"A Visit to Grandmother" by William Melvin Kelley

Multiple Choice

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

Critical Reading Identify the letter of the choice that best answers the question.

1. What reason does Charles give for driving south in “A Visit to Grandmother”?
   a. He needs to take Chig's brother and sister to camp.
   b. He wants to go see his brother GL and GL's wife Rose.
   c. He wants to go to Nashville to attend his college class reunion.
   d. He is taking Chig to see his old college in case he decides to go there.

2. Charles says that he left home when he was fifteen because he wanted to attend school. What was probably the real reason that Charles left home?
   a. He thought nobody in his family loved him.
   b. He had a terrible fight with his brother Hiram.
   c. Mama sent Charles away so she could spend all her time with GL.
   d. He wanted to get a college degree to show he was better than GL.

3. Chig notices that his father gets an ugly look on his face when he hugs Mama. What can you infer about how Charles feels about Mama?
   a. He is frightened of Mama's rage.
   b. He feels respect and love for Mama.
   c. He is angry at Mama about something.
   d. He feels ashamed of himself around Mama.

4. What is the best way to describe GL's character in “A Visit to Grandmother”?
   a. friendly and intelligent
   b. lazy and stupid
   c. sincere and pessimistic
   d. charming and irresponsible

5. Which of the following lines from “A Visit to Grandmother” is an example of direct characterization?
   a. “Doctor Charles Dunford cared about people.”
   b. “She let him go, and fell back into her chair, grabbing the arms.”
   c. “When Uncle Hiram and Mae, his wife, came they sat down to eat.”
   d. “They sat in silence for awhile and then heard a key in the front door.”

6. Which of the following lines from the story is an example of indirect characterization?
   a. “The old lady had not heard him; only Chig had heard.”
   b. “She smiled. She had all her teeth, but they were too perfect to be her own.”
   c. “They had been met at the door by Aunt Rose, GL’s wife, and ushered into the living room.”
   d. “Tears now traveled down the lines in her face, but when she spoke, her voice was clear.”
7. Which of the following might help you infer that Chig was very upset by his father’s tears?

a. knowing that Charles cries about many things  
b. knowing that Chig's mother is not a nervous woman  
c. thinking about how Mama paid more attention to GL than to Charles  
d. thinking about how you might feel if you saw your own father crying

8. At the end of “A Visit to Grandmother,” the author describes GL’s smile as the innocent smile of a five-year-old. Why does the author compare GL to a five-year-old?

a. to reveal that Charles is in fact older than GL  
b. to show that GL is not mature and not very smart  
c. to make it clear that Charles is wrong to be jealous of GL  
d. to imply that GL is very attractive and does not show his age

9. What lesson about life can be learned from “A Visit to Grandmother”?

a. Brothers should forgive one another's faults.  
b. Grandchildren should not visit their grandparents.  
c. The pain of family misunderstandings can last a lifetime.  
d. Parents and adult children should not argue for the grandchildren's sake.

10. Charles does not tell Chig right away about his plans to visit his family. What can you infer about his feelings concerning the visit?

a. Charles is not looking forward to the visit.  
b. Charles wants the visit to be a surprise for Chig.  
c. Charles thinks Chig will be reluctant to go.  
d. Charles did not think he would have time to visit.

11. What detail is explained by 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.

a. the reason that Chig's father moved to New York when he was an adult.  
b. the reason that Chig’s father thinks of GL as a practical joker.  
c. the reason that Chig and his father were traveling near Grandmother's home.  
d. the reason Chig's father wanted to go to his college reunion.

12. In “A Visit to Grandmother,” why is it important to Mama for people to understand that she can do things for herself?

a. She is embarrassed by GL and his wife Rose.  
b. She thinks everyone else does things the wrong way.  
c. She is too proud to let people think that she is old and feeble.  
d. She wants her children to leave her alone to enjoy her retirement.

13. In “A Visit to Grandmother,” Charles uses formal standard English at his mother's house because he

a. respects and admires the family.
b. wants Chig to be proud of him.
c. has serious professional ambitions.
d. sets himself apart from the family.

14. Which of the following quotations from the story explains why Charles's mother spent more time with GL than with Charles?

   a. “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.”
   b. “That's not true, Mama. You know it.”
   c. “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.”
   d. “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.”

15. Why does GL refer to Charles as a “rascal” at the end of “A Visit to Grandmother”?

   a. GL suspects Charles is dishonest.
   b. GL is fond of Charles.
   c. GL resents Charles's interference.
   d. GL thinks Charles is mischievous.

16. What is the most important story in “A Visit to Grandmother”?

   a. a teenager's first meeting with his father's family
   b. a mother's reunion with her son
   c. a man's attempt to deal with a painful childhood.
   d. a horse's misbehavior and its results

Essay

17. Thinking About the Big Question: Can progress be made without conflict? In “A Visit to Grandmother,” Charles makes a great deal of progress—positive change—to become the man Chig describes in the first paragraph. What role do you think Charles’s childhood conflicts played in helping him become a better man? Answer this question in a well-written paragraph: First, identify the conflicts that Charles faced as a child. Then, describe what Charles is like as a man. Finally, explain how his childhood conflicts helped him progress into a successful adult.