The Watsons Go To Birmingham – 1963 Unit Test

MULTIPLE CHOICE
Directions: Read each question carefully. Circle the corresponding letter that best answers the question.

1. Christopher Paul Curtis, the author, wrote the novel from which character’s point of view?
   a. Daniel Watson
   b. Byron Watson
   c. Kenny Watson
   d. Grandma Sands

2. The story predominantly takes place in _________________.
   a. Wichita, Kansas
   b. Birmingham, Alabama
   c. Detroit, Michigan
   d. Flint, Michigan

3. “It was one of those super-duper-cold Saturdays. One of those days that when you breathed out your breath kind of hung frozen in the air like a hunk of smoke and you could walk along and look exactly like a train blowing out big, fat white puffs of smoke” (1).
   Which literary device is present in the excerpt above?
   a. Metaphor
   b. Simile
   c. Parallelism
   d. Idiom

4. The narration mode of The Watsons Go To Birmingham- 1963 is _________________.
   a. First- person point of view
   b. Second- person point of view
   c. Third-person omniscient
   d. Third-person subjective

5. Which of the following is NOT true about Byron?
   a. He is always getting into trouble
   b. He is in fourth grade
   c. His best friend is Buphead
   d. He is a bully
6. “If you asked Momma why you had to do something and she didn’t feel like explaining she just repeated herself. She was chopping up onions for spaghetti sauce and I guess the tears made it so she didn’t feel like talking. If you were stupid enough to ask your question again there would be the loudest quiet in the world coming from Momma” (75).

“Loudest quiet” (75) is an example of ____________________.
   a. Metaphor
   b. Assonance
   c. Hyperbole
   d. Oxymoron

7. “Peon” means ________________.
   a. A subservient working-class laborer
   b. A type of bird
   c. A king or queen
   d. A juvenile delinquent

8. All of the following are themes within the novel except ________________.
   a. Racism and Prejudice
   b. Family relationships
   c. Growing up
   d. The impermanence of life

9. Kenny’s character could be described as ________________.
   a. Static
   b. Dynamic
   c. Flat
   d. Translucent

10. Why might Momma have wanted to leave the South despite having spent the majority of her life there?
    a. Black people in the South are subject to more discrimination than in the North
    b. She and Grandma Sands don’t necessarily get along
    c. The weather in the South is intolerably hot
    d. There are more opportunities to work in the North

11. Why do the kids at school tease Kenny?
    a. He is wicked smart
    b. He’s black
    c. He has a lazy eye
    d. He’s poor
12. “When Byron’s fourth Swedish Crème left his hand I knew that if the bird didn’t move he was going to get whacked. The cookie popped the bird smack-jab in the chest! The bird’s wings both stuck out to the side and for a hot second with its tail hanging down and its wings sticking out like that it looked like a perfect small letter t stuck up on the telephone wire.”

In the first and second lines of this excerpt, the writer uses this type of figurative language:

a. Hyperbole  
   b. Conceit  
   c. Personification  
   d. Metaphor

13. Several times throughout this phrase is repeated, making it a motif:
   a. “Cash rules everything around me.”
   b. “I ride in the front, ya dig?”
   c. “Read, aim, fire!”
   d. “Yakety yak.”

14. “Leave it to Daddy Cool to kill a bird, then give it a funeral. Leave it to Daddy Cool to torture human kids at school all day long and never have his conscience bother him but to feel sorry for a stupid little grayish brown bird.

   I don’t know, I really wished I was as smart as some people thought I was, ‘cause some of the time it was real hard to understand what was going on with Byron” (85).

   What do you think is going on with Byron?

   a. Byron is a bully – nothing more and nothing less – and he was only crying because he puked up a bag and a half of Swedish Crème cookies and chunks of green apple.
   b. Who knows. I mean, can anyone really ever understand another human being?
   c. Byron is an emotionally disturbed little boy who does not receive enough positive attention.
   d. Byron really likes mourning doves.

15. How might spending time in Alabama help Byron’s attitude improve?

   a. Grandma Sands is a tough old lady who will keep Byron under control.
   b. Byron will be separated from Buphead, who is a bad influence and a trouble-maker.
   c. Byron will get more attention from Grandma Sands because Momma and Daddy have their hands full with Joetta and Kenny and don’t necessarily have the time or patience to raise Byron properly.
   d. The exposure to racial tension in the South will prepare Byron to exist in a world where he will constantly be discriminated against due to the color of his skin.
16. At the Ohio rest stop the Watson children were amazed to find that _______________.
   a. They were not allowed to use the “Whites Only” bathroom
   b. Momma was afraid of driving at night
   c. The radio stations had changed from Michigan to Ohio
   d. The toilets were located outside in a separate building

17. “What Dad was calling ‘just the mountains’ were the scariest things I’d ever seen. On every side of us were great big, black hills, and behind these were even bigger, blacker hills, and behind these were the biggest, blackest hills. It looked like someone had crumpled up a pitch-black blanket and dropped the Weird Watsons down into the middle of it.

   The air didn’t seem right either. It made you feel like something bad was going to happen. If this was a movie there would be loud, scary organ music playing right now” (145).

   What is significant about the setting in this passage, and how does the setting differ from that of Flint?

   a. The setting in the passage above establishes the mood. Quite literally the Watsons are enveloped in menacing shadows and mountains of tension. The setting of Flint establishes a playful, welcoming mood.
   b. The setting of the passage above is in Tennessee, and the setting of Flint is in Michigan.
   c. There are no mountains in Michigan and there are mountains in Tennessee.
   d. The setting of the passage above suggests that the Watsons are lost in the backwoods of Tennessee. In Flint the Watsons were in familiar surroundings.

18. The danger at Collier’s landing was _________________.
   a. Quick sand
   b. A whirlpool
   c. A cliff
   d. Very deep water

19. Byron told Joey that the Wool Pooh was _________________.
   a. A lie that Grandma Sands had made up
   b. A monster that lurked in Birmingham and lived in the trees
   c. Winnie the Pooh’s evil twin brother
   d. Something that grownups can’t see
20. When Kenny was sucked into the whirlpool, what did he see?
   a. An angel that looked like Joetta
   b. His parents running to save him
   c. Everything that had happened in his past
   d. A dog

21. Who saved Kenny from the whirlpool?
   a. Joetta
   b. Byron
   c. Daddy
   d. Mr. Robert

22. What sounded like a far off thunderstorm to Kenny was actually _________________.
   a. Gunshots at Collier’s landing
   b. A bomb exploding in the Birmingham Courthouse
   c. A bomb exploding in Joey’s church
   d. Gunshots at Joey’s church

SHORT ESSAY RESPONSE:
Directions: Read the question. Respond to all facets of the question in a well-written paragraph.

23. What was Kenny and Byron’s relationship like before the trip to Alabama? How has their relationship changed since their return from Birmingham? Why?

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