

Pre-Test - Narrative

Name: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: kristio

Instructions: Write the letter of the best answer on the line next to the question number.

The Beadwork

by Zitkala-Sa

Soon after breakfast, mother sometimes began her beadwork. On a bright clear day, she pulled out the wooden pegs that pinned the skirt of our wigwam to the ground, and she rolled the canvas partway up on its frame of slender poles. Then the cool morning breezes swept freely through our dwelling, now and then wafting the perfume of sweet grasses from newly burnt prairie.

Untying the long tasseled strings that bound a small brown buckskin bag, my mother spread her bunches of colored beads upon a mat beside her, just as an artist arranges the paints upon a palette. On a lapboard she smoothed out a double sheet of soft white buckskin, and drawing a long, narrow blade from a beaded case that hung on the left of her wide belt, she trimmed the buckskin into shape. Often she worked upon small moccasins for her small daughter. Then I became intensely interested in her designing. With a proud, beaming face, I watched her work. In my imagination, I saw myself walking in a new pair of snugly fitting moccasins. I felt the envious eyes of my playmates upon the pretty red beads decorating my feet.

Close beside my mother I sat on a rug, with a scrap of buckskin in one hand and an awl in the other. This was the beginning of my practical observation lessons in the art of beadwork. My mother pulled out a single thread from a skein of finely twisted threads of silvery sinews. With an awl she pierced the buckskin, and skillfully threaded it with the white sinew. Picking up the tiny beads one by one, she strung them with the point of her thread, always twisting it carefully after every stitch.

It took many trials before I learned how to knot my sinew thread on the point of my finger, as I saw her do. Then the next difficulty was in keeping my thread stiffly twisted, so that I could easily string my beads upon it. My mother required that I create original designs for my lessons in beading. At first I frequently ensnared many a sunny hour into working a long design. Soon I learned from self-inflicted punishment to refrain from drawing complex patterns, for I had to finish whatever I began.

After some experience I usually drew easy and simple crosses and squares. These were some of the set forms. My original designs were not always symmetrical nor sufficiently characteristic, two faults with which my mother had little patience. The quietness of her oversight made me feel strongly responsible and dependent upon my own judgment. She treated me as a dignified little individual as long as I was on my good behavior; and how humiliated I was when some boldness of mine drew forth a rebuke from her!

In the choice of colors she left me to my own taste. I was pleased with an outline of yellow upon a background of dark blue, or a combination of red and myrtle-green. There was another of red with a bluish gray that was more conventionally used. When I became a little familiar with designing and the various pleasing combinations of color, a harder lesson was given me. It was the sewing on, instead of beads, some tinted porcupine quills, moistened and flattened between the nails of the thumb and forefinger. My mother cut off the prickly ends and burned them at once in the center fire. These sharp points were poisonous, and worked into the flesh wherever they lodged. For this reason, my mother said, I should not do much alone in quills until I was as tall as my cousin Warca-Ziwin.

Always after these confining lessons I was wild with surplus spirits, and found joyous relief in running loose in the open again. Many a summer afternoon, a party of four or five of my playmates roamed over the hills with me. We each carried a light, sharpened rod about four feet long, with which we pried up certain sweet roots. When we had eaten all the choice roots we chanced upon, we shouldered our rods and strayed off into patches of a stalky plant under whose yellow blossoms we found little crystal drops of gum. Drop by drop we gathered this nature's rock-candy, until each of us could boast of a lump the size of a small bird's egg. Soon satiated with its woody flavor, we tossed away our gum, to return again to the sweet roots.

I remember well how we used to exchange our necklaces, beaded belts, and sometimes even our moccasins. We pretended to offer them as gifts to one another. We delighted in impersonating our own mothers. We talked of things we had heard them say in their conversations. We imitated their various manners, even to the inflection of their voices. In the lap of the prairie we seated ourselves upon our feet; and leaning our painted cheeks in the palms of our hands, we rested our elbows on our knees, and bent forward as old women were most accustomed to do.

While one was telling of some heroic deed recently done by a near relative, the rest of us listened attentively, and exclaimed in undertones, "Han! Han!" (yes! yes!) whenever the speaker paused for breath, or sometimes for our sympathy. As the discourse became more thrilling, according to our ideas, we raised our voices in these interjections. In these impersonations our parents were led to say only those things that were in common favor.

No matter how exciting a tale we might be rehearsing, the mere shifting of a cloud shadow in the landscape nearby was sufficient to change our impulses; and soon we were all chasing the great shadows that played among the hills. We shouted and whooped in the chase; laughing and calling to one another, we were like little sportive nymphs [gloss 1] on that Dakota sea of rolling green.

On one occasion, I forgot the cloud shadow in a strange notion to catch up with my own shadow. Standing straight and still, I began to glide after it, putting out one foot cautiously. When, with the greatest care, I set my foot in advance of myself, my shadow crept onward too. Then again I tried it; this time with the other foot. Still again my shadow escaped me. I began to run; and away flew my shadow, always just a step beyond me. Faster and faster I ran, setting my teeth and clenching my fists, determined to overtake my own fleet shadow. But ever swifter it glided before me, while I was growing breathless and hot. Slackening my speed, I was greatly vexed that my shadow should check its pace also. Daring it to the utmost, as I thought, I sat down upon a rock embedded in the hillside.

