

Freedom Run

by Anonymous

(1) The rattle of the key fumbling in the lock sent a shudder down her spine. He was home. Megan gulped down her emotions and fixed her face into a plastic smile. With a sigh, she clicked off the late show. The door swung open, and he stumbled inside.

(2) "There'sh my little Meggie-May," he crooned, slurring his words into one jumbled strand. "Howsh it goin'? What you up to tonight, little one?"

(3) He staggered toward her, arms outstretched. She stood, numb and motionless, like an observer in an overplayed scene. The same dialogue. The same motions. Rehearsed every night for some unscheduled performance. It was familiar. Too familiar.

(4) He tripped on a chair leg as he passed the dining table. The pleasant face instantly darkened as the shadow of impending rage fell. He swore loudly and turned on Megan.

(5) Why don't you clean up this pigsty," he yelled, the words clearer, colder, chilling.

(6) In two long strides, he crossed to where she still stood, rooted to the floor. She had learned long ago that backing away only prolonged the misery. His hand fell heavy across her cheek.

(7) "Lazy, good-for-nothing child," he screamed. He swore again, throwing her into the wall. "Ungrateful!"

(8) She no longer cringed as the blows landed. When he knocked her to the ground, she instinctively curled around herself, forming a tight little ball of misery. His feet crashed clumsily into her body, and she waited for it to end. In a while, it would be over. It never lasted forever.

(9) When the blows stopped, Megan struggled to her feet. She could taste the tang of blood on her split lip. She could feel the swelling in her eye. She watched him watching her. Then his face crumpled into a broken sob. He pulled her to his chest and stroked her hair.

(10) "I'm so sorry, Meggie-May. I don't mean to hurt you, darling." He sobbed louder. "Please forgive me, my little Meggie-May. I just get so mad sometimes. I won't do it again. Promise."

(11) Megan held him awkwardly, half-heartedly patting his back. “I know, Daddy,” she murmured, her voice hollow. “It’s okay.”

(12) She led him gently to the couch and helped him sit. He clicked on the late show and settled into a subdued stupor. Megan crept upstairs and washed her battered face. She changed into a clean t-shirt and shorts and went back to the living room.

(13) “I’m going running,” she announced, grabbing her house key from the table.

(14) He nodded silently. Then he glanced up. “Do me a favor before you go, Meggie-May?”

(15) “What do you need, Daddy?” she asked, knowing what he would ask for.

(16) “Bring me a beer, darling,” he said with a wink.

(17) She brought him a frosty can, drowning in condensation. He took it and thanked her. Then he was lost in the eerie glow of the TV again, and Megan slipped out into the night.

(18) The cool summer breeze assaulted her senses, clearing the fog of pain and fear and anger and guilt. Her feet pattered, then pounded, then pummeled the pavement. She left the crumbling brownstone—and her crumbling life—far behind.

(19) She ran with the wind in her face and reality at her back. Running was freedom. Her aching, throbbing body loosened. Tears stung her eyes, and she submitted to the solace of sorrow. The empty streets embraced her. This was her escape.

(20) She ran for miles, past tall tenements that stretched concrete fingers toward the moon. She ran across a rust-speckled bridge, glancing down at the silent, slumbering, still depths of the river below. Across the river, larger houses sprawled on the banks. A few windows still glowed, but most were blank with darkness.

(21) It was time to go home. She knew it, even as every fiber of her body resisted. Winding her way back through silent neighborhoods, she pushed her body harder, gasping for air and aching for rest. As the streets grew darker and narrower, reality began to close again around her heart. The freedom and release gave way to fear, and she climbed the brownstone’s dirty steps.

(22) Inside, the air was stale and thick. Megan’s eyes adjusted to the glare of the TV, and she saw him, sprawled on the couch. She picked up the empty beer can that dangled from his limp fingers and took it to the kitchen. When she came back, she pulled a blanket loosely over him. He stirred in his sleep, nestling into the blanket. His eyes opened halfway.

(23) “Night, Meggie-May,” he murmured, turning over to face the couch.

(24) Megan turned off the TV and started up the stairs. Halfway up, she stopped and looked down. Shadows danced across his features. He looked peaceful, helpless, deceptively harmless. She loved him and hated him in one tangled surge of emotion.

(25) “Goodnight, Daddy,” she whispered to the darkness. Then she turned and went upstairs.

PSJA-ISD

English I

STAAR-LITERATURE PAIRED

Genres: Literary Fiction

Texts: Freedom Run

Use “Freedom Run” to answer questions 1-6. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

1B (denotative/connative meaning)

1. In paragraph 5, the word *pigsty* means---

- A** A place where pigs live.
- B** A dirty or messy place.
- C** Clean room.
- D** A place where food is stored.

5B (character analysis)

2. Read this sentence from paragraph 21.

"It was time to go home. She knew it, even as every fiber of her body resisted."

This sentence implies

that—

- F** Megan enjoyed running and wanted to run more.
- G** Running was Megan’s escape from her troubled life.
- H** Megan was afraid her father might be asleep.
- J** The route back home was mostly uphill

5 Fig 19 B (inference on text)

3. From paragraph 8, the reader can infer that-

- A the physical abuse by Megan's father is a common occurrence.
 - B Megan's dad wanted to give her a warm welcome.
 - C this is a typical father/daughter behavior.
 - D Megan was going to be grounded for doing something bad.
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5C (point of view)

4. Which sentence best describes how the author uses point of view in the selection?

- F The author uses a third-person limited narrative to help the reader understand what motivates the protagonist to continue with life in spite of its hardships.
 - G The author uses an unreliable first-person narrator to suggest that the protagonist exaggerates the dangers she faces.
 - H The author uses an omniscient narrator to create suspense by revealing the existence of a threat to a vulnerable protagonist.
 - J The author use a first-person narrative to help the reader identify with the thoughts and feelings of a protagonist under extreme stress.
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2C (figurative language)

5. Read the paragraph 3.

"She stood, numb and motionless, like an observer in an overplayed scene."

sentence from

The author uses figurative language in this sentence to reveal that-

- A The main character was surprised.
- B The main character needed a break.
- C The father realized what he had done.
- D The main character knew what was going to happen.

7 FIG 19B (inferences/draw conclusions)

6. Read the following from paragraph 18.

"The cool summer breeze assaulted her senses, clearing the fog of pain and fear and anger and guilt."

Why does the author use personification in this quotation?

- F.** The cool summer breeze symbolizes the love for her father.
- G** The description mimics the girl's disappointment toward her father.
- H** The author is conveying the protagonist's sense of temporary relief.
- J** The author is showing the protagonist's anger and resentment towards her father.

