

Name _____

Date _____

Flower Power

As a child, Mary had wonderful memories of her grandmother. They did so many exciting things together: swimming in the ocean, flying kites, making snowmen in the front yard. But when her grandmother's health began to deteriorate in the fall of 1994, Mary knew that their time together was limited. Every few days, Mary would make the drive from Washington, DC to Winchester, VA to visit her grandmother, who was staying in the hospital there.



Mary hated highway driving, finding it ugly and monotonous. She preferred to take meandering back roads to the hospital. When she drove through the rocky town of Harpers Ferry, the beauty of the rough waters churning at the intersection of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers always captivated her.

Toward the end of her journey, Mary had to get on highway 81. It was here that she discovered a surprising bit of beauty during one of her trips. Along the median of the highway, there was a long stretch of wildflowers. They were thin and delicate and purple. They swayed in the wind as if whispering secrets to one another.

The first time she saw the flowers, Mary was seized by an uncontrollable urge to pull over on the highway and yank a bunch from the soil. She carried them into her grandmother's room when she arrived at the hospital and placed them in a water pitcher by her bed.

For a moment her grandmother seemed more lucid than usual. She thanked Mary for the flowers, commented on their beauty, and asked where she had gotten them. Mary was overjoyed by the ability of the flowers to wake up something inside her ailing grandmother.

Afterwards, Mary began carrying clippers in the car during her trips to visit her grandmother. She would quickly glide onto the shoulder, jump out of the car, and cut a bunch of flowers. Each time Mary placed the flowers in the pitcher, her grandmother's eyes would light up and they would have a splendid conversation.

It was a chilly morning in late October when Mary got the call. The man at the hospital calmly informed her that her grandmother had taken a turn for the worse. Mary got in her car and headed to the hospital. She sped past the place where she usually stopped to pick the flowers. After continuing ahead for about a mile, she put on her emergency lights and pulled onto the median.

She reentered the highway going the opposite way. When Mary arrived back at the flowers, she was surprised to see how many of them had withered and turned brown, probably as a result of the cold.

Nonetheless, she spotted a patch that bravely retained that vibrant purple glow. She cut a few of them and hopped back into her car and headed for the hospital.

When Mary arrived at the hospital, she found her grandmother very weak and unresponsive. She placed the flowers in the pitcher and sat down to hold her grandmother's hand. She felt a light squeeze on one of her fingers. It would be the last conversation they ever had.

1) Based on the things Mary and her grandmother did when she was a child, it can be understood that Mary's grandmother

- A. was an exceptionally strong swimmer
- B. had a variety of colorful kites
- C. enjoyed spending time outdoors
- D. lived in a cold and windy area

2) As used in paragraph 1, which is the best antonym for **deteriorate**?

- A. improve
- B. increase
- C. adjust
- D. climb

3) As used in paragraph 2, the word **captivated** most nearly means

- A. energized
- B. fascinated
- C. imprisoned
- D. relaxed

4) In paragraph 3 the author writes, "They swayed in the wind as if whispering secrets to one another." Which of the following literary devices is used in this sentence?

A. Metaphor, characterized by the comparison of two unlike things without the use of "like" or "as." This often involves taking a concept or identity that is clearly understood and applying it to a second, less well-known element.

B. Alliteration, characterized by the use of adjacent words that begin with the same sound or letter, creating a repetition of similar sounds in the sentence. This is used to add character to the writing and often adds an element of playfulness.

C. Authorial intrusion, characterized by a point at which the author speaks out directly to the reader. Authorial intrusion establishes a one to one relationship between the writer and the reader where the latter is no longer a secondary player or an indirect audience to the progress of the story but is the main subject of the author's attention.

D. Personification, characterized by attributing human traits or characteristics to inanimate objects or animals.

- 5) Which best describes what the act of stopping for flowers on the side of the highway became for Mary?
- A. a curse
 - B. a ritual
 - C. a regret
 - D. a bother
- 6) As used in paragraph 5, which is the best antonym for **lucid**?
- A. false
 - B. realistic
 - C. confused
 - D. determined
- 7) What do the flowers come to signify for Mary?
- A. the natural beauty of the United States highway system
 - B. an opportunity to compose herself before visiting her grandmother
 - C. a final chance to connect with her grandmother
 - D. a way to make the hospital room more pleasant
- 8) Why do you think Mary continued to pick flowers from the median instead of just buying them at the store? Explain your answer.
