BLOGS

Sample Questions For CLAT 2023: English

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Questions 1 – 10: Answer based on the following passage

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death. It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half-concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself, she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul. She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all acquainted with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves. There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams. She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the colour that filled the air. Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will–as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself, a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: “free, free, free!” The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and grey and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him–sometimes. Often, she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being! “Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering. Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the key hold, imploring for admission.

“Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door–you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.” “Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window. Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a

shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom. Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey.

It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife. When the doctors came, they said she had died of heart disease–of the joy that kills.

1. What is the irony in the above passage?

a. There was such a beautiful sight outside her window despite news of a tragic occurrence in the household.
b. Mrs. Mallard felt a sense of liberation when she heard about the death of her husband.
c. Mrs. Mallard was hopeful for the future despite the present circumstances in her life being dire.
d. The characters attribute her death to her shocked elation that her husband is alive whereas the real cause of her death is from shock, not of joy, but of horror.

2. In the above passage, what is the "joy that kills"?

a. It is the beauty that Mrs. Mallard experiences even during her most trying times.
b. It is Mrs. Mallard's unwavering optimism.
c. It is Mrs. Mallard's ruined dream of experiencing a free life the moment she discovers that Brently is alive.
d. It was the discovery that her husband's friend had lied to her about her husband's death.

3. What is the view of the author on marriage as seen from the above passage?

a. The author is cynical about marriage.
b. The author is hopeful about marriage.
c. The author is indifferent to marriage.
d. The author is repulsed by marriage.

4. What is the significance of the line, “She could see the open square before her house the top of the trees that were all aquiver with new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which someone was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.”?

a. The setting outside is a polar opposite of the way that Mrs. Mallard is feeling at that particular point in time.
b. She uses the beauty of life around her to console herself.
c. The sight of vibrant life outside her window has made her realise that her husband’s death has set her free.
d. The sights outside her window make it clear to her how tragic her life has been up to that point.

5. What is the central theme of the above passage?

a. Beauty can be found in the toughest of times.
b. Marriage is pain.
c. Oppression can be a killer.
d. Friends can be deceptive.

6. In the above passage, the line “knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband’s death.” Is an example of which of the following?

a. Foreshadowing b. Metaphor c. Irony d. Symbolism

7. Which of the following is the author most likely to agree with?

a. Marriage is intrinsically oppressive.
b. Sometimes women are stuck in oppressive marriages.
c. Men are oppressive in nature.
d. Oppression is everywhere.

8. Which of the following words is farthest in meaning to the word ‘tumultuously’ as appearing in the passage?

a. Passionately

b. Impulsively

c. Obtusely

d. Cautiously

9. What literary device is employed by the author in the line “When the storm of grief had spent itself, she went to her room alone.”?

a. Simile

b. Metaphor

c. Alliteration

d. Symbolism

10. What literary device is employed by the author in the line “When she abandoned herself, a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips.”?

a. Simile

b. Metaphor

c. Personification

d. Symbolism

ANSWERS

1. (d)

Explanation: Although the other three options could be considered to be ironical, they are, in fact, not the main irony is the passage. The main irony on which the passage concludes is the fact that the other characters mistakenly attribute Mrs. Mallard’s death to her shocked elation that her husband Brently is alive. Supposedly killed in a train accident, Brently suddenly appears at the end of the story. During the “hour” of the story, however, Mrs. Mallard secretly celebrates her new freedom from her marriage and husband. Her death, therefore, is from shock not of joy but of horror.

2. (c)

Explanation: The “joy that kills” is Louise Mallard’s ruined dream of experiencing a free life the moment she discovers that Brently is alive. When Louise Mallard learns that her domineering husband, Brently Mallard, has tragically died in a railroad accident, she is

initially overcome with grief and goes upstairs to compose herself. Once Louise is alone in her room, she begins to think about her future as a widow and realizes that she will be completely free and independent. Louise recognizes that she will have the rest of her life to do as she pleases and will no longer live under her husband's forceful hand. However, when she learns that her husband is still alive, she is overcome with shock and consequently dies. The other three options are incorrect as they are not the reasons for why Mrs. Mallard had expired.

3. (a)
Explanation: This is evidenced by the fact that the author describes marriage as being something that takes away from freedom and independence of the parties. Options b) and c) can in no way be inferred from the passage as they are opposite to the central theme of the passage. Option d) is not very different from how the author feels about marriage, but it is too extreme to be inferred from the passage.

4. (c)

Explanation: Mrs. Mallard mirrors the mood of exuberant joy and freedom that she has witnessed outside of her window. By becoming aware of the vibrant rebirth of life outside her window on a spring day, she realises that her husband's death has set her free. The other options are incorrect. She doesn't feel the polar opposite of the scene unfolding outside of her window. Neither is she using the sight to console herself. Option d) is incorrect as it is too much of an assumption to make.

5. (c)
Explanation: This is true because the entire story revolves around how Mrs. Mallard felt like she was being oppressed by her husband. Further, the ultimate reason for her death was due to the fact that she was shocked that her husband was alive. She was apprehensive of being oppressed further. Option a) is not the central theme but can be inferred from a part of the passage. Option b) and d) are blanket statements and are incorrect.

6. (a)
Explanation: This line is a literary device that is used by the author to foreshadow what is going to happen to Mrs. Mallard towards the end of the story when the news that her husband is alive is abruptly broken to her, ultimately resulting in her death. Although metaphors, irony and symbolism is used in other parts of the passage, the quoted line is not an example of them.

7. (b)
Explanation: This is evidenced by the fact that Mrs. Mallard felt like she was being oppressed in the passage. The other three options are oversimplifications and are hence the wrong answers.

8. (d)
Explanation: The word tumultuously means “marked by disturbance and uproar”. Options a), b) and c) are similar in meaning to the word tumultuously. Option d) however, is opposite in meaning to the word tumultuously.

9. (b)

Explanation: In the given line, the author uses a metaphor on the word “grief” because the news of her husband’s death hit her all at once and then it finally died down. She came to a realisation and wanted to be alone. A simile is a comparison made using the word “like”; and alliteration is a literary device employing the repetition of sounds; and symbols are when symbols are used to convey ideas. Hence, the other three options are incorrect.

10. (c)
Explanation: A personification is when the attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human, or the representation of an abstract quality in human form. In the given line, a little whispered word “escaped” is an example of a personification because a word cannot escape. It is given a human like attribute.

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