

DIRECTIONS: Read the short story entitled “Breakfast in Virginia” and the text entitled “Crystal Night,” then answer the questions that follow.

Breakfast in Virginia

by Langston Hughes

“Breakfast in Virginia,” written by the African American author Langston Hughes, takes place in the United States during World War II, when racial segregation was both openly visible and commonly accepted. From the 1880s into the 1960s, the majority of states enforced segregation through Jim Crow laws. Many states and cities could impose legal punishments on people for associating with members of another race. The most common types of laws forbade intermarriage and ordered business owners and public institutions to keep their black and white clientele separated.

- 1 Two colored boys during the war. For the first time in his life one of them, on furlough from a Southern training camp, was coming North. His best buddy was a New York lad, also on furlough, who had invited him to visit Harlem. Being colored, they had to travel in the Jim Crow car until the Florida Express reached Washington.
- 2 The train was crowded and people were standing in WHITE day coaches and in the COLORED coach—the single Jim Crow car. Corporal Ellis and Corporal Williams had, after much insistence, shared for a part of the night the seats of other kindly passengers in the coach marked COLORED. They took turns sleeping for a few hours. The rest of the time they sat on the arm of a seat or stood smoking in the vestibule. By morning they were very tired. And they were hungry.
- 3 No vendors came into the Jim Crow coach with food, so Corporal Ellis suggested to his friend that they go into the diner and have breakfast. Corporal Ellis was born in New York and grew up there. He had been a star trackman with his college team, and had often eaten in diners on trips with his teammates. Corporal Williams had never eaten in a diner before, but he followed his friend. It was midmorning. The rush period was over, although the dining car was still fairly full. But, fortunately, just at the door as they entered there were three seats at a table for four persons. The sole occupant of the table was a tall, distinguished gray-haired man. A white man.

- 4 As the two brownskin soldiers stood at the door waiting for the steward to seat them, the white man looked up and said, “Won’t you sit here and be my guests this morning? I have a son fighting in North Africa. Come, sit down.”
- 5 Thank you, sir,” said Corporal Ellis, “this is kind of you. I am Corporal Ellis. This is Corporal Williams.”
- 6 The elderly man rose, gave his name, shook hands with the two colored soldiers, and the three of them sat down at the table. The young men faced their host. Corporal Williams was silent, but Corporal Ellis carried on the conversation as they waited for the steward to bring the menus.
- 7 “How long have you been in the service, Corporal?” the white man was saying as the steward approached.
- 8 Corporal Ellis could not answer this question because the steward cut in brusquely, “You boys can’t sit here.”
- 9 “These men are my guests for breakfast, steward,” said the white man.
- 10 “I am sorry, sir,” said the white steward, “but Negroes cannot be served now. If there’s time, we may have a fourth sitting before luncheon for them, if they want to come back.”
- 11 “But these men are soldiers,” said the white man.
- 12 “I am sorry, sir. We will take *your* order, but I cannot serve them in the state of Virginia.”
- 13 The two Negro soldiers were silent. The white man rose. He looked at the steward a minute, then said, “I am embarrassed, steward, both for you and for my guests.” To the soldiers he said, “If you gentlemen will come with me to my drawing room, we will have breakfast there. Steward, I would like a waiter immediately, Room E, the third car back.”

- 14 The tall, distinguished man turned and led the way out of the diner. The two soldiers followed him. They passed through the club car, through the open Pullmans, and into a coach made up entirely of compartments. The white man led them along the blue-gray corridor, stopped at the last door, and opened it.
- 15 “Come in,” he said. He waited for the soldiers to enter.
- 16 It was a roomy compartment with a large window and two long comfortable seats facing each other. The man indicated a place for the soldiers, who sat down together. He pressed a button.
- 17 “I will have the porter bring a table,” he said. Then he went on with the conversation just as if nothing had happened. He told them of recent letters from his son overseas, and of his pride in all the men in the military services who were giving up the pleasures of civilian life to help bring an end to Hitlerism.¹ Shortly the porter arrived with the table. Soon a waiter spread a cloth and took their order. In a little while the food was there.
- 18 All this time Corporal Williams from the South had said nothing. He sat, shy and bewildered, as the Virginia landscape passed outside the train window. Then he drank his orange juice with loud gulps. But when the eggs were brought, suddenly he spoke, “This here time, sir, is the first time I ever been invited to eat with a white man. I’m from Georgia.”
- 19 “I hope it won’t be the last time,” the white man replied. “Breaking bread together is the oldest symbol of human friendship.” He passed the silver tray. “Would you care for rolls or muffins, Corporal? I am sorry there is no butter this morning. I guess we’re on rations.”
- 20 “I can eat without butter,” said the corporal.

