Read the following passage and answer questions 19 through 22.

Acting Up

Write something.

“Huh?”

Write something.

“Ugh.”

My ninth grade teacher was telling me to write something about what I had just read, and my mind was gazing out across greener pastures. I was staring at the football field, through my high school English class’s window, daydreaming about what “pearls of wisdom” I should transcribe to my notebook paper, when all I really wanted to do was “to act.”

When I was a kid, and I read a book, all I could do was picture the book as a movie. And, naturally, I was the star. (Ah, to see my name in lights!) Indeed, all my life, I have thought cinematically. When I walk into a room, my immediate thoughts are how would this look on the big screen? What would this person say? Where would I put this chair? Can I make this more entertaining?

It is terrible to think this way. You spend half your time not really listening to what people have to say. And the other half rearranging their wardrobe.

Write something.

I would like to write something, but what I really like to do is “act.” I think it’s genetic.

I was born with a predisposition to sing and dance. I came out of the womb wearing a top hat and cane, ready to softshoe my way into the hearts of my relatives. My school years were spent playing the clarinet (not my forte), singing in choruses (you didn’t miss anything), and putting on plays. For my high school senior year, I was voted “Most Dramatic.” I was not surprised, though. I had performed for my high school a monologue entitled “The Night the Bed Fell” by James Thurber, and I had been—as they say in showbiz—a hit.

I remember the day vividly. As members of the high school debate team, we were forever going to district and state competitions. One category that I relished
was dramatic interpretation. My debate teacher, Mrs. Spector (dear Mrs. Spector, I remember the time when we jumped in the school’s indoor pool with our clothes on, but that’s another story), selected the piece for me, knowing my penchant for humor and my desire to entertain. She felt this Thurber piece, about a series of misadventures that lead everyone to believe that an earthquake has occurred, instead of a bed falling, was the perfect vehicle for my dramatic debut.

She was right.

There I was on the high school stage, standing near a single chair (You know the kind. They are wooden, sturdy, and usually found in turn of the century libraries), bathed in a glow of bright light. And a sea of people. My classmates. All staring in great anticipation.

“What’s this crazy kid going to do now?”

Until then, my classmates had only seen me in bit parts. I was not the Tom Cruise of my high school. I had been in school plays, but nothing really big. I was the character actor to the right, the nerdy kid in stage makeup, looking like someone’s long-lost relative.

I was no heartthrob.

Most high schools present Spring musicals, where good looking singers and dancers are held at a premium. And although I love to sing and dance, enthusiasm is my real talent.

Mrs. Spector, though, gave me my big break.

As soon as the audience quieted, I began.

It was awesome.

I held my classmates in the palm of my hand. They were glued to my every word. They sighed and laughed appropriately. They understood what I was saying (believe me, Thurber is not easy to follow), and moreover, they listened to me. No one else. Just me.

I was in seventh heaven.

Until this day, I still remember the final ovation.

I remember the applause sweeping over me like a wave of righteousness. Each clap, underlining what I already knew.

Acting is my thing.

19. How does the reader know that the story is a dramatic monologue?
   A The narrator is the only speaker.
   B The story is about the narrator’s love of acting.
   C The narrator has a vivid personality.
   D The story is based on the narrator’s experiences.

20. What is the main effect produced by the repetition of the phrase *Write something*?
   A It reminds the reader that the narrator is daydreaming.
   B It proves that the narrator has finished his homework.
   C It emphasizes the importance that writing has to an actor.
   D It makes the story easier for the reader to understand.

21. Which statement BEST describes what happens in the story?
   A A teacher nurtures a talented writer.
   B A teacher gives students an impossible assignment.
   C A student avoids classwork by daydreaming.
   D A student gains confidence in his abilities by performing.

