-faced man speaks up and says Mr. Easton is taking him to Leavenworth for counterfeiting.
 - The glum-faced man is a former train robber and must be guarded.

- ___ 6. In “Hearts and Hands,” why does the real marshal deceive Miss Fairchild?
- He doesn’t want Miss Fairchild to worry about having a dangerous criminal on board.
 - He enjoys fooling or teasing strangers.
 - He is compassionate and wants to spare Mr. Easton some embarrassment.
 - He wants to have a chance to get acquainted with Miss Fairchild because she is pretty.
- ___ 7. Which of the following details hints that Mr. Easton is concerned about money, and that he might logically be a counterfeiter?
- “ . . . well, a marshalship isn’t quite as high a position as that of ambassador, . . . ”
 - “Money has a way of taking wings unto itself”
 - “My butterfly days are over, I fear.”
 - “Duty calls, you know.”
- ___ 8. Why do the two men leave their seat across from Miss Fairchild?
- They have to go to another coach where criminals are supposed to travel.
 - The train arrives at their destination.
 - Mr. Easton’s conversation with Miss Fairchild is over.
 - They move into the smoker.
- ___ 9. What evidence does the passenger at the end of the story use to figure out who the marshal is?
- The passenger knew that officers usually handcuff prisoners to their left hand.
 - The passenger was slightly acquainted with Mr. Easton.
 - The passenger noticed the “keen, shrewd eyes” of the older man and guessed he was the marshal.
 - The passenger knew Mr. Easton was too young to be a marshal and guessed the older man was the marshal.
- ___ 10. Which line from “Hearts and Hands” would logically lead a reader to conclude that Miss Fairchild admires Mr. Easton?
- “Well, Mr. Easton, if you *will* make me speak first, I suppose I must.”
 - “And so now you are one of these dashing Western heroes”
 - “But you must go on to Leavenworth, I suppose?”
 - “The glad look in the girl’s eyes slowly changed to a bewildered horror.”
- ___ 11. Based on the following passage from “The Fish,” what is the most logical assumption a reader could make?
- I thought of the coarse white flesh / packed in like feathers, / the big bones and the little bones,
- The speaker is looking forward to eating the fish.
 - The speaker thinks the old fish’s meat will be tough and unappealing.
 - The fish has been wounded so that the speaker can see the flesh and bones.
 - The speaker thinks the meat will have too many bones in it.
- ___ 12. Which of the following lines from “The Fish” is a clue to the surprise ending?
- “He hadn’t fought at all.”
 - “While his gills were breathing in/the terrible oxygen”
 - “They shifted a little, but not/to return my stare.”
 - “ . . . a five-haired beard of wisdom/trailing from his aching jaw.”
- ___ 13. What does the speaker in “The Fish” discover in the fish’s mouth?
- five old fish hooks
 - green weeds
 - barnacles
 - a small fish
- ___ 14. For some readers of “The Fish,” the ending might not be a surprise because
- the speaker thinks the fish looks sad.
 - the speaker indicates the fish is old and will therefore not be good to eat.

- c. the boat is only rented, so they know that the speaker is not a serious fisherman.
- d. the speaker spends so much time describing and admiring the fish.

- ___ 15. What do the following lines from “The Fish” mean?
and victory filled up / the little rented boat,
- a. After seeing that this fish had gotten away from other fishermen, the speaker is especially pleased.
 - b. The idea of eating such a sought-after fish makes the catch even more valuable.
 - c. The speaker added the fish to a pile of other fish, nearly filling the little boat.
 - d. The speaker feels it is a good omen to have caught *this* fish on the first attempt.

Vocabulary and Grammar

- ___ 16. The glum-faced man in “Hearts and Hands” forestalls Mr. Easton by
- a. nudging him.
 - b. interrupting him.
 - c. speaking before Mr. Easton has a chance to.
 - d. begging Miss Fairchild to convince the marshal to be merciful.
- ___ 17. The fish is described as infested with tiny white sea-lice because it
- a. once had sea-lice but is now rid of them.
 - b. has a few sea-lice on its body.
 - c. is crawling with sea-lice.
 - d. has scars from having had sea-lice.
- ___ 18. What are the parts of the compound predicate in the following sentence?
When I arrived, the fisherwoman was sitting in her boat, reeling in her line, and hauling up the hugest fish I had ever seen.
- a. arrived, had seen
 - b. arrived, was sitting, reeling
 - c. reeling, hauling, had seen
 - d. was sitting, reeling, hauling
- ___ 19. Where would someone be most likely to sidle?
- a. on a bus
 - b. in a hallway at the airport
 - c. on an escalator
 - d. in a check-out line at the grocery store
- ___ 20. When a compound predicate consists of two or more verb phrases with the same helping verb
- a. the helping verb is dropped.
 - b. the helping verb is often used only with the first verb.
 - c. the helping verb is always repeated before each verb.
 - d. the helping verb is often used only with the last verb.

Essay Questions

21. In an essay, explain how the speaker in “The Fish” and the marshal in “Hearts and Hands” show compassion. Then explain why compassion is important in our everyday lives. Cite examples of compassionate behavior you have seen or experienced.
22. “Hearts and Hands” contains a number of clues that foreshadow the ending. Having finished the story, use your knowledge of the outcome to identify, in an essay, as many clues or hints as you can. Explain how each is tied to the outcome.
23. O. Henry’s story depends to some extent upon appearance and assumptions. Miss Fairchild, just like the rest of us, makes assumptions based on the appearance of the two men. In an essay, discuss how the description of the two men directs your own assumptions. What are the stereotypes that O. Henry is playing against? Consider the stereotyping you see in our own culture as depicted on television and in movies. Explain whether you think it is acceptable for television and movie producers to use stereotypes to convey certain attributes of their characters.