

Close Reading

After reading the following passage, choose your answers to the multiple-choice questions.

- “Listen to me,” Aldwyn said, taking Kiran by the arm. His eyes were set with determination, as if it were possible, by sheer will, to transfer his wisdom to Kiran. “You are to seek the dwelling place of the Voice of the
- Line* Father and beg his forgiveness, but remember, the Great Father works in
(5) mysterious ways. Knowledge and understanding can come from unexpected places. Seek wisdom from all whom you meet on this journey. But be cautious. These influences can also lead you astray.”
- “How will I know the difference?”
Aldwyn tapped him on the chest.
- (10) “Listen to my heart.”
Aldwyn nodded. “Let that be your guide.”
“But what if...?” Kiran twisted his boot in the sand. “What if my heart conflicts with the Way?”
“The search for truth is a grave task. This will not be an easy journey.
- (15) Above all else, trust yourself.”
“But the Script...?”
Aldwyn clenched his teeth. “The scrolls are not meant to be our only source of inspiration.” He turned his gaze to the Sanctuary on the Mount for a moment, then shook his head. “We’ve become so...disconnected. I fear...”
- (20) “What? You fear what?”
He turned back to Kiran. “I fear I’ve already said too much.”
“What do you mean, disconnected?”
Aldwyn sighed. Then, as if to confirm he’d given Kiran too many
- (25) things to think about, he patted him on the shoulder and said, “Clarity will come with time.” Leaning on Kiran’s shoulder for support, he rose to his feet and brushed the sand from his robe. “Maybe someday young Torans will learn the story of your travels.”
“Really?” Kiran looked up at Aldwyn, his frustrations forgotten in
- (30) an instant. “Will we be celebrated? Will there be a Book of our quest? I hadn’t thought of that. We’ll be heroes.”
“Ah, now you are eager to go.”
Kiran’s face flushed red.
- (35) “Don’t go off chasing the wind. Remember, patience. Only with patience and humility does wisdom come.” A smile spread across Aldwyn’s face. “Always so full of doubt you are. I have answered your questions as best I can. Now, you must seek for yourself. Why don’t you stay and watch the sun set and recite the evening Verse. We’ll talk further in the morning.” He took a few steps toward their home, then stopped and
- (40) turned back. He looked as though he had something more to say, but he only sighed and turned and headed home.
“Did you get all that?” Kiran asked his dog. Echo cocked his head to the side as if trying to understand the question. “At least I’m not the only one.”
- (45) Time melted into the night as Kiran’s confusion merged into an abstract longing that settled over him like a fog. Flashes of firebugs began to appear, one by one, in the tall grasses, and the landscape came alive, each tiny light sending a message in the dark. He thought of the many evenings

he had spent chasing them, mesmerized by their magic—one of the many mysteries of the Great Father—and his disappointment as they always flitted just outside his grasp. Those days are over, he thought. I have to start figuring these things out on my own.

What was Aldwyn trying to tell me? He had to be prepared when he faced the Voice.

He jerked upright. I am going to stand before the Great Father—and speak with Him. He sprang to his feet. If the Great Father will accept me as a true Toran, then everyone will. “That’s it!”

His hat fell to the ground and the dog let out a yip and spun around in a circle.

Kiran laughed out loud. “Yes! That’s what I need to do.” He stood tall, straightening his back. “I am going to be an Elder some day. I am. You’ll see.”

And so he made a vow. He would reach the Voice of the Father, no matter what it took, no matter how long. Then he would return home, with his head held high, bearing the blessings of the Great Father. He’d be a Toran—a real Toran. From this moment forward, his mission was clear, as though a door had opened before him that he hadn’t known existed.

He plucked a switch of grass and stuck it in his mouth, then plopped down, snatched up his hat and placed it on his head, adjusting it just the way he liked it, and nodded with satisfaction. He lay back on his elbows and scratched Echo’s ears. To the west, the last burst of sunlight blazed across the trees of the Lost Forest, burning orange and yellow. The amber sky turned pink, then magenta, then a deep, vibrant purple, transforming the Lost Forest into an abstract texture of leaves and branches, color and shape, light against dark. A collage of color...

Tipping his head back, he remembered how, as a child, he’d marvel at the stars as they popped out of their daytime hiding places. Now, they reminded him of all the things he still didn’t understand and he felt small and insignificant. Like the orphan that he was.

Something still didn’t make sense. Of all the people in the village, he had been chosen to go. Why? Aldwyn never answered his question. Why won’t he tell me?

Kiran looked to the sky. “Why me?” he said aloud, daring to say it in the Tongue of the Father.

There was no answer.

1. As archetypes, the relationship between the two characters is best described as

- (A) father and son
- (B) man and boy
- (C) mentor and reluctant hero
- (D) authoritative and submissive
- (E) misogynistic

2. The tone of Aldwyn’s advice in lines 3-7 is best described as

- (A) demeaning
- (B) prophetic
- (C) domineering
- (D) advisory
- (E) biblical

3. In lines 45-51, the author uses an analogy between
- (A) light and dark
 - (B) light and knowledge
 - (C) firebugs and children
 - (D) magic and religious belief
 - (E) both B and D
4. The passage as a whole establishes the story as
- (A) fantasy
 - (B) a melodramatic monologue
 - (C) hero's journey
 - (D) an historical account
 - (E) a dramatic retelling of a fairy tale
5. In lines 67-70, the author uses a description to invoke a well-known literary character, the adventurous Huck Finn. Why?
- (A) She was lazy
 - (B) Association by suggestion
 - (C) Irony
 - (D) It establishes genre
 - (E) Parallel syntax
6. Lines 75-78 suggest the story will be about
- (A) astronomy
 - (B) a small orphan boy
 - (C) a boy who loses his innocence
 - (D) how orphans can be powerful
 - (E) seeking knowledge beyond one's grasp
7. Which of the following best describes the function of the last sentence in the passage?
- (A) Foreshadowing
 - (B) It suggests there is no god.
 - (C) It suggests the novel's theme.
 - (D) It establishes the protagonist's dilemma.
 - (E) All of the above.