

Name _____

Date _____

Foreshadowing

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Foreshadowing is a literary device that authors use to hint at certain plot developments that may occur in the future. The reader can use these hints and clues to make predictions about what may happen later. Authors use foreshadowing for two main reasons. First, foreshadowing can help the reader understand and feel more prepared for what is about to happen. Second, foreshadowing can create a suspenseful mood for the story. Mood is the overall feeling or impression evoked by a story; it's how you feel while you're reading. A story's mood can be joyful, sad, silly or something else. When authors use foreshadowing, especially in a mystery story, they're often trying to create a tense or eerie mood.

Read the following passage.

When Heesun woke up that Thursday, she had no idea it was going to be the longest day of her life. As usual, she hit the snooze button three times, then threw off all the covers. She brushed her teeth, took a shower and put on her favorite sweater, the one with the rainbow-colored stripes. Then she went downstairs to have breakfast with her dad and brother. All three of them ate their waffles in happy silence.

Which detail from the passage best creates a suspenseful mood?

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| A. "As usual, she hit the snooze button three times." | B. "All three of them ate their waffles in happy silence." |
| C. "She had no idea it was going to be the longest day of her life." | D. She "put on her favorite sweater, the one with the rainbow-colored stripes." |

2. Foreshadowing isn't always a big, dramatic statement. Sometimes just naming a future event is an example of foreshadowing. For example, Rafael is in class, listening to his science teacher talk about fossils. But his mind keeps wandering to the meeting he has later today with the principal. That might seem like a small or meaningless detail—but if the author took the time to mention the meeting, maybe more than once, you can bet that whatever happens in this meeting is going to be significant. This is especially true if a character feels apprehension, or fear, about the upcoming event. This type of foreshadowing creates anticipation for the future event and prepares the reader for what is to come.

Which of the following passages is the best example of foreshadowing through anticipation?

- A. When I reached into the box, I found a bunch of rubber snakes. I jumped back in shock—I'm scared of snakes!
- B. Karl wasn't sure if he liked the new girl, even after having lunch with her in the cafeteria. She seemed nice enough, but she didn't like hip-hop.
- C. As Jamie got ready for bed, all she could think about was her doctor's appointment tomorrow. She was going to find out whether or not her illness had come back.
- D. Luisa's mom didn't want her to go to the party. "I don't want you to be out in a strange neighborhood, especially at night," she said. Luisa was disappointed, but she knew in her heart that her mom was right.

3. Sometimes authors use a symbol as an omen, or sign, to foreshadow what is to come. When you see a classic symbol of bad luck or death appear in a story, it's likely that the author included it on purpose. For example, it's a common superstition that crossing paths with a black cat will bring bad luck. If a story begins with the main character seeing a black cat run across the street, you can guess that he or she will soon encounter danger. Other examples of superstitious bad omens include the number 13, ravens, crows, bad weather, breaking something, walking under a ladder and opening an umbrella indoors.

However, symbolic omens are not always tied to superstition. Authors sometimes use a seemingly random detail as an omen to indicate that something similar may occur. For example, in the opening paragraph of *A Farewell to Arms*, Ernest Hemingway writes, "The leaves fell early that year." This may seem like a minor detail, but it foreshadows a character's early death later in the story.

Which of these excerpts does **not** contain a symbolic omen?

- A. When Mari opened the curtains, she noticed a raven looking right at her.
- B. Mike was excited to get to the dance. He wondered if there would be a live band or a DJ.
- C. It was the day the judge would give his verdict. As Paul pulled up to the courthouse, he noticed dark storm clouds gathering above the building.
- D. Joon couldn't wait to show off his guitar skills at the talent show; he'd been practicing for weeks. But when he took out his guitar for one final practice session, one of its strings broke!

4. A classic type of foreshadowing is the “loaded image.” Anton Chekhov, a Russian playwright and short-story writer, famously described this. He said, “If you say in the first chapter that there is a rifle hanging on the wall, in the second or third chapter it absolutely must go off. If it's not going to be fired, it shouldn't be hanging there.” In other words, every element that you introduce—especially one that’s full of meaning and potential, like a rifle—must be necessary to the story; unnecessary elements should be removed. The item in question does not have to be a gun. It can be any object, or even a person or an idea, that’s going to turn up again in a meaningful way. It can also be the *absence* of something, like a gas tank close to empty or an empty fridge. The loaded image adds tension, or excitement, to the story because the reader doesn’t know how or when the item will reappear.

Read the following passage.

There were many reasons Eliza didn’t want to go on her family vacation to Florida. First of all, she hated packing. Second, she didn’t like beaches or hot weather. Worst of all, her annoying cousin, Margot, was going to be there too. Eliza sighed and reached into her dresser drawer to look for her bathing suit. As her fingers dug around, they brushed against a plastic bottle: her asthma inhaler. She hadn’t needed it in a long time, and it was almost empty. She found her new striped bathing suit and tossed it, along with the inhaler, into her suitcase. She zipped the suitcase closed.

Which of the following events would make this passage an example of a loaded image?

- A. Eliza's striped bathing suit still fits her.
- B. Eliza and Margot had a great time together on vacation.
- C. On vacation, Eliza had an asthma attack, but her inhaler was empty.
- D. The family car broke down on the highway before they reached Florida.

5. A character's premonition, or vision of what is to come, can be used as a type of foreshadowing. A premonition can be related to supernatural forces, astrology or fate, such as a fortune teller seeing a character's future in a crystal ball, a tarot card reading or the message inside a fortune cookie. It can also be a dream or a sudden gut feeling a character has. The character may or may not take the premonition seriously.

Read the following passage.

Walt's favorite time of day was early morning. He loved to eat breakfast and read the paper at the kitchen table as the sun came up. Today he decided to make coffee and scrambled eggs with rye toast. As he ate, his eyes fell on the horoscope section of the paper, and he decided to see what it said. "You will meet someone who will change your life," it read. Walt chuckled and closed the paper. "Not likely!" he exclaimed as he put his coffee cup and plate in the sink.

In the passage, what detail is the best example of foreshadowing through premonition?

- A. Walt made coffee and scrambled eggs with rye toast.
- B. Walt loved early mornings because he got to spend quiet time by himself.
- C. Walt placed his cup and plate in the sink instead of washing them right away.
- D. Walt read his horoscope, which said he would meet someone who would change his life.
6. Despite what Chekhov would advise, authors sometimes add foreshadowing details that never pay off. These are called red herrings. In particular, mystery authors tend to leave red herrings throughout a story to keep the reader guessing who the culprit really is. The author might include suspicious details about several different people, not just the "bad guy." For example, one suspect might be nervous before being interrogated by the police, but her reason for being nervous might have nothing to do with the main story. Or a fortune teller might see the face of bearded man in her crystal ball, but the character with a beard may actually turn out to be innocent. Having multiple potential culprits creates tension and excitement.

According to the passage, why might an author want to include red herrings in a mystery story?

- A. to prove Chekhov wrong
- B. to keep multiple suspects in play
- C. to talk about a police interrogation
- D. to show that most people are good at heart