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## READING TEST

35 Minutes—40 Questions

**DIRECTIONS:** This test includes four passages, each followed by ten questions. Read the passages and choose the best answer to each question. After you have selected your answer, fill in the corresponding bubble on your answer sheet. You should refer to the passages as often as necessary when answering the questions.

## PASSAGE I

**PROSE FICTION:** *This passage is adapted from Joseph Conrad's The Heart of Darkness © 1899.*

The *Nellie*, a cruising ship, swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest. The tide had come in, the wind was nearly calm, and being bound down the river, the only thing for the ship was to come to and wait for the turn of the tide.

The Director of Companies was our captain and our host. We four affectionately watched his back as he stood in the bow looking toward the sea. On the whole river there was nothing that looked half so nautical. He resembled a pilot, which to a seaman is trustworthiness personified. It was difficult to realize his work was not out there in the luminous estuary, but behind him, within the brooding gloom.

Between us there was, as I have already said somewhere, the bond of the sea. Besides holding our hearts together through long periods of separation, it had the effect of making us tolerant of each other's stories—and even convictions. The Lawyer—the best of old fellows—had, because of his many years and many virtues, the only cushion on deck, and was lying on the only rug. The Accountant had brought out already a box of dominoes, and was toying architecturally with the pieces. Marlow sat cross-legged, leaning against the mast. He had sunken cheeks, a yellow complexion, a straight back, and, with his arms dropped, the palms of his hands outwards, resembled an idol. The Director, satisfied the anchor had good hold, made his way forward and sat down amongst us. We exchanged a few words lazily. Afterwards there was silence on board the yacht. For some reason or another we did not begin that game of dominoes. We felt meditative, and fit for nothing but placid staring.

“And this also,” said Marlow suddenly, “has been one of the dark places of the earth.” He was the only man of us who still “followed the sea.” The worst that could be said of him was that he did not represent his class—always the same. In their unchanging surroundings, the foreign shores, the foreign faces glide past, veiled not by a sense of mystery but by a slightly disdainful ignorance; for there is nothing mysterious

to a seaman unless it be the sea itself, which is the mistress of his existence and as inscrutable as destiny. For the rest, after his hours of work, a casual stroll or a casual spree on shore suffices to unfold for him the secret of a whole continent, and generally he finds the secret not worth knowing. The stories of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical, and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale, which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine.

His remark did not seem at all surprising. It was just like Marlow. It was accepted in silence. No one took the trouble to grunt even; and presently he said, very slow—“I was thinking of very old times, when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago.” And at last, in its curved and imperceptible fall, the sun sank low, and from glowing white changed to a dull red without rays and without heat, as if about to go out suddenly, stricken to death by the touch of that gloom brooding over a crowd of men.

Marlow broke off. Flames glided in the river, small green flames, red flames, white flames, pursuing, overtaking, joining, crossing each other—then separating slowly or hastily. The traffic of the great city went on in the deepening night upon the sleepless river. We looked on, waiting patiently—there was nothing else to do; but it was only after a long silence, when he said, in a hesitating voice, “I suppose you fellows remember I did once turn fresh-water sailor for a bit,” that we knew we were fated, before the ebb began to run, to hear about one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences.

- The narrator's point of view is that of:
  - an omniscient observer.
  - a member of the ship's crew.
  - another ship's captain.
  - a person watching from shore.

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2. It can reasonably be inferred from the passage that the crew most likely did not play dominoes because:
- F. they were simply too tired.
  - G. they did not get along well enough to play a game together.
  - H. the Director would not have approved of game-playing.
  - J. the sea was too rough.
3. Which of the following are explanations given by the narrator as to why the Lawyer used the ship's only cushion?
- I. He was very old.
  - II. He would not allow anyone else to use it.
  - III. He was greatly respected by the ship's crew.
- A. I and II only
  - B. I only
  - C. I and III only
  - D. II only
4. As it is used in line 32 of the passage, the word *placid* most nearly means:
- F. calm.
  - G. straightforward.
  - H. nervous.
  - J. playful.
5. According to the passage, how was Marlow unlike typical seamen?
- A. Marlow was content to stay in one place, while most men of the sea prefer to roam and explore.
  - B. Marlow believed his home was the ship, while most sailors believed their home was the sea.
  - C. Marlow found the sea inexplicable and full of secrets, while a typical sailor understands the mysteries of the water.
  - D. Marlow wove complicated and ambiguous tales, while most seamen prefer to tell simple and clear tales.
6. It can be reasonably inferred from the passage that Marlow is about to tell a story:
- F. that explains why he is now a freshwater sailor.
  - G. that is short and funny, like most of the stories he tells.
  - H. that had a profound effect on him.
  - J. about a man that he saved from drowning in a river.
7. According to the passage, how did the men aboard the *Nellie* feel about the Director?
- A. They respected and trusted him.
  - B. They felt that he was lazy.
  - C. They despised and rejected him.
  - D. They thought that he was gloomy.
8. The reaction of the narrator to Marlow's story can be most accurately described as:
- F. malicious annoyance.
  - G. resigned tolerance.
  - H. genuine interest.
  - J. sincere appreciation.
9. According to the passage, which of the following was not an effect of the "bond of the sea" (line 15)?
- A. It allowed the men to look past each other's criminal backgrounds.
  - B. The men did not mind listening to each other's meandering tales.
  - C. It eased the loneliness of extended periods of time away from each other.
  - D. The men were able to be more tolerant of each other's beliefs.
10. The main point of the second paragraph is:
- F. The ship's captain is better suited to be an aviator than a sailor.
  - G. The captain is unaware of the great amount of hard work that lies ahead of him.
  - H. An unqualified and inexperienced businessman is serving as the captain of the *Nellie*.
  - J. The narrator and other crew members greatly respect their ship's captain.