

Grade 12

Reading Comprehension & Writing

Text 1: “Never judge a book by its cover”

I stepped off the Marta rail at Five Points Station a little past eight o'clock on a Saturday evening. I had noticed previously on the train an older woman, perhaps in her mid-sixties, staring at me with a look that suggested she was anything but content with my presence in the seat across from hers. As we exited the train she continued to make glances in my direction. Not those glances that you happen to make every now and then just to check your surroundings, but rather the type of glance you make when you know a dog's loose, so you watch him to make sure he does not sneak and attack you. It was obvious that she was uncomfortable with me walking the same path as her, yet in all actuality her apparent frightfulness of me made me somewhat uncomfortable as well. I quickened my pace and eventually passed her with a nod and a smile and continued on my way. The entire experience was nothing new for me; in fact it has become somewhat of the norm; however, it is something I could never completely get used to. For those who have never experienced a stereotype, I would be glad to lend my shoes for a day and let them experience one first hand.

Since the founding of this country, American society has been filled with stereotypes that label individuals based on physical appearance rather than personality or intellect. It was said by our forefathers that only men should be able to work and vote because women were incapable to do so. For nearly three hundred years, it was believed that African-Americans were inferior to Caucasians due to the color of their skin. Here I stand a young African-American male in the 21st century, still categorized by a society that knows nothing about me. I encounter atrocious stares from strangers who cannot seem to see past the baggy pants and dreadlocks. I am a sixteen-year-old student who will next year graduate with not only a high school diploma, but with an associates degree as well, yet I am labeled a criminal by so many due to the apparel I choose to wear. Am I not too a person born with the inalienable rights of “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness”? Should I be forced to compromise with America in order to be accepted in a society that was founded on the belief of individual free will?

Givonte Latimore

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Text 2: Never judge a man by his background

Alex Denholm was a pleasant enough man who could have been popular with his neighbours if it had not been for his queer streak. Alex had no sense of proportion. Until the neighbours got to know him they would hurry across to his farm to help him fix his tractor or his combine, only to find that there was nothing wrong with them; Alex had actually stopped work in the middle of the wheat-sowing season to go inside to listen to *the Music Lover's Hour* on the radio. And he would come out with his red hair standing up from the way he rumbled it in his excitement, his reddish-brown eyes glowing like fire, and his face, which was rugged and ruddy, shining in an absurdly delighted and boyish manner, to tell them he had just heard the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra playing Mozart's E Flat Symphony.

Opinion about Alex's wife was divided. Some said she was a heroine for putting up with him; others that she was a fool for not leaving him.

The neighbours were very amused when they heard that Alex was getting an Italian prisoner-of-war to work for him.

'That'll be two of a kind,' said some.

'Don't be too hard on the Ities¹,' said the others.

The Control Centre men were a bit apologetic about the Italian they brought to Denholm's place. He was a small, obsequious fellow, who looked exactly like a waiter in a second-rate Italian restaurant.

'I don't think he knows anything about farm work,' said the sergeant-major, 'but you'll have no trouble keeping him in order.'

All the C.C. staff chuckled at this and Mario looked at them nervously, with his big soft brown eyes sliding from one to the other. Alex gave his prisoner a cheerful smile, as if he were sure he would discover some good in him. It did not take him very long. The very first night when he took him in to tea and they were both feeling awkward and embarrassed because they could understand only a few words of each other's language, Alex switched on his radio to his usual programme of classical music. An orchestra was playing selections from Italian operas. Mario looked and listened with intense interest.

'Rossini,' he said.

'Rossini good,' said Alex.

'Good! Good!' said Mario enthusiastically, and they smiled delightedly at each other. The orchestra played the first three notes of the next air and Alex shouted, 'Mascagni!'

Mario looked at him admiringly. 'Mascagni good!' he said.

Eric Otto Schlunke, *The Man Who Liked Music*, 1965.

1. Ities: pejorative terms for Italians.

Text 1:

- 1- What type of text is it?
- 2- Who is Givonte? (3 items)
- 3- What did the older woman do on the train, then on the platform?
- 4- How did Givonte interpret the older woman's attitude?
- 5- What accounts for the older woman's attitude towards him? Answer in a few sentences and justify with three elements from the text.
- 6- Was this an isolated incident for Givonte? Justify by quoting from the text.
- 7- What conclusions about America does Givonte draw from his experience? Answer in a few sentences. (

Text 2:

- 8- What type of text is it?
- 9- Who are Alex and Mario?

Choose the relevant answers from the list below and justify by quoting the text. (Two items for each character)

a farmer • a mechanic • a music composer • a prisoner of war • a Control Centre man • a waiter • a music lover

- 10- How is Alex regarded by the community and why? Answer in your own words.
- 11- Say whether the following statements are **right** (R) or **wrong** (W). Justify your choice by quoting from the text.
 1. People in the neighbourhood thought Alex and Mario would not get on well.
 2. Alex and Mario actually got on well.

Both texts:

- 12- What do the older woman (text 1) and the neighbours (text 2) have in common? Explain in a few sentences.
- 13- How do Alex and Givonte each deal with the way people see them? Explain in a few sentences.
- 14- In what way can the title of text 1 apply to text 2? (30-40 words)

Writing:

Choose A or B

- A- Have people become more tolerant in the 21st century? (300 words)
- B- Write a speech urging people to accept one another's differences. (250 words)

Grade 12

English; Full Presentation

S/ ES:

Write the full **5-minute** presentation of a 2nd notion of your choice using specific arguments and examples from class discussions and/or from personal readings.

Email your work to aline.khattar@gmail.com

Your work will be graded 10