21 For the first time his eyes met those of his host. He smiled. Through the window of the speeding train, as it neared Washington, clear in the morning sunlight yet far off in the distance, they could see the dome of the Capitol. But the soldier from the Deep South was not looking out of the window. He was looking across the table at his fellow American.

22 “I thank you for this breakfast,” said Corporal Williams.

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¹ **Hitlerism**—Nazism or National Socialism—was a political belief promoting an exclusive German race and a strong and centrally governed state. The term is most often used in connection with Adolf Hitler’s dictatorship of Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945.

“Crystal Night”

Memoir by Lore Metzger

1 When Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany in January 1933, I had just celebrated my twelfth birthday. I was a student in the all-girl high school of Landau, Rhineland-Palatinate. My thoughts and hobbies were typical of any budding teenager's, and my biggest worries were to get perfect grades and to be noticed just for a moment by one of the students of the all-male high school.

2 My childhood was an abundance of happy occasions: birthday parties, the annual children's masquerade at the city theater, long walks through Landau's beautiful parks, visits to the zoo, skating and sledding in winter, swimming, biking, and hiking in summer. I loved to climb high in the mountains, each crowned by romantic ruins, castles of kings and emperors of long ago. Life was joyous, carefree, safe.

3 Shortly after Hitler's rise to power, menacing signs sprang up everywhere, at the swimming pool, the zoo, the parks, the theaters, the restaurants: “Jews forbidden.” Jewish homes were soiled with swastikas and hate slogans, Jewish stores were boycotted, Jewish men and even children were beaten in the streets. In school, Jewish students, now “non-Aryans,” were segregated from their fellow students. To have to sit in the so-called Jew corner, to have to listen to the most degrading remarks and avoid all contact with classmates who until then had been my friends, made those years agony for me. More and more of my Jewish classmates left Germany with their families.

4 For the longest time my parents refused to think about emigration, but in 1938 they finally made the decision to go to America. The German government no longer allowed Jews to take money out of the country, but we could take what we wanted of our household possessions as long as we paid a special tax. By November all the plans for the big move had been made. We were to set sail for America on the S.S. *Washington* on November 28.

5 During the dreary days of early November, the damp, cold mood of Mother Nature reflected our own only too well. Through the terrible years of the Nazi regime, our home, with its beautifully furnished rooms and magnificent garden, had always been a center of peace and comfort. Now my brother and I could read the sadness and fear in our parents' eyes. They had both been born in Landau, as had my grandparents. They had both served in the military during World War I, and they were deeply involved in the social, cultural, and economic life of Landau. My father didn't know how he would support his family in a strange land, with no knowledge of English and few resources. My mother couldn't sleep for worrying about her aged father, who would have to be left behind because the American consulate wouldn't issue a visa to anyone over seventy. We were all so preoccupied with the emotions of leaving our home and the preparations for the move that we hardly noticed the news item

that was to carry such enormous consequences. In Paris, an enraged Polish Jew shot and killed an employee of the German embassy when he learned that his parents had been deported from Germany back to Poland.

6 At seven o'clock on the morning of November 10, one of our maids came into my bedroom and awakened me with soft, halting words: “Honey, if you want to see the temple again get up now, because it's on fire.” Shaking all over, I dressed and ran outside, without stopping for a coat. As soon as I left the house, I could detect a burning odor in the foggy air. I stopped in front of the hotel about a block from the temple and stood there paralyzed by shock and disbelief. Flames were shooting out of the stained-glass rose window, and a second later more flames engulfed the beautiful five-domed sanctuary. How long I remained there I cannot remember.

7 In tears, I ran back home. My parents were sitting down to breakfast, and I was just about to tell them of the dreadful thing I had witnessed when I heard loud male voices in the hall. In my confusion, I had left the front door open. Suddenly six or eight men pushed their way in, and without so much as a word, one of them yanked the tablecloth off the table, sending the breakfast dishes crashing to the floor. Another grabbed my father by the arm and barked, “You are under arrest!” When my father asked why, he was told, “Today we get all the Jews.” We watched, stunned, as they led him away.

8 Moments later a dozen storm troopers burst into the room brandishing axes,

crowbars, hammers, and revolvers. Like beasts of prey fallen upon their victims, they went from room to room, systematically smashing furniture and dishes, cutting up oriental rugs, tearing open feather pillows, even slashing canvases in their frames—my mother's own paintings. As they were about to destroy a recently completed picture, my mother found the courage to say, “What do you want from us? We have served Germany faithfully both in peace and in war,” and with that she pointed to the china cabinet, where the military decorations bestowed upon her and my father lay on a black velvet pillow, along with my grandfather's medals from the Franco-Prussian War. When the men saw these, one of them immediately gave the command to stop, but it was too late.