22. What does the use of flashbacks accomplish in “Acting Up”?
   A makes the narrator seem dreamy and unrealistic
   B shows the reader what the narrator was like as a child
   C allows the narrator to list his achievements
   D gives the reader more insight into the narrator’s character
“I never wanted to come on this stupid old hiking trip anyway!” His voice echoed, shrill and panicked, across the narrow canyon. His father stopped, chest heaving with the effort of the climb, and turned to look at the boy.

“This is hard on you, son, I know. But you’ve got to come through with courage and a level head.”

“But I’m scared! I don’t even want to have courage!” he retorted. He jerked his head the other way and wiped his eyes across his arm.

“If not courage, fine,” his father replied sternly. “Then have enough love for your brother to think this through!” He pulled a bandana from his back pocket and tied it around his neck. Then he gently placed his hand on the boy’s shoulder and continued, more softly this time. “Now, I don’t know if I can make it without stopping every so often. And we just don’t have the time to stop. You’re young, but you’re strong and fast. Do you remember the way back from here to the road, if you had to go alone?”

Jeff flashed back to the agonizing scene of his seventeen-year-old brother at their campsite that morning. He’d been bitten by a snake yesterday during a rough hike through very rocky terrain. By the time they returned to their tents, he was limping badly. Then this morning he couldn’t put on his boots, and the pain seemed to be getting worse. He needed medical attention right away, so leaving him there was their only choice.

“Jeffrey? Jeffrey, could you do it? Could you make it to the road without me if you had to?”

Jeff blinked and looked past his father’s eyes to the end of the canyon, several miles away. He nodded slowly as the path and the plan began to take hold in his mind. “What was the name of that little town we stopped in to get matches, Dad?”

His father smiled and replied, “Flint. After we left Flint, we parked at the side of the road a few miles out of town. When you see which way our car is
facing, you’ll know that the town is back the other
direction.” Jeff thought about this and then nodded.
They both drank water and then continued scrambling
over the rocks.

Nothing was as pretty as it had seemed when they
first hiked this way to their campsite. Before, the
boulders and rocks had been an interesting challenge.
Now, they were obstacles that threatened their footing
and their velocity. Overhanging limbs had earlier
been natural curiosities in the cliffs. But now they
were nature’s weapons, slapping and scratching the
boy and the man who crashed by and pushed through
as quickly as they could.

Stone by stone, they made their way up the canyon.
Jeff’s father grew smaller and smaller in the distance.
“He must be stopping a lot,” Jeff thought. He waved
to him from a bend in the canyon wall. His father
waved back. Jeff turned and made the final ascent up
an easier slope toward the road and spotted his
father’s car. He lurched toward it, half stumbling, and
leaned on the hood, breathless.

“Can’t stop,” he thought. “Mark’s in big trouble.
Gotta keep going.” The fast, loud thudding in his ears
was deafening, and as he pulled himself upright, he
was surprised as a car sped by, heading toward Flint.
“Hey, mister!” he shouted, waving both arms. He
began to walk, faster and faster until he was jogging.
Then he quickly crossed the highway and broke into
a full-speed run, holding his left arm straight out, his
thumb up.

His chest was burning with every breath when he
suddenly heard several loud honks from behind. He
turned as the brakes squealed and saw “Bob’s Towing
& Repair, Flint” right behind him. “Jump in, boy!
What’s up?” Jeff explained between gasps as the
truck picked up speed. The driver reached for his
two-way radio as soon as he heard about Mark.
“Better get the helicopter in there,” he seemed to be
shouting into his hand. But Jeff wasn’t sure about that
because everything got fuzzy and then went black
and quiet.

Hours later, Jeff opened his eyes to find strange
surroundings and his father on a chair nearby.

“You’re a hero, son,” his father said with a smile.
“You saved Mark.”

“What happened?” Jeff asked through a wide yawn.
“Where are we?”

“This is a motel room in Flint. You made it into town
and sent the helicopter into the canyon after Mark. I
can’t tell you how happy I was when I saw it
overhead. I’m so proud of you!”

Jeff sat up suddenly. “Where’s Mark? Is he OK?”