So! My shadow had the impudence to sit down beside me!

Now my comrades caught up with me, and began to ask why I was running away so fast.

"Oh, I was chasing my shadow! Didn't you ever do that?" I inquired, surprised that they should not understand.

They planted their moccasined feet firmly upon my shadow to stay it, and I arose. Again my shadow slipped away, and moved as often as I did. Then we gave up trying to catch my shadow.

Before this peculiar experience I have no distinct memory of having recognized any vital bond between myself and my own shadow. I never gave it an afterthought.

Returning our borrowed belts and trinkets, we rambled homeward. That evening, as on other evenings, I went to sleep over my legends.

[gloss 1] nymphs - female, elf-like beings who inhabited the countryside in ancient Greek myths

_____ 1. Read the sentence below from the passage.

Drop by drop we gathered this nature's rock-candy, until each of us could boast of a lump the size of a small bird's egg.

In the sentence, the phrase "nature's rock-candy" is an example of which type of figurative language?

- A. simile
- B. hyperbole
- C. metaphor
- D. personification

_____ 2. In the passage, the phrase "we were like little sportive nymphs" is an example of which type of figurative language?

- A. idiom
- B. hyperbole
- C. simile
- D. personification

_____ 3. The passage begins at what time of day?

- A. morning
- B. noon
- C. evening
- D. night

_____ 4. Which **best** describes how the rural setting affects the main events in the passage?

- A. It gives the children wide, open areas in which to play.
- B. It enables porcupines to live near the wigwams.
- C. It makes a perfume of newly burnt, sweet grasses.
- D. It provides the wigwams with cool morning breezes.

_____ 5. When the narrator goes outside the wigwam, she becomes more

- A. playful.
- B. obedient.
- C. creative.
- D. interested.

_____ 6. When the clouds cast shadows on the ground, it gives the narrator the idea to

- A. have interesting dreams.
- B. try to catch up with her own shadow.
- C. start rambling homeward.
- D. use porcupine quills in her designs.

_____ 7. The author uses sequence of events as the structure of the first six paragraphs **mainly** to

- A. propose solutions to past beadwork problems.
- B. explain the order in which beadwork activities usually occur.
- C. show how the beadwork looks when finished.
- D. suggest that some beadwork projects are superior to others.

- _____ 8. Which **best** describes parallel episodes in the passage?
- A. The mother rolls up the canvas on the wigwam, and the daughter dreams at night.
 - B. The daughter tries to catch up with her shadow, and the mother puts beads on the thread.
 - C. The mother burns porcupine quills, and the daughter looks at the clouds in the sky.
 - D. The daughter learns beadwork from her mother, and the children imitate their mothers while playing.
- _____ 9. Which **best** describes the falling action of the story?
- A. The narrator learns beadwork from her mother.
 - B. The shadow stays ahead of the narrator wherever she goes.
 - C. The mother rolls up the canvas on the wigwam.
 - D. The narrator and her friends ramble homeward after playing.
- _____ 10. Which is a conflict in the passage?
- A. The children step on the shadow.
 - B. The narrator tries unsuccessfully to catch up with her shadow.
 - C. The mother teaches beadwork to the narrator.
 - D. The mother burns the sharp points off the porcupine quills.
- _____ 11. The author uses sequence as the text structure of the entire passage **mainly** to
- A. show how kind the mother is to her daughter.
 - B. explain the order of events in the narrator's day.
 - C. describe the smells that come into the wigwam.
 - D. compare the narrator's behavior indoors and outdoors.
- _____ 12. Which **best** summarizes the passage?
- A. The narrator decided to chase her shadow. She began to glide after it. Every time she tried to capture her shadow it would escape her. She began to run faster and faster but was unable to catch it.
 - B. The friends got together and roamed over the hills. They ate sweet roots and gathered gum. The friends exchanged necklaces, beaded belts, and moccasins. The children impersonated their mother and told great stories.
 - C. The narrator learned beadwork from her mother. It took a long time to learn how to work with the delicate materials. After lessons, the narrator played with friends and exchanged gifts. One day the narrator tried to chase her shadow.
 - D. The mother pulled out the wooden pegs of the wigwam. She smoothed out a double sheet of white buckskin and drew a narrow blade to trim it with. She was shaping the buckskin into small moccasins with beads.
- _____ 13. When the children exchanged gifts and had conversations they had heard, they were pretending to be like
- A. their mothers.
 - B. little nymphs.
 - C. their cousins.
 - D. great shadows.
- _____ 14. The daughter becomes intensely interested in her mother's activities when her mother
- A. rolls up the canvas.
 - B. uses intricate beadwork.
 - C. makes small moccasins.
 - D. burns porcupine quills.

- _____ 15. The mother treats the daughter as a "dignified little individual" as long as the daughter
- A. behaves well.
 - B. sits in the wigwam.
 - C. remembers well.
 - D. walks in moccasins.
- _____ 16. Based on the passage, learning to do beadwork requires the narrator to be
- A. playful.
 - B. conceited.
 - C. patient.
 - D. judgmental.