

A Wagner Matinée Willa Cather

COMPREHENSION Circle the letter of the best answer to each of the following items. (30 points; 6 points each)

1. Georgiana cries during the concert primarily because she—
 - A) remembers how important music is to her
 - B) is suddenly homesick for Nebraska and her family
 - C) is self-conscious about being with so many well-dressed people
 - D) is exhausted and ill from her long train ride
2. One of the central conflicts of the story is between—
 - A) the hard life on the Nebraska frontier and the cultured world of Boston
 - B) the narrator's dilemma over whether to stay on the Nebraska farm or return to the city
 - C) the decision whether to ranch or to farm on the Nebraska frontier
 - D) Aunt Georgiana and her husband
3. At first, Clark regrets his plans to take Aunt Georgiana to the concert because—
 - A) she might embarrass him by her unsophisticated appearance
 - B) she might fall asleep during the concert because it lasts too long
 - C) he is doubtful that, after so many years, she will enjoy the concert
 - D) she might not understand the new music she would hear
4. Clark believed that his Uncle Howard was—
 - A) abusive to his wife and children
 - B) cultured and successful
 - C) careless, and neglectful of his wife
 - D) intelligent and hard-working
5. Cather clearly wants readers to sympathize with Aunt Georgiana's plight. Which of the following elements best makes the author's case?
 - A) Clark's description of his boyhood on his aunt and uncle's Vermont farm
 - B) The detailed description of the Nebraska homestead and the family's harsh life
 - C) The description of Aunt Georgiana's early years in the culture of Boston
 - D) Clark's recollection of his lessons in Latin and music

Unit 4: Collection 9, Selection Test *continued*

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT Choose the best vocabulary word for each sentence below from the column of words on the right. On the line provided, write the letter of the word that best fits the sentence. Some words will not be used. (10 points; 2 points each)

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| _____ 6. For the costume party the good-looking teen ironically chose a(n)_____ mask. | A) deluge |
| | B) legacy |
| _____ 7. Visiting the memorials in Washington, D.C., may make you feel _____. | C) trepidation |
| | D) grotesque |
| _____ 8. My grandmother's _____ included a large gift to the National Wildlife Fund. | E) reverential |
| | F) inert |
| _____ 9. The anxious six-year-old walked to his first day of school with _____. | G) pious |
| _____ 10. Exhausted and stunned, on the bus after losing the championship, the players were _____. | |

VOCABULARY SKILL Match each of the idioms on the left with its correct meaning on the right. (10 points; 2 points each)

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| _____ 11. get up on the wrong side of the bed | A) precisely define |
| _____ 12. keep your chin up | B) get to the point |
| _____ 13. cut to the chase | C) cheer up |
| _____ 14. hit the nail on the head | D) get serious |
| _____ 15. get down to brass tacks | E) be in a bad mood |

LITERARY FOCUS Circle the letter of the best answer to each of the following items. (15 points; 5 points each)

16. The **setting** has a major influence on all of the following elements except—
- A) point of view
 - B) characters
 - C) plot
 - D) theme
17. What best describes the two **settings** of the story?
- A) a Nebraska kitchen and a Boston concert hall
 - B) a farm in the Green Mountains and a homestead in Nebraska
 - C) a Boston concert hall and a Methodist church in Nebraska
 - D) a Boston concert hall and a Nebraska farm

Unit 4: Collection 9, Selection Test *continued*

18. Aunt Georgiana's reaction to the **setting** of the concert reveals that she—
- A) feels isolated and aloof from the rest of the concertgoers
 - B) enjoys being part of the appreciative audience
 - C) is overcome by the beauty of her surroundings
 - D) has poor vision and is unable to appreciate the details of the concert hall

READING FOCUS Circle the letter of the best answer to each of the following items. (15 points; 5 points each)

19. Why did Clark's Aunt Georgiana warn him not to love something too much, or it might be taken from him?
- A) Aunt Georgiana loved her husband, and she was sad when he died.
 - B) She had loved living in Boston, but she had to move to Nebraska.
 - C) Things that people love will always be taken away.
 - D) She loved music, but she did not hear performances in Nebraska.
20. As the concert ends, Clark says of his aunt, "From the trembling of her face, I could well believe that before the last numbers she had been carried out where the myriad graves are . . . where . . . hope has lain down with hope and dream with dream and, renouncing, slept." What is the most significant thematic inference you can draw from this passage?
- A) A person can realize hopeless regret over having made the wrong choice in life.
 - B) One thing a person wishes for can end in disappointment.
 - C) A difficult life has the power to put a person's spirit to sleep.
 - D) Our faces often reflect how we are feeling.
21. Which of the following quotations best expresses a major **theme** of "A Wagner Matinée"?
- A) "I felt suddenly a stranger to all the present conditions of my existence, wholly ill at ease and out of place amid the familiar surroundings of my study."
 - B) "It never really died, then—the soul that can suffer so excruciatingly and so interminably. . . ."
 - C) "She seemed not to realize that she was in the city where she had spent her youth, the place longed for hungrily for half a lifetime."
 - D) "Indeed, for her own sake, I could only wish her taste for such things quite dead, and the long struggle mercifully ended at last."

CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE (20 points)

22. How does the setting influence Aunt Georgiana's major life choices? On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph that explains your answer. Support your ideas with details from the story.