“They airlifted him out and got him to the hospital.
His leg’s still in bad shape, but he’s going to be just
fine in a couple of days. Thanks to you, son.”

Jeff’s worried face relaxed as his father spoke. “How
about you, Dad? How did you get out?”
“Well, I finally hiked myself out of that canyon and to the road. I won’t be going back there any time soon. That’s for sure. Anyway, I couldn’t see the car, and as I headed for Flint, I got lucky and was able to hitch a ride from a fellow named Bob in a tow truck.”

Jeff laughed out loud. “I guess Bob makes a good living going up and down that road. I hope you gave him a good tip, Dad!”

23. This passage is an example of which of the following genres of writing?
   A  a narrative short story
   B  an informational text
   C  a persuasive essay
   D  a biographical essay

24. Which of the following sentences BEST explains Jeff’s biggest problem in the passage?
   A  He needed to face his fear of losing his father’s respect.
   B  He needed to find someone to take him to the town of Flint.
   C  He needed to climb the rock-covered hill to get to the top.
   D  He needed to face his fear in order to help his brother.

25. What kind of person is Jeff’s father in the passage?
   A  understanding and motivating
   B  aggressive and annoying
   C  humorous and entertaining
   D  impatient and anxious
A Word in the Hand

It might have been destiny that left Marco waiting in the library for his sister. Whatever it was, Marco waited impatiently, tapping his fingers on the table until a librarian gave him a warning glance. He tapped his foot until the librarian sent another cautionary glance his way. Marco stood up, stretched, yawned, and viewed the stacks of books, the shelves of books, the books in every direction, books as far as the eye could see. He picked one randomly off the shelf: Everyday Quotations and Proverbs. Marco thumbed through the pages, a little bored. To be honest, Marco wasn't much of a reader. He didn't mind reading, but it just wasn't his favorite thing to do.

A line caught his eye. It was a quotation he had heard before, a million times at least, something his mom said to him all the time. This quotation was from the sixteenth century, was over 400 years old, and was still kicking around today. Marco read on. The more he read, the more he found that sounded familiar. He moved a stack of magazines off a chair and sat down, still reading. He found a saying to fit every situation and every occasion. There were proverbs that offered instruction on everything, from loaning money to friends (not a good idea, according to the wisdom of the ages) to making excuses. Marco kept reading.

When his sister finally showed up, Marco didn't even notice. Alicia practically had to shout to get him to look up. Then she was the one who had to wait, somewhat impatiently, while Marco applied for and received a library card so he could check out the book and take it home.

“Come on,” said Alicia. “Hurry up. Mom said to make sure we got home in time for dinner.”

“Haste makes waste,” said Marco calmly as he got into the car and put the key in the ignition.

“What’s wrong with you?” Alicia wanted to know.

Marco pointed to the book that lay on the console between them. “Knowledge is power.”

“You’re crazy,” she said.
“Birds of a feather flock together.”

“Whatever. All I know is that if we’re late for dinner, Mom’s going to be mad.”

“A soft answer turns away wrath.”

Alicia’s only response was to gape at Marco, her mouth slightly open.

Marco himself was surprised by the proverbs popping out of his mouth. The sayings had taken on a life of their own.

At dinner, Marco declined a serving of green beans.

“Marco, you need to eat some vegetables,” said his mother.

“Waste not, want not,” Marco replied.

When Marco’s mother asked him what was new, Marco shrugged and said that there was nothing new under the sun. When Marco’s father said that he had hired a new assistant, Marco nodded in approval and said that a new broom swept clean and that two heads were better than one. When his mother said that she had gotten stuck in the development phase of a new project, Marco said sympathetically, “Back to the drawing board.” As an afterthought, he cautioned that if she wanted anything done right, she would have to do it herself. Alicia mentioned that she had snagged her favorite sweater on the sharp corner of a desk. Marco told her there was no use in crying over spilt milk. Alicia looked at him as if she had never seen him before. “Be quiet, please.” Her tone was anything but polite.