9 No sooner had they gone than one of our faithful servants arrived and broke down at the sight of the devastation. Struggling to compose herself, she told us she had heard that during the coming night all Jewish houses were to be set afire and all Jewish boys killed. She wanted to take my brother and hide him in the forest, but my mother declined her courageous offer and tearfully sent her away, not wanting to endanger her life as well.

10 Darkness fell early that November afternoon. My mother dressed us in extra warm clothes, and we left our home and went through the desolate park in the direction of the Jewish cemetery. There we

spent the night, wandering around in a daze or sitting on the tombstones of my grandparents’ graves.

11 At daybreak we returned to the park, where we had a perfect view of our home through the leafless trees. It had not been burned. We saw a large car pull up in front of the house. Two SS men got out and went inside. I was terrified and wanted to run back to the safety of the cemetery, but my mother thought they might have news of my father, so we hurried across the park. As we entered the house, the two men were voicing their disgust at the destruction all around them. Oddly enough, they were the same two officers who had inspected our belongings several weeks before to determine the exit tax. They assured my mother that they themselves would see to it that the government paid for repairs. “We would not want you to go to America and talk about us Germans as barbarians,” they told her.

12 After they left, my mother sent my brother and me to bed. I dreamed of the telephone, which rang and rang and rang, until I finally realized that this was no dream. The phone—miraculously undamaged—was indeed ringing. I stumbled to the den through the debris and picked it up. A harsh male voice said, “Pack your bags and be at the railroad station by noon. Be sure to take all your money and jewelry with you.” My mother, who had been out when the call came, returned to this dreadful news and began packing. Shortly before noon on November 11, the three of us left our home for the last time.

13 Lugging our heavy suitcases, we walked past the temple, which was still burning, and past the ransacked homes of our friends. Worst of all, we walked past the people of Landau, our former neighbors, who stared at us with wordless hostility. Some of them forced us off the sidewalk into the busy street.

14 A cold drizzle was falling as we reached the plaza in front of the station. There about two hundred women and children were huddled together, trembling and scared, knowing nothing of the fate of their husbands and fathers, or of their own. True to her greatness, my mother made it her business to go around and speak to everyone encouragingly, especially the children.

15 One by one, the women and children were taken to a small room in the station, ordered to disrobe, and examined by members of the Nazi women’s group, who wanted to be sure that no money or jewelry was hidden on their bodies. All the valuables we brought with us had already been confiscated, except wedding bands. A little after eight o’clock, we boarded a train that took us to Mannheim, on the other side of the Rhine River. That day the Palatinate was to be made *judenfrei*—free of Jews.

16 We were fortunate to have distant relatives who ran a small hotel in Mannheim. These good people sent a taxi and umbrellas and money to the station. By a miracle, their place had not been touched the day before, and I could hardly

believe my eyes when we stepped into the warmly lit foyer. It was difficult to comprehend that such things as unbroken furniture still existed. The dining room table was set, awaiting us, and on it was the most beautiful sight of all: two burning Sabbath candles. It was Friday night, and the Sabbath had begun. After the events of the past two days, the radiance of their flickering light gave me an indescribable feeling of peace. Suddenly I discovered a new pride in being a Jew, and in my heart I knew that God would never forsake us.

17 The next day my father was released from the Dachau concentration camp. He traced us to Mannheim with the help of

our former chauffeur, and we were reunited at last. The two SS men kept their word, and my mother was allowed to return to Landau to pack our repaired furniture.

18 Twenty-three years later, in 1961, my husband and I went back to Landau. For the first time in my life I saw bombed-out houses, whole blocks leveled by air strikes, and I was grateful—yes, grateful—for I realized that the events that drove us from home, the horrors of the Hitler years, of that Crystal Night, had spared my family the horrors of war.

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“Breakfast in Virginia”

Answer the following questions using the text entitled “Breakfast in Virginia.”

1. What can the reader infer is the author’s purpose in writing this story?
 - A. To entertain
 - B. To inform
 - C. To persuade
 - D. To encourage
 - E. To argue
2. In paragraph 1, the word furlough means:
 - A. Trip
 - B. Break
 - C. Segregation
 - D. Sick leave
 - E. Training
3. Read the text below from paragraph 17.

“He told them of recent letters from his son overseas, and of his pride in all the men in the military services who were giving up the pleasures of civilian life to help bring an end to Hilterism”?

What literary device does the author use?

