

“A Visit to Grandmother” by William Melvin Kelley**Selection Test****Critical Reading**

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

- _____ 1. What is the most important story in “A Visit to Grandmother”?
- a teenager’s first meeting with his father’s family
 - a mother’s reunion with her son
 - a man’s attempt to face a childhood pain
 - a horse’s misbehavior and its results
- _____ 2. Which of the following lines from the story is an example of direct characterization?
- “. . . he had spoken of GL with the kind of indulgence he would have shown a cute, but ill-behaved and potentially dangerous, five-year-old.”
 - “He’ll be here though; he ain’t as young and footloose as he used to be.”
 - “And Chig had a suspicion now that the reunion had been only an excuse to drive south, that his father had been heading to this house all the time.”
 - “She was a honey-colored woman, with long eyelashes.”
- _____ 3. Charles does not tell Chig right away about his plans to visit his family. What does this reveal about his feelings concerning the visit?
- Charles is not looking forward to the visit.
 - Charles wants the visit to be a surprise for Chig.
 - Charles thinks Chig will be reluctant to go.
 - Charles didn’t think he would have time to visit.
- _____ 4. In “A Visit to Grandmother,” Chig’s father had never talked much about his family, with the exception of
- Aunt Rose.
 - his brother GL.
 - Mae.
 - Uncle Hiram.
- _____ 5. GL’s character can best be described as
- friendly and intelligent.
 - lazy and stupid.
 - sincere and persuasive.
 - charming and irresponsible.
- _____ 6. Charles uses formal standard English at his mother’s house because he
- respects and admires the family.
 - wants Chig to be proud of him.
 - has serious professional ambitions.
 - sets himself apart from the family.
- _____ 7. What detail is clarified, or made clear, in the following passage from the selection?
- “Ten days before in New York, Chig’s father had decided suddenly he wanted to go to Nashville to attend his college class reunion, twenty years out. . . . Chig was seventeen, had nothing to do that summer, and his father asked if he would like to go along.”
- The reason why Chig’s father moved to New York when he was an adult.
 - The reason why Chig’s father thinks of GL as a practical joker.
 - The reason why Chig and his father were traveling together, near Grandmother’s home.
 - The reason Chig’s father wanted to go to his college reunion.

- ___ 8. Which of the following lines from the story is an example of indirect characterization?
- “She smiled. She had all her teeth, but they were too perfect to be her own.”
 - “Uncle Hiram was somewhat smaller than Chig’s father; his short-cropped kinky hair was half gray, half black.”
 - “She was standing now, her back and shoulders straight. She came only to Chig’s chest.”
 - “They don’t know nothing about old ladies. When I want help, I’ll let you know. Only time I’ll need help getting anywheres is when I dies and they lift me into the ground.”
- ___ 9. For Charles, what does the story of GL and the horse represent?
- his mother’s preference for GL
 - GL’s ignorance about horses
 - his mother’s stubborn pride
 - GL’s attractive personality
- ___ 10. When Mrs. Dunford says “GL could-a ended up swinging,” she means he could have
- wasted his life at parties.
 - lived a cheerful, carefree life.
 - been hanged as a criminal.
 - suffered emotional ups and downs.
- ___ 11. Which of the following passages clarifies the reason why Charles’s mother spent more time with GL than with Charles?
- “You was more growed up than GL when you was five and he was ten, and I tried to show you that by letting you do what you wanted to do.”
 - “That’s not true, Mama. You know it.”
 - “I said that if I had done it, if I had done just exactly what GL did, you would have beaten me good for it, Mama.”
 - “Don’t ask me how I did that; I reckon it was that I was a mother and my baby asked me to do something, is all.”
- ___ 12. How does Chig feel when he sees his father cry?
- He is angry that Mama has made his father cry.
 - He is depressed that his father is so sad.
 - He is alarmed that his father would show such emotion.
 - He is impressed by his father’s emotional honesty.
- ___ 13. What do Charles’s words and actions surrounding his mother’s treatment of him as a child reveal about his character?
- He is sensitive and full of anger.
 - He is unable to express his feelings.
 - He dislikes humorous stories.
 - He views his mother as perfect.
- ___ 14. Why does GL refer to Charles as a “rascal”?
- GL suspects Charles is dishonest.
 - GL is fond of Charles.
 - GL resents Charles’s intrusion.
 - GL thinks Charles is mischievous.
- ___ 15. You can clarify the relationships among the characters in “A Visit to Grandmother” by
- rereading the story’s final paragraph.
 - reading the words of GL.
 - making a family tree.
 - defining the word *family*.

- ___ 16. Which of the following statements best expresses the theme or message of “A Visit to Grandmother”?
- a. Brothers should be tolerant and forgiving of each other’s faults.
 - b. The pain of family misunderstandings can last a lifetime.
 - c. Parents and adult children should resolve conflicts for the grandchildren’s sake.
 - d. Adults often resume childhood roles when they visit their parents.

Vocabulary and Grammar

- ___ 17. As a doctor, Charles was always kind and friendly to frightened patients who _____ timidly into his office.
- a. ventured
 - b. ran
 - c. grimaced
 - d. lacquered
- ___ 18. Chig is surprised that he and his father _____ to visit his father’s family the next day, because his father never talked about them.
- a. were going
 - b. are going
 - c. is going
 - d. was going
- ___ 19. Choose the sentence that contains a verb in the present progressive tense.
- a. I watched GL drag that poor animal up to the house.
 - b. You must be crazy if you think that I am getting on that horse.
 - c. I was watching that beast and it was boiling hotter all the time.
 - d. This horse is as gentle as a rose petal.
- ___ 20. I turned around to go back into the house because it _____ late, near dinner time.
- a. were getting
 - b. are getting
 - c. is getting
 - d. was getting

Essay Questions

21. In an essay, clarify the problem Charles has with his mother and his brother. Explain the specific misunderstanding between Charles and his mother that is at the root of the problem. What is Charles’s attitude toward GL? What is the true reason for this attitude?
22. When Charles bends down to kiss his mother, Chig notices that “something new and almost ugly had come into his (Charles’s) eyes: fear, uncertainty, sadness, and perhaps even hatred.” In an essay, explain why Chig sees each of these things in his father’s eyes. Why does Charles have negative feelings toward his family? What is the purpose of his visit home? Why might his visit home cause him to feel fear, uncertainty, sadness, and hatred?
23. In an essay, discuss the techniques the author of “A Visit to Grandmother” uses to characterize Chig’s grandmother, Charles, and GL. Describe at least two traits of each character and how you as a reader learn about these traits. What are some of each character’s most revealing moments?