“It takes two to make a quarrel,” Marco instructed her.

“I guess it only takes one to act like an idiot,” his sister replied. “Stop it!”

“Familiarity breeds contempt,” said Marco sadly. “Let’s forgive and forget.”

“Marco,” his father said sternly, “discretion is the better part of valor.”

“That’s right,” said his mother in her strictest voice. “Besides, this is all Greek to me!”

Both of his parents started laughing.

“Laughter is the best medicine,” said Marco.

“Oh, well,” said Alicia, relenting. “Better to be happy than wise.”

“Good one,” said Marco, surprised.

Alicia smiled. “If you can’t beat them, join them.”
26. Read this sentence from the selection.

“Familiarity breeds contempt.”

What does the word contempt mean in this sentence from the story?

A alarm
B dislike
C emotion
D confusion

27. What does Marco mean when he says to his sister, “Birds of a feather flock together”?

A If he is crazy, then she must be crazy, too.
B She must set a good example for him.
C She, not he, is the crazy one.
D If she plans to stay out of trouble, they must unite.

28. How does Marco’s family react to his use of proverbs?

A His parents are surprised; his sister is upset.
B His parents are irritated; his sister is impressed.
C His parents are entertained; his sister is annoyed.
D His parents are disturbed; his sister is encouraging.
Read the following story and answer questions 29 through 31.

Out of the Woods

There was a strange silence in the woods. As they walked, Gabriel and Marie could hear birds chirping, pine needles crunching under their feet, the snapping of twigs, even the slight thump of the occasional pine cone landing softly.

They had been hiking as part of a project with their natural sciences class, a group that included thirteen other students and two teachers. As the trail became steeper, the others had started to fall behind. Mr. Davis had kept up with Gabriel and Marie most of the way, but had turned around to make sure the others were on the right track. Oblivious to the group, Gabriel and Marie had climbed and climbed as the trail narrowed and twisted and peaked.

“It’s the soccer legs,” said Gabriel, who was a forward on the varsity team. “I could climb forever.”

“You’ll be sore tomorrow,” said Marie. “I, on the other hand, have the stamina. I’m used to logging miles and miles.” Marie ran cross-country.

“Miles of flat land. We’ll see who’s sore tomorrow.”

They thought they had been following a straight course, but when they finally turned back to find the group, they discovered that the trail had actually split.

“Are we lost?” Marie asked.

“How could we be lost? They were all here just a few minutes ago.”

The sheer silence, the absence of other human voices, was overwhelming.
“Let’s go back that way.” Marie pointed at the trail leading in the opposite direction.

The trail led nowhere. Gabriel and Marie soon found themselves at a precipice, looking down into a canyon. Realizing that they were lost, they panicked. Every snap of a twig was a mountain lion stalking them; every twitch of a branch behind them was a bear getting ready to charge. They ran. They ran wildly, blindly into the forest ahead, slipping on pine needles, leaping over fallen branches, and looking—they later agreed, laughing—like complete idiots.

“You should have seen yourself,” said Marie. She mimicked a terrified face.

“Me? You’re the one who ran into a tree,” said Gabriel.

“I tripped!”

“Okay, you just keep saying that.” Gabriel looked around. “We can’t be too far from everyone.”

“Then why can’t we hear them?”

They followed the trail back and began to make their way down the mountain. Surely they could find their way to the beginning of the trail. As they hiked down, the landscape looked unfamiliar. “Hey, this doesn’t look right,” said Gabriel, stopping. “Look how the trail slopes up again.”

“We didn’t come this way.”

“Let’s go back,” said Gabriel.

“No, wait. Listen.” Both were quiet. They heard a sound, a new sound.

“It’s a creek!” The first trail had crossed over a creek!

The sound of water led them to the creek. Following the direction of the running water, they hiked along the creek bed until they reached another trail crossing.

“This is it!”