- A. Allusion
 - B. Hyperbole
 - C. Onomatopoeia
 - D. Simile
 - E. Metaphor
4. How do the setting and the historical context influence both Corporals’ points of view?
 - A. They each feel the way they do because they are traveling by train instead of airplane.
 - B. They each feel the way they do because they are in the military.
 - C. They each feel the way they do because of the way they had been treated in the past based on the area of the country they were from.
 - D. They each feel the way they do because they are both being sent into battle.
 - E. They each feel the way they do because Hitler is invading Germany and it is the Holocaust.

5. What symbol does this statement from line 21 represent?

"For the first time his eyes met those of his host"

- A. Hope
- B. Defeat
- C. Intrigue
- D. Sadness
- E. Irony

"The Crystal Night"

Answer the following questions using the text entitled "The Crystal Night".

1. The word "menacing" in section 3 most likely means:
- A. Heroic
 - B. Threatening
 - C. Brilliant
 - D. Forbidden
 - E. Dreary
2. Read this line from the text entitled "The Crystal Night".

"Jewish homes were soiled with swastikas and hate slogans...Jewish men and children were beaten in the streets."

This line illustrates the poet's use of:

- A. Assonance
- B. Mood
- C. Metaphor
- D. Imagery
- E. Onomatopoeia

3. The tone of passage entitled "Crystal Night" changes from:

- A. Melancholy to Witty to Humorous
- B. Amused to Pessimistic to Pompous
- C. Informal to Gloomy to Sorrowful
- D. Suspenseful to Frustrating to Frightening
- E. Cheerful to Somber to Appreciative

4. Read this line from paragraph 8 of "Crystal Night".

"Like beasts of prey fallen upon their victims, they went from room to room, systematically smashing furniture and dishes, cutting up oriental rugs, tearing open feather pillows, even slashing canvases in their frames- my mother's own painting."

This line is an example of the following literary device:

- A. Hyperbole
- B. Symbolism
- C. Simile
- D. Allusion
- E. Allegory

5. Read this excerpt from paragraph 3 of "The Crystal Night"

Shortly after Hitler's rise to power, menacing signs sprang up everywhere, at the swimming pool, the zoo, the parks, the theaters, the restaurants: "Jews forbidden." Jewish homes were soiled with swastikas and hate slogans, Jewish stores were boycotted, Jewish men and even children were beaten in the streets. In school, Jewish students, now "non-Aryans," were segregated from their fellow students. To have to sit in the so-called Jew corner, to have to listen to the most degrading remarks and avoid all contact with classmates who until then had been my friends, made those years agony for me. More and more of my Jewish classmates left Germany with their families.

Which **three words from this excerpt convey the author's intent** to portray the Jewish culture as the subject of propaganda?

You must select all three correct words for your answer to be correct.

- A. Menacing signs
- B. Forbidden
- C. Soiled
- D. Slogan
- E. Boycotted
- F. Beaten
- G. Fellow
- H. Degrading
- I. Avoid
- J. Agony

Comparison of "Breakfast in Virginia" and "Crystal Night"

Answer the following questions comparing both passages.

1. After reading "The Crystal Night" and "Breakfast in Virginia," choose the word that best conveys the overall tone of both passages.
 - A. Violent
 - B. Apathetic
 - C. Appreciative
 - D. Understated
 - E. Worshipful
2. Both "Breakfast in Virginia" and "Crystal Night" reflect on the subject of:
 - A. Arrogance
 - B. Religion
 - C. Segregation
 - D. Heroism
 - E. Coming of Age
3. Read the excerpts below:

Lines from "Breakfast in Virginia"

"I am sorry, sir," said the white steward, "but Negroes cannot be served now. If there's time, we may have a fourth sitting before luncheon for them, if they want to come back." "But these men are soldiers," said the white man. "I am sorry, sir. We will take *your* order, but I cannot serve them in the state of Virginia."

Lines from "Crystal Night"

"Oddly enough, they were the same two officers who had inspected our belongings several weeks before to determine the exit tax. 'We would not want you to go to America and talk about us Germans as barbarians,' they told her."

Which literary term is demonstrated in both passages above?

- A. Tone
- B. Allusion
- C. Oxymoron
- D. Irony
- E. Metaphor

Released Test Questions from Texas 2009

Comparison of "Breakfast in Virginia" and "Crystal Night"

Answer the following questions comparing both passages.

1. What historical element do the selections have in common?
 - A. Both show how Jim Crow laws were enforced.
 - B. Both detail the persecution of Jews.
 - C. Both occur while Hitler was in power.
 - D. Both highlight the separation between the South and the North.

2. What makes the persecuted characters in both selections feel better?
 - A. Sleep
 - B. Hospitality
 - C. Travel
 - D. Humor

3. Both selections end on a note of:
 - A. Sadness
 - B. Elation
 - C. Fear
 - D. Gratitude