

English III Practice EOI Selection #6: Fiction: The Open Window by Saki (H. H. Munro)

The Open Window

Saki (H. H. Munro)

"My aunt will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel," said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; "in the meantime you must try and put up with me."

Framton Nuttel endeavoured to say the correct something which should duly flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing.

"I know how it will be," his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; "you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul, and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there.

"Do you know many of the people round here?" asked the niece, when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communion.

"Hardly a soul," said Framton. "My sister was staying here, at the rectory, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here."

"Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?" pursued the self-possessed young lady.

"Only her name and address," admitted the caller.

"Her great tragedy happened just three years ago," said the child; "that would be since your sister's time."

"Her tragedy?" asked Framton.

"You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon," said the niece, indicating a large French window that opened on to a lawn.

"Has that window got anything to do with the tragedy?"

"Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their day's shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favourite snipe-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It had been that dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the

dreadful part of it." Here the child's voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. "Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back some day, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walk in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening till it is quite dusk.

Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm, and Ronnie, her youngest brother, singing 'Bertie, why do you bound?' as he always did to tease her, because she said it got on her nerves. Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window—"

She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance.

"I hope Vera has been amusing you?" she said.

"She has been very interesting," said Framton.

"I hope you don't mind the open window," said Mrs. Sappleton briskly; "my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way. They've been out for snipe in the marshes to-day."

She rattled on cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds, and the prospects for duck in the winter. To Framton it was all purely horrible. He made a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic; he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate coincidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary.

"The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise," announced Framton, who labored under the tolerably wide-spread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and infirmities.

"Oh?" said Mrs. Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention - but not to what Framton was saying.

"Here they are at last!" she cried. "Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!"

Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction.

In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window; they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house, and then a hoarse young voice started singing."

Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat; the hall-door, the gravel-drive, and the front gate were dimly-noted stages in his headlong retreat. A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid an imminent collision.

"Here we are, my dear," said the bearer of the white mackintosh, coming in through the window; "fairly muddy, but most of it's dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?"

"A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel," said Mrs. Sappleton; "could only talk about his illnesses, and dashed off without a word of good-bye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost."

"I expect it was the spaniel," said the niece calmly; "he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make anyone their nerve."

Romance at short notice was her specialty.

1.

“Who was that who bolted out as we came up?”

Bolted is to waited as vacation is to

- A break.
- B work.
- C stay.
- D lock.

2.

A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid imminent collision.

In this sentence from the passage, the word imminent means

- A frightening.
- B head to head.
- C about to happen.
- D dangerous and painful.

3.

The author uses dialogue

- A to foreshadow the outcome of events.
- B to define symbols of love and support.
- C to help the characters hide their feelings.
- D to portray the personalities of the characters.

4.

Which set of notes best represents the accurate sequence of events on the passage?

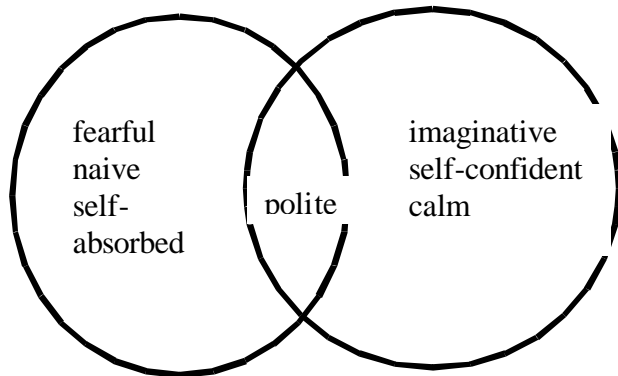
- A Mr. Nuttel meets the Sappleton family.
Vera lies to Mr. Nuttel.
The dogs scare Mr. Nuttel.
Mr. Nuttel thinks Vera is terrible.
Mr. Nuttel decides to visit other friends.
- B Mrs. Sappleton invites Mr. Nuttel to visit.
The hunters come home.
Vera introduces the family to Mr. Nuttel.
Mr. Sappleton dislikes Mr. Nuttel.
Mr. Nuttel decides to go home.
- C Mr. Nuttel meets Vera.
Vera tells him about the hunting tragedy.
The hunters return.
Mr. Nuttel flees.
Vera tells about Mr. Nuttel's fear of dogs.
- D Vera is asked to entertain Mr. Nuttel.
Mr. Nuttel enjoys hearing about the hunting.
Mrs. Sappleton helps Mr. Nuttel feel comfortable.
Vera introduces her uncles to Mr. Nuttel.
Mr. Nuttel leaves because he is afraid of the dogs.