“I knew we’d find it,” said Marie. They jumped the creek and ran down the trail. As the trail widened, they ran even faster, propelled by relief. Nearing the road where the bus was parked, they heard the sounds they had been longing to hear.

“Come on,” yelled Gabriel. “Race!”

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29. What is the author’s purpose in writing this story?

A  to entertain the reader with a lesson about paying attention to the surroundings when hiking
B  to teach the reader a moral about the importance of listening to your leader
C  to present factual information about the best places in nature to hike
D  to give an explanation of what to take when preparing to go for a hike

30. Read this sentence from the story.

Every snap of a twig was a mountain lion stalking them; every twitch of a branch behind them was a bear getting ready to charge.

What does the author convey in the above sentence?

A  Although the woods had been strangely silent at first, now they were full of deafening noises.
B  The strange noises Gabriel and Marie heard were being made by different animals.
C  Every strange noise they heard was frightening to Gabriel and Marie.
D  The woods were full of dangerous animals that were stalking Gabriel and Marie.

31. Read this sentence from the story.

Nearing the road where the bus was parked, they heard the sounds they had been longing to hear.

In this sentence, the author is referring to the sounds of—

A  the voices of the other hikers.
B  the water in the creek.
C  the pine needles crunching under their feet.
D  the noises of other cars on the road where the bus was parked.
Read the following poem and answer questions 32 through 34.

The Courage That My Mother Had

The courage that my mother had
Went with her, and is with her still:
Rock from New England quarried;
Now granite in a granite hill.

The golden brooch\(^1\) my mother wore
She left behind for me to wear;
I have no thing I treasure more:
Yet it is something I could spare.

Oh, if instead she’d left to me
The thing she took into the grave!—
That courage like a rock, which she
Has no more need of, and I have.

\(^1\) pin

32. Which sentence BEST describes the theme of this poem?

A Personal strengths are more important than valuable objects.
B Only a daughter can truly relate to her mother’s feelings.
C Having a golden brooch is better than nothing.
D Unlike jewelry, traits such as courage are not valued.

33. Which phrase from the poem creates a tone of sadness and regret?

A “Rock from New England quarried”
B “Oh, if instead she’d left to me”
C “The golden brooch my mother wore”
D “That courage like a rock”

34. Which pair of nouns BEST describes the mood of this poem?

A admiration and longing
B distrust and jealousy
C awe and amazement
D anger and resentment
Read the following poem and answer questions 35 through 37.

**I’ve Watched . . .**

I’ve watched the white clouds pantomime  
The inner workings of my mind,  
Where thought and feeling paint a scene  
As if the blue sky were a dream.

I’ve watched the snow-bogged trees bend down  
And shake their coats upon the ground  
In order that they may reclaim  
A straighter truth from whence they came.

I’ve watched the congress of the geese  
Assemble in a perfect V  
In order that they may keep sight  
Of one another’s path of flight.

I’ve watched the flood tide turn its head  
And slack before the coming ebb  
Without want or predilection  
Waiting for the moon’s direction.

I’ve watched the ocean lashed by wind,  
Make a fool of the fishermen,  
Who thought their knowledge of the sea  
Ensured them some security.

But all this watching, knows not much,  
For what are wind and sea and such,  
The V of geese, the bent-down tree,  
If nothing more than mystery?
35. In this line from the poem, the word *lashed* suggests that the ocean is being—

I’ve watched the ocean lashed by wind.

A soothed.  
B troubled.  
C sailed.  
D whipped.  

36. According to lines 17–20, the fishermen’s knowledge of the sea—

A reflects their love of natural elements.  
B helps them navigate more effectively.  
C is greater than their knowledge of the weather.  
D does not guarantee them safety.  

37. What is the theme of the poem?  

A Clouds can be a reflection of our thoughts.  
B Geese assemble in the shape of a V to navigate properly.  
C Nature remains a mystery, regardless of our observations.  
D Trees often bend beneath the weight of the snow.