**Multiple Choice**

*Identify the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.*

**Reading Comprehension**

**Directions** Read the following selections. Then answer the questions that follow.

***from* Come a Stranger**

**Cynthia Voigt**

Mina's heart was beating so fast, and so hard, she thought for sure it must show, thumping away under her blouse. Her father was driving slowly through the city of New London and then, slowly, up the river road. They had been riding for hours, without talking much, and Mina had made herself be patient. She started to recall last year’s visit to the camp. It was such a happy time. So many friends that shared her passsion for dance. Her roommate Tansey and her had everything from pillow fights to great conversations about music. Her room was always full of excitement and experiences. Her mind drifted back to realize that now they were so close, and the car was going so slowly, waiting to turn and enter between the stone pillars and creeping up the road to the quadrangle.

When the car finally stopped, Mina burst out and took her suitcase from the back seat. Her father greeted Miss Maddinton. They talked about nothing in particular. Mina looked at her sneakers and felt her heart, beating.

It all soaked into her skin, and that was enough for now. If she looked around, at the stone buildings and trees, at all the familiar remembered places, she would start running around to touch everything, and her father would know—he'd know for sure what he'd only guessed, that she was gladder to be back at camp than anywhere else, that she could barely wait for him to leave so she could be by herself and be her own self again. She didn't want to hurt her father's feelings by letting him know that, so she stood there with her eyes closed, being there.

At last, he started to leave."Have a good time, Mina." He hugged her close and she hugged him back, her head almost up to his shoulder now. "Behave yourself."

"I will. Have a good summer, Dad."

She made herself stand and wave while the car drove away, a dusty black sedan with the Maryland license plate a little white square. Then she turned slowly around, and smiled.

"You're in room three-o-seven," Miss Maddinton said to her, consulting a list she had on her clipboard. She was wearing a silvery gray suit; her hair was in dark braids that she'd wound around her head like a corona. She looked busy, she looked distant and calm, she looked beautiful.

Mina was back where there was music around everywhere, every day. She was back where if you said Prokofiev, nobody said, "Who?"

"You've grown," Miss Maddinton said, sounding doubtful, looking doubtful.

What did she expect Mina to do? Not grow? Mina laughed out loud. "I guess. My mom says I've been shooting up and shooting out."

"You can find your own way, can't you? I've got to greet the new girls."

"Three-o-seven?" Mina asked, not that she didn't remember, but just to savor this first minute a little longer. "Is Tansy here yet?"

"She's up there," Miss Maddinton said.

At that, Mina couldn't wait another minute. She grabbed her suitcase and hurrying as fast as she could with the heavy case banging against her leg went into the dormitory, went home.

Room 307 was on the third floor. The second floor was for the littlest girls, thetop floor for the fourteen year olds. Mina climbed two flights of stairs and pushed through the heavy door onto the corridor. She heard voices, she heard music. Looking at the numbers painted on the doors, she went on down the hall. Her feet wanted to jump and run, her heart wanted to stop it all from going by so fast already. Room 307 was down toward the far end of the corridor. The door was open, but no music came out. Mina guessed Tansy was probably in somebody else's room, visiting.

But the room had only one bed in it. The room was too small for two beds anyway. The room was a single room.

Mina put her suitcase down on the floor and sat on the bed. For a long minuteher mind was empty—blank and silent, a cold white emptiness. Then she understood.

They were seeing the outside of her.

Because nobody, not even Tansy, had wanted to be her roommate. So the adults had put her into a single room too.

Mina got up and set her suitcase on the bed. She unpacked her clothes into the dresser, then made up the bed and thought. She just hadn't understood, she guessed; but as soon as she thought that she knew she was wrong. They had all been friends, they had all gotten along just fine. It was what her father had said, though, what he had noticed right away when he picked her up: She wasthe only little black girl there.

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1. Which type of conflict is revealed when Mina enters her room?

a. man vs. man

b. man vs. self

c. man vs. nature

d. man vs. society

2. The flashback occurs when Mina is

a. in the car

b. in room 307

c. on the 2nd floor

d. at the stone buildings

3. Which sentence from the excerpt shows that Mina is considerate?

a. "They had been riding for hours, without talking much." (line 3)

b. "It all soaked into her skin, and that was enough for now." (line 12)

c. "She made herself stand and wave while the car drove away..." (lines 21-22)

d. "Then she turned slowly around, and smiled." (line 22)

4. You can tell that Mina enjoyed the camp so much the year before because she could

a. relax and be who she is, without fear of rejection

b. get into trouble and mischief without her parents finding out

c. enjoy some alone time, away from all of her good friends

d. spend time in a place that doesn't have loud music

5. The turning point in the story is when Mina

a. sees her room

b. says goodbye to her dad

c. greets Mrs. Maddinton

d. hears music in the hallway

6. Mina's actions in lines 35-36 tell you that she is

a. happy to be at camp

b. nervous about finding Tansy

c. scared about being alone

d. glad to see Miss Maddinton

**A Secret For Two**

**Quentin Reynolds**

Montreal is a very large city, but, like all large cities, it has some very small streets. Streets, for instance, like Prince Edward Street, which is only four blocks long, ending in a cul-de-sac. No one knew Prince Edward Street as well as did Pierre Dupin, for Pierre had delivered milk to the families on the street for thirty years now.

