

Question 1-11 are based on the following passage.

This passage is excerpted from L.M. Montgomery, "The Gossip of Valley View," originally published in 1910.

It was the first of April, and Julius Barrett, aged fourteen, perched on his father's gatepost, watched ruefully the low descending sun, and counted that day lost. He had not succeeded in "fooling" a single person, although he had tried repeatedly. One and all, old and young, of his intended victims had been too wary for Julius. Hence, Julius was disgusted and ready for anything in the way of a stratagem or a spoil.

The Barrett gatepost topped the highest hill in Valley View. Julius could see the entire settlement, from "Young" Thomas Everett's farm, a mile to the west, to Adelia Williams's weather-grey little house on a moonrise slope to the east. He was gazing moodily down the muddy road when Dan Chester, homeward bound from the post office, came riding sloppily along on his grey mare and pulled up by the Barrett gate to hand a paper to Julius. Dan was a young man who took life and himself very seriously. He seldom smiled, never joked, and had a Washingtonian reputation for veracity. Dan had never told a conscious falsehood in his life; he never even exaggerated.

Julius, beholding Dan's solemn face, was seized with a perfectly irresistible desire to "fool" him. At the same moment his eye caught the dazzling reflection of the setting sun on the windows of Adelia Williams's house, and he had an inspiration little short of diabolical. "Have you heard the news, Dan?" he asked.

"No, what is it?" asked Dan.

"I dunno's I ought to tell it," said Julius reflectively. "It's kind of a family affair, but then Adelia didn't say not to, and anyway it'll be all over the place soon. So I'll tell you, Dan, if you'll promise never to tell who told you. Adelia Williams and Young Thomas Everett are going to be married."

Julius delivered himself of this tremendous lie with a transparently earnest countenance. Yet Dan, credulous as he was, could not believe it all at once.

"Git out," he said.

"It's true, 'pon my word," protested Julius. "Adelia was up last night and told Ma all about it. Ma's her cousin, you know. The wedding is to be in June, and Adelia asked Ma to help her get her quilts and things ready."

Julius reeled all this off so glibly that Dan finally believed the story, despite the fact that the people thus coupled together in prospective matrimony were the very last people in Valley View who could have been expected to marry each other. Young Thomas was a confirmed bachelor of fifty, and Adelia Williams was forty; they were not supposed to be even well acquainted, as the Everetts and the Williamses had never been very friendly, although no open feud existed between them.

Nevertheless, in view of Julius's circumstantial statements, the amazing news must be true, and Dan was instantly agog to carry it further. Julius watched Dan and the grey mare out of sight, fairly writhing with ecstasy. Oh, but Dan had been easy! The story would be all over Valley View in twenty-four hours. Julius laughed until he came near to falling off the gatepost.

At this point Julius and Danny drop out of our story, and Young Thomas enters.

It was two days later when Young Thomas heard that he was to be married to Adelia Williams in June. Eben Clark, the blacksmith, told him when he went to the forge to get his horse shod. Young Thomas laughed his big jolly laugh. Valley View gossip had been marrying him off for the last thirty years, although never before to Adelia Williams.

"It's news to me," he said tolerantly.

Eben grinned broadly. "Ah, you can't bluff it off like that, Tom," he said. "The news came too straight this time. Well, I was glad to hear it, although I was mighty surprised. I never thought of you and Adelia. But she's a fine little woman and will make you a capital wife."

Young Thomas grunted and drove away. He had a good deal of business to do that day, involving calls at various places—the store for molasses, the mill for flour, Jim Bentley's for seed grain, the doctor's for toothache drops for his housekeeper, the post office for mail—and at each and every place he was joked about his approaching marriage. In the end it rather annoyed Young Thomas. He drove home at last in what was for him something of a temper. How on earth had that fool story started? With such detailed circumstantiality of rugs and quilts, too? Adelia Williams must be going to marry somebody, and the Valley View gossips, unable to locate the man, had guessed Young Thomas.

1

Over the course of the passage, the main focus shifts from

- A) a character's attempt at a practical joke to the effect felt by another character.
- B) a depiction of a small town to the relationships among the characters in the town.
- C) a character's humorous behavior to the evolution of a story passed around the town.
- D) a description of a friendship to a discussion of a prank perpetuated by the town.

2

Which statement best characterizes the relationship between Julius and Dan?

- A) Dan is trusting of Julius and does not question his story about Thomas.
- B) Dan is skeptical by nature but trusts Julius to always tell him the truth.
- C) Dan's disposition makes him an attractive target for Julius' plan.
- D) Dan's attitude towards Julius illustrates an imbalanced friendship.

3

As used in line 2, the phrase "ruefully" most nearly means

- A) mournfully.
- B) apologetically.
- C) repentantly.
- D) angrily.

4

As used in line 18, "veracity" most nearly means

- A) candor.
- B) truthfulness
- C) versimilitude
- D) impartiality

5

The conversation between Julius and Dan serves mainly to

- A) show how bored Julius is with the inhabitants of Valley View.
- B) provide a context for the relationships in the community.
- C) demonstrate Dan's gullibility when it comes to rumors.
- D) establish why Julius' story was so widely accepted.

6

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) lines 3–5 ("He . . . repeatedly")
- B) lines 33–34 ("Julius . . . countenance")
- C) lines 45–49 ("Young Thomas . . . them")
- D) lines 50–52 ("Nevertheless . . . further")

7

In the passage, Dan is characterized as someone who is

- A) honest.
- B) foolish.
- C) stubborn.
- D) distrustful.

8

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) lines 16–20 ("Dan . . . exaggerated")
- B) lines 21–22 ("Julius . . . him")
- C) lines 34–35 ("Yet . . . once")
- D) lines 53–54 ("Oh . . . easy")

9

Lines 57–58 ("At . . . enters") serves mainly to

- A) introduce a new character and setting to the story.
- B) show the resulting impact of the rumor Julius started.
- C) add a surprising twist to the story.
- D) create a sense of suspense for the outcome of the prank.

10

Eben's comments in lines 66–70 ("Ah . . . wife") primarily indicate that he

- A) disagrees strongly with Thomas.
- B) finds the rumor to be funny.
- C) believes that Thomas is lying.
- D) feels unsurprised by the match.

11

It can be inferred that Tom is "in something of a temper" because he

- A) feels exasperated by Julius' tendency to gossip.
- B) believes Adelia doesn't want to marry him.
- C) is agitated that he is the subject of a rumor.
- D) has too many errands to run in Valley View.