

1. In the first paragraph, the character of the narrator is most revealed by which of the following sentences?
  - a. "He called my wife from his in-laws'."
  - b. "They made tapes and mailed them back and forth."
  - c. "I wasn't enthusiastic about his visit."
  - d. "My idea of blindness came from the movies."
  - e. "A blind man in my house was not something I looked forward to."
2. The sentence "A blind man in my house was not something I looked forward to" (para. 1) is characterized by
  - a. figurative language
  - b. hyperbole
  - c. inverted syntax
  - d. personification
  - e. apostrophe
3. The second paragraph establishes
  - I. the background for the narrator's wife's relationship with the blind man
  - II. the intimacy between the narrator's wife and the blind man
  - III. the relationship between the narrator and the blind man
    - a. I only
    - b. I and II
    - c. II and III
    - d. III only
    - e. I, II, and III
4. The clauses within the double dash in the third sentence of paragraph 5 suggest that the narrator
  - a. is annoyed that he has to share so much about his wife's personal history
  - b. thinks his wife secretly harbors feelings for her childhood sweetheart
  - c. is introducing new facts about the blind man
  - d. may be threatened by his wife's earlier relationship
  - e. has known his wife's ex-husband for a long time
5. At the end of paragraph 5, what might the reader infer by the narrator's explanation for why he and his wife did not listen to the latest tape from the blind man?
  - a. the interruption might have been something other than a knock at the door
  - b. the wife realized that the blind man was about to praise the narrator
  - c. the wife realized that the blind man was about to insult the narrator
  - d. the wife had not told the blind man much about the narrator
  - e. the narrator and his wife were too drunk to understand what the blind man was talking about
6. The narrator's description of what he knows about blind people suggests all of the following EXCEPT that
  - a. he is open-minded
  - b. he stereotypes people
  - c. he is narrow-minded
  - d. he is uninterested in expanding his horizons
  - e. he is threatened by the blind man
7. The tone of the passage is best described as
  - a. casual, informative, and fairly tolerant
  - b. introspective, amused, and basically open-minded
  - c. informal, intimate, and somewhat aggrieved
  - d. relaxed, romantic, and slightly angry
  - e. laid-back, humorous, and self-deprecating
8. The passage is best described as being narrated from which point of view?
  - a. an omniscient first-person narrator
  - b. an omniscient third-person narrator
  - c. an objective first-person narrator
  - d. a limited-omniscient third-person narrator
  - e. an unreliable first-person narrator

## **“Cathedral” Excerpt**

1        This blind man, an old friend of my wife's, he was on his way to spend the night. His wife had died. So he was visiting the dead wife's relatives in Connecticut. He called my wife from his in-laws'. Arrangements were made. He would come by train, a five-hour trip, and my wife would meet him at the station. She hadn't seen him since she worked for him one summer in Seattle ten years ago. But she and the blind man had kept in touch. They made tapes and mailed them back and forth. I wasn't enthusiastic about his visit. He was no one I knew. And his being blind bothered me. My idea of blindness came from the movies. In the movies, the blind moved slowly and never laughed. Sometimes they were led by seeing-eye dogs. A blind man in my house was not something I looked forward to.

2        That summer in Seattle she had needed a job. She didn't have any money. The man she was going to marry at the end of the summer was in officers' training school. He didn't have any money, either. But she was in love with the guy, and he was in love with her, etc. She'd seen something in the paper: HELP WANTED – *Reading to Blind Man*, and a telephone number. She phoned and went over, was hired on the spot. She'd worked with this blind man all summer. She read stuff to him, case studies, reports, that sort of thing. She helped him organize his little office in the county social-service department. They'd become good friends, my wife and the blind man. How do I know these things? She told me. And she told me something else. On her last day in the office, the blind man asked if he could touch her face. She agreed to this. She told me he touched his fingers to every part of her face, her nose--even her neck! She never forgot it. She even tried to write a poem about it. She was always trying to write a poem. She wrote a poem or two every year, usually after something really important had happened to her.

3        When we first started going out together, she showed me the poem. In the poem, she recalled his fingers and the way they had moved around over her face. In the poem, she talked about what she had felt at the time, about what went through her mind when the blind man touched her nose and lips. I can remember I didn't think much of the poem. Of course, I didn't tell her that. Maybe I just don't understand poetry. I admit it's not the first thing I reach for when I pick up something to read.

4        Anyway, this man who'd first enjoyed her favors, the officer-to-be, he'd been her childhood sweetheart. So okay. I'm saying that at the end of the summer she let the blind man run his hands over her face, said goodbye to him, married her childhood etc., who was now a commissioned officer, and she moved away from Seattle. But they'd kept in touch, she and the blind man. She made the first contact

after a year or so. She called him up one night from an Air Force base in Alabama. She wanted to talk. They talked. He asked her to send him a tape and tell him about her life. She did this. She sent the tape. On the tape, she told the blind man about her husband and about their life together in the military. She told the blind man she loved her husband but she didn't like it where they lived and she didn't like it that he was a part of the military-industrial thing. She told the blind man she'd written a poem and he was in it. She told him that she was writing a poem about what it was like to be an Air Force officer's wife. The poem wasn't finished yet. She was still writing it. The blind man made a tape. He sent her the tape. She made a tape. This went on for years. My wife's officer was posted to one base and then another. She sent tapes from Moody AFB, McGuire, McConnell, and finally Travis, near Sacramento, where one night she got to feeling lonely and cut off from people she kept losing in that moving-around life. She got to feeling she couldn't go it another step. She went in and swallowed all the pills and capsules in the medicine chest and washed them down with a bottle of gin. Then she got into a hot bath and passed out.

5 But instead of dying, she got sick. She threw up. Her officer--why should he have a name? he was the childhood sweetheart, and what more does he want?-- came home from somewhere, found her, and called the ambulance. In time, she put it all on a tape and sent the tape to the blind man. Over the years, she put all kinds of stuff on tapes and sent the tapes off lickety-split. Next to writing a poem every year, I think it was her chief means of recreation. On one tape, she told the blind man she'd decided to live away from her officer for a time. On another tape, she told him about her divorce. She and I began going out, and of course she told her blind man about it. She told him everything, or so it seemed to me. Once she asked me if I'd like to hear the latest tape from the blind man. This was a year ago. I was on the tape, she said. So I said okay, I'd listen to it. I got us drinks and we settled down in the living room. We made ready to listen. First she inserted the tape into the player and adjusted a couple of dials. Then she pushed a lever. The tape squeaked and someone began to talk in this loud voice. She lowered the volume. After a few minutes of harmless chitchat, I heard my own name in the mouth of this stranger, this blind man I didn't even know! And then this: "From all you've said about him, I can only conclude--" But we were interrupted, a knock at the door, something, and we didn't ever get back to the tape. Maybe it was just as well. I'd heard all I wanted to.