During the past fifteen years the horse which drew the milk wagon used by Pierre was a large white horse named Joseph. In Montreal, especially in that part of Montreal which is very French, the animals, like children, are often given the names of saints. When the big white horse first came to the Provincale Milk Company, he didn't have a name. They told Pierre that he could use the white horse henceforth. Pierre stroked the softness of the horse's neck; he stroked the sheen of its splendid belly, and he looked into the eyes of the horse.

"This is a kind horse, a gentle and a faithful horse," Pierre said, "and I can see a beautiful spirit shining out of the eyes of the horse. I will name him after good St. Joseph, who was also kind and gentle and faithful and a beautiful spirit."

Within a year Joseph knew the milk route as well as Pierre. Pierre used to boast that he didn't need reins—he never touched them. Each morning Pierre arrived at the stables of the Provincale Milk Company at five o'clock. The wagon would be loaded and Joseph hitched to it. Pierre would call "*Bon jour, vieille ami,*" as he climbed into his seat and Joseph would turn his head and the other drivers would smile and say that the horse would smile at Pierre. Then Jacques, the foreman, would say, "All right, Pierre, go on," and Pierre would call softly to Joseph, "*Avance,mon ami*," and the splendid combination would stalk proudly down the street “in unison”.

The wagon, without any direction from Pierre, would roll three blocks down St. Catherine Street, then turn right two blocks along Roslyn Avenue: then left, for that was Prince Edward Street. The horse would stop at the first house, allow Pierre perhaps thirty seconds to get down from his seat and put a bottle of milk at the front door and would then go on, skipping two houses and stopping at the third. So down the length of the street. Then Joseph, still without any direction from Pierre, would turn around and come back along the other side. Yes, Joseph was a smart horse.

Pierre would boast at the stable of Joseph's skill. "I never touch the reins. He knows just where to stop. Why, a blind man could handle my route with Joseph pulling the wagon."

So it went on for years—always the same. Pierre and Joseph both grew old together, but gradually, not suddenly. Pierre's huge walrus mustache was pure white now and Joseph didn't lift his knees so high or raise his head quite as much. Jacques, the foreman of the stables, never noticed that they were both getting old until Pierre appeared one day carrying a heavy walking stick.

"Hey, Pierre," Jacques laughed. "Maybe you got the gout, hey?"

"*Mais oui,* Jacques," Pierre said uncertainly. "One grows old. One's

legs get tired."

"You should teach the horse to carry the milk to the front door for you," Jacques told him. "He does everything else."

He knew every one of the forty families he served on Prince Edward Street. The cooks knew that Pierre could neither read nor write, so instead of following the usual custom of leaving a note in an empty bottle if an additional quart of milk was needed they would sing out when they heard the rumble of his wagon wheels over the cobbled street, "Bring an extra quart this morning, Pierre."

"So you have company for dinner tonight," he would call back gaily.

Pierre had a remarkable memory. When he arrived at the stable he'd always remember to tell Jacques, "The Paquins took an extra quart this morning; the Lemoines bought a pint of cream."

Jacques would note these things in a little book he always carried. Most of the drivers had to make out the weekly bills and collect the money, but Jacques, liking Pierre, had always excused him from this task. All Pierre had to do was to arrive at five in the morning, walk to his wagon, which was always in the same spot at the curb, and deliver his milk. He returned some two hours later, got stiffly from his seat, called a cheery "*Au 'voir*" to Jacques and then limped slowly down the street.

One morning the president of the Provincale Milk Company came to inspect the early morning deliveries. Jacques pointed Pierre out to him and said, "Watch how he talks to that horse. See how the horse listens and how he turns his head toward Pierre? See the look in that horse's eyes? You know, I think those two share a secret. I have often noticed it. It is as though they both sometimes chuckle at us as they go off on their route. Pierre is a good man, *Monsieur* President, but he gets old. Would it be too bold for me to suggest that he be retired and be given perhaps a small pension?" he added anxiously.

"But of course," the president laughed, "I know his record. He has been on this route now for thirty years and never once has there been a complaint. Tell him it is time he rested. His salary will go on just the same."

But Pierre refused to retire. He was panic-stricken at the thought of not driving Joseph every day. "We are two old men," he said to Jacques. "Let us wear out together. When Joseph is ready to retire—then I, too, will quit."