5.

Which graphic organizer best represents the character traits of Mr. Nuttel and Vera?

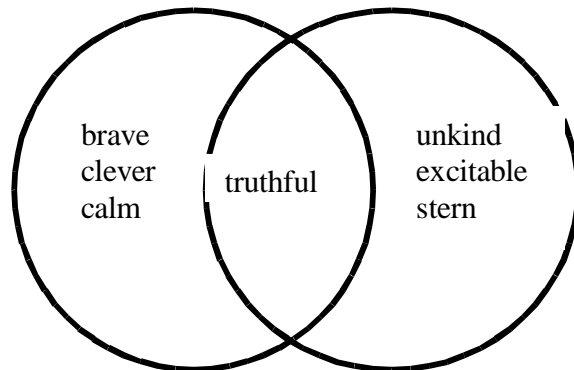
A Mr. Nuttel

Vera



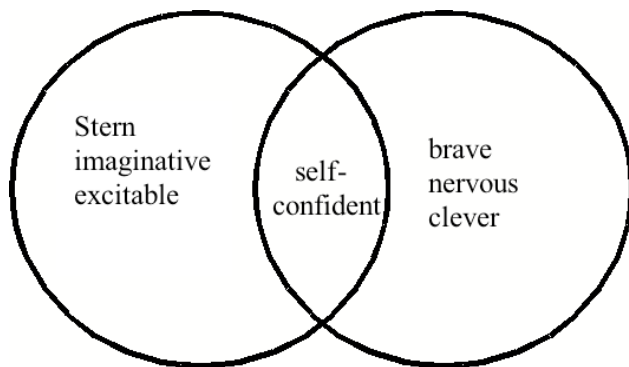
B Mr. Nuttel

Vera



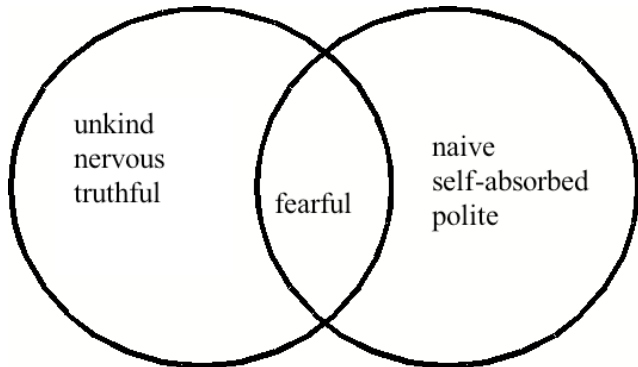
C Mr. Nuttel

Vera



D Mr. Nuttel

Vera



5.**Which is most likely the cause of conflict in the passage?**

- A Mr. Sappleton's pack of dogs
- B Mrs. Sappleton's grief
- C Mr. Nuttel's illness
- D Vera's stories

6.**Which sentence best supports the idea that Vera makes up stories?**

- A "In the meantime you must try and put up with me."
- B Romance on short notice was her specialty.
- C She broke off with a little shudder.
- D "That was the dreadful part of it."

7.**Based on what she says in the passage, Vera wants people to think she is**

- A smart and funny.
- B gentle and helpful.
- C amusing and entertaining.
- D knowledgeable and mature.

8.

Why is it important to the plot that Vera meets with Mr. Nuttel before her aunt comes into the room?

- A Mr. Nuttel needs to learn about his hostess.
- B Vera wants to keep her aunt from being upset.
- C Vera's aunt knows the truth about the hunters.
- D Being around many people is Mr. Nuttel's problem.

9.

Which is the best way to show on a note card how Vera solves the problem she has caused by telling Mr. Nuttel the story about the hunters?

- A Vera tells story → goes outside to be alone
- B Vera tells story → makes up another story
- C Vera tells story → introduces the hunters
- D Vera tells story → apologizes to her aunt

10.

What would be the best research question to use as a guide when developing a presentation about the works of Saki (H. H. Munro)?

- A How did Munro incorporate British cultural life into his works?
- B What effect did growing up in India have on Munro?
- C Where did Munro live during his adult years?
- D Why did Munro decide to join the Army as WWI began?

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	ANSWER:	State Obj.:	DOK:
1.	B	1.3	2
2.	C	1.4	1
3.	C	2.1.c	3
4.	A	2.1.d	3
5.	D	2.2.b	2
6.	B	2.2.d	2
7.	D	3.2.c	2
8.	C	3.2.e	2
9.	B	4.1.c	2
10.	B	4.2.e	3