

ACT READING DIAGNOSTIC TEST

LONG FORM

35 Minutes—40 Questions

Passage I

Prose Fiction: The following is adapted from Jack London's boxing story, *The Game*.

Many patterns of carpet lay rolled out before them on the floor. A score of nearby ingrains lured their eyes and prolonged the debate between desire and pocket-book. The head of the department did them the honor of waiting upon them himself—or did Joe the honor, as she well knew, for she had noted the open-mouthed awe of the elevator boy who brought them up. She had also not been blind to the marked respect shown Joe by the urchins and groups of young fellows on corners, when she walked with him through their own neighborhood down at the west end of the town.

But the head of the department was called away to the telephone, and in her mind the splendid promise of the carpets and the annoyance of the pocketbook were thrust aside by a greater doubt and anxiety.

~~“But I don't see what you find to like in fighting, Joe,” she said softly, the note of insistence in her words betraying recent and unsatisfactory discussion.~~

“What's the good of worrying?” he questioned.
“It's the last go, the very last.”

He smiled at her, but she saw on his lips the unconscious sigh that belied his words. She feared this thing she did not understand and which gripped his life so strongly.

“You know the go with O'Neil cleared the last payment on mother's house,” he went on. “And that's off my mind. Now this last with Ponta will give me a hundred dollars in bank—an even hundred, that's the purse—for you and me to start on ... a nest-egg.”

She disregarded the money appeal. “But you like it, this—this ‘game’ you call it. Why?”

He lacked speech-expression. He expressed himself with his hands, at his work, and with his body and the play of his muscles in the squared ring; but to tell with his own lips the charm of the squared ring was beyond him. Yet he essayed, and haltingly at first, to express what he felt when playing the Game at the supreme summit of existence.

“All I know, Genevieve, is that you feel good in the ring when you've got the man where you want him, when he's had a punch up both sleeves waiting for you and you've never given him an opening to land 'em, when you've landed your own little punch an' he's goin' groggy, an' holdin' on, an' the referee's dragging him off so's you can go in an' finish 'm, an' all the house is shouting an' tearin' itself loose, an' you know you're the best man, an' that you played m' fair an' won out because you're the best man. I tell you—”

He ceased brokenly, alarmed by his own volubility and by Genevieve's look of alarm. As he talked she had watched his face while fear dawned in her own. As he described the moment of moments to her, on his inward vision were lined the tottering man, the lights, the shouting house, and he swept out and away from her on this tide of life that was beyond her comprehension, menacing, irresistible, making her love pitiful and weak. The Joe she knew receded. The fresh boyish face was gone, the tenderness of the eyes, the sweetness of the mouth, the warmth of the dimpled cheeks. It was a man's face she saw now, a face of steel, tense and immobile; a mouth of steel, the lips like the jaws of a trap; eyes focused, dilated, intent, and the light in them and the glitter were the light and glitter of steel. The face of a man, and she had known only his boy face. This face she did not know at all.

She did not understand this force of his being that rose seemingly mightier than all and laid its compulsion upon him; and yet, in her heart she was aware of the sweet pang which told her that for her sake, for Love's own sake, he had surrendered to her, abandoned all that portion of his life, and with this one last fight would never fight again.

“Your mother doesn't like prize-fighting,” she said. “She's down on it, and she knows something, too.”

He smiled indulgently, concealing a hurt, not altogether new, at her persistent lack of appreciation for this side of his nature and life in which he took the greatest pride. It was to him power and achievement, earned by his own effort and hard work; and in the moment when he had offered himself and all that he was to Genevieve, it was this, and this alone, that he was proudly conscious of laying at her feet. And she had not understood it then, as she did not fully understand it now, and he might well have wondered what else she found in him to make him worthy.

1. Which of the following best describes the passage?

- A. A dialogue between the narrator and her husband
- B. A description of a business transaction between a young couple and a third party vendor
- C. A conversation between two people in which their thoughts are revealed to the reader
- D. A character sketch of two people drawn from the perspective of one of the two people

2. Based on the passage, which of the following statements best describes the overall attitudes of Genevieve and Joe toward boxing?

- F. Genevieve is detached, while Joe is resentful.
- G. Genevieve is apprehensive, while Joe is confident.
- H. Genevieve is happy, while Joe is committed.
- J. Genevieve is supportive, while Joe is crestfallen.

3. The passage indicates that Genevieve wants which of the following from Joe?

- A. That he not fight his last scheduled fight.
- B. That he begin to build a retirement nest-egg.
- C. That he train hard for his last scheduled fight.
- D. That he move in with his mother.

4. The author uses the phrase *supreme summit of existence* (line 38) to suggest that Joe:

- F. trained hard for every boxing match.
- G. would lose his last scheduled fight.
- H. would win his last scheduled fight.
- J. felt terrific when he was boxing.

5. The *O'Neil* referred to in line 25 is most likely?

- A. A seasoned boxing promoter.
- B. One of Joe's longtime friends.
- C. A boxer Joe had fought.
- D. Joe's boxing trainer.

6. According to the passage, one of the things that upsets Joe the most is that:

- F. his mother does not like boxing.
- G. he cannot afford to quit boxing yet.
- H. Genevieve will not come to his matches.
- J. Genevieve does not appreciate the fighter in him.

7. Based on Joe's account of a boxing match, the thing that thrills Joe the most is:

- A. watching the referee call the match.
- B. knowing that he might get hurt.
- C. avoiding his opponent's punches.
- D. knowing that he won because he is the best.

8. As it was used in line 57, the word *receded* most nearly means:

- F. intensified.
- G. disappeared.
- H. hardened.
- J. contorted.

9. Which of the following statements best describes Genevieve's feeling about Joe's promise to give up fighting after his scheduled last fight?

- A. She is worried that they will no longer have a source of income.
- B. She does not want him to stop but is worried about his health.
- C. She does not think he will be able to stop fighting at all.
- D. She knows he will reluctantly keep his promise, but struggles to understand why he loves fighting so much.

10. The author's comments in lines 75-85 primarily serve to:

- F. explain why Genevieve ultimately stayed married to Joe.
- G. highlight the sense of isolation Joe experienced because of his career.
- H. reveal that boxing gave Joe a strong sense of personal worth.
- J. suggest the possibility that Joe will not fight his last scheduled fight.