Jacques, who was a kind man, understood. There was something about Pierre and Joseph which made a man smile tenderly. It was as though each drew some hidden strength from the other. When Pierre was sitting in his seat, and when Joseph was hitched to the wagon, neither seemed old. But when they finished their work, then Pierre would limp down the street slowly, seeming very old indeed, and the horse's head would drop and he would walk very wearily to his stall.

Then one morning Jacques had dreadful news for Pierre when he arrived. It was a cold morning and still pitch-dark. The air was like iced wine that morning and the snow which had fallen during the night glistened like a million diamonds piled together.

Jacques said, "Pierre, your horse, Joseph, did not wake this morning. He was very old, Pierre, he was twenty-five, and that is like seventy-five for a man."

"Yes," Pierre said, slowly. "Yes. I am seventy-five. And I cannot see Joseph again."

"Of course you can," Jacques soothed. "He is over in his stall, looking very peaceful. Go over and see him."

Pierre took one step forward then turned. "No . . . no . . . you don't understand, Jacques."

Jacques clapped him on the shoulder. "We'll find another horse just as good as Joseph. Why, in a month you'll teach him to know your route as well as Joseph did. We'll . . ."

The look in Pierre's eyes stopped him. For years Pierre had worn a heavy cap, the peak of which came low over his eyes, keeping the bitter morning wind out of them. Now Jacques looked into Pierre's eyes and he saw something which startled him. He saw a dead, lifeless look in them. The eyes weremirroring the grief that was in Pierre's heart and his soul. It was as though his heart and soul had died.

"Take today off, Pierre," Jacques said, but already Pierre was hobbling off down the street, and had one been near one would have seen tears streaming down his cheeks and have heard half-smothered sobs. Pierre walked to the corner and stepped into the street. There was a warning yell from the driver of a huge truck that was coming fast and there was a scream of brakes, but Pierre apparently heard neither.

Five minutes later an ambulance driver said, "He's dead. Was killed instantly."

Jacques and several of the milk-wagon drivers had arrived and they looked down at the still figure.

"I couldn't help it," the driver of the truck protested, "he walked right into my truck. He never saw it, I guess. Why, he walked into it as though he was blind."

The ambulance doctor bent down. "Blind? Of course the man was blind. See those cataracts? This man has been blind for five years." He turned to Jacques. "You say he worked for you? Didn't you know he was blind?"

"No . . . no . . ." Jacques said softly. "None of us knew. Only one knew—a friend of his named Joseph . . . . It was a secret, I think, just between those two."

**1. Bon jour, vieille ami** French for “Hello, old friend.”

**2. Avance, mon ami** French for “Go forward, my friend.”

**3. Mais oui** French for “but yes.”

**4. Au ‘voir** French for “until we meet again”; “goodbye.”

**5. Monsieur** French for “mister” or “sir.”

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7. Which of the following *best* summarizes the story?

a. Pierre teaches his horse how to do his work for him.

b. A man spends his lifetime delivering milk in Montreal.

c. Jacques is pleased with the years of service Pierre has given him.

d. A milkman and his horse work closely for many years until their passing.

8. Lines 1 -13 represent the story’s

a. exposition

b. rising action

c. falling action

d. resolution

9. Why did the president of the milk company offer Pierre his salary even after his retirement?

a. He arrived on time everyday.

b. He was familiar with the area.

c. He was the only one able to control Joseph.

d. He had successfully worked for over 30 years

10. The details about the setting in lines 21 - 26 suggest that Pierre and Joseph-

a. avoid relationships with people on their route

b. know Prince Edward Street as well as they know each other

c. have difficulty trusting one another on the milk route

d. are eager to complete their routine on Prince Edward Street

11. In lines 29 - 32, the author shows that the characters are growing old mainly by-

a. showing how Pierre and Joseph act toward others

b. describing Pierre and joseph’s physical appearance

c. including what Pierre says to Joseph about himself

d. describing other’ reactions to Pierre and Joseph

12. The climax of the story occurs when-

a. Joseph begins to grow weak with age

b. Jacques requests a pension for Pierre

c. Pierre is hit by a passing truck

d. Jacques learns that Pierre is blind

13. Which of the phrases below express the story’s theme?

a. relationships are built on dependency

b. trust between friends can be very strong

c. animals can feel love just as people can

d. lies between people can be destructive

**Vocabulary**

**Directions:** Use context clues and your knowledge of root words to answer the following question.

14. The phrase “in unison” in line 20 means-

a. as one

b. singing

c. full of life

d. unbelievably

**Directions:** Use your knowledge of analogies to complete the following:

15. Joseph : helpful :: Pierre : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

a. wealthy

b. literate

c. unreliable

d. dependent

**Short Answer**

**Directions:** Answer each question on a separate piece of paper.

16. Explain how *A Secret for Two* would be different if told from Pierre’s point of view? Use information from the story to support your answer.

17. Identify the protagonist in *A Secret for Two*. Use information from the story to explain your answer.