

Reading Practice

Read this selection. Then answer the questions that follow.

from *The Lucky Stone*

by Lucille Clifton

My notes about
what I am reading

Fourteen-year-old Tee loves to sit on her front porch and listen to her great-grandmother tell stories. Some of Tee's favorite stories involve the history of Grandma's lucky stone, which she plans to pass on to Tee someday.

- 1 Up until the time I was fourteen years old I hadn't ever got one valentine in the mail. And I was really worried about having a boyfriend and all. I used to talk to my Great-grandmother about it.
- 2 "Don't you worry, Sweet Tee." She would smile and pat my plaits.¹ "They'll come round buzzin like bees to the cone,² bees to the cone."
- 3 The year that I was going to be fourteen was the year that she was almost eighty years old and caught pneumonia. Oh, that scared us. She was such an old woman. Real little and thin, but not weak-looking, just a small old lady. She would lay in her bed watching the sun out the window and breathing so loud seemed like her breathing rustled the curtains.
- 4 After a few days Mama and Daddy wanted to take her to the hospital, but she didn't want to go.
- 5 "I'll let the sun heal me," she'd fuss. "Give the sun just one more good day."
- 6 "Grandmother, you need the doctor," Mama would almost cry.
- 7 "The sun be my doctor if it's all right with you," my Great-grandmother would say.

1. **plaits:** braids in a person's hair.

2. **like bees to the cone:** A cone is the part of a flower that produces pollen, which attracts bees.

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- 8 But finally Mama and Daddy took her to the hospital. And every day without missing I would walk to the hospital with dogwood or candy and every day the nurse wouldn't let me see my Great-grandmother.
- 9 "No visitors." That's all she would say. No reason or nothing. No visitors.
- 10 Well, this one day I went over to the hospital and the nurse's place was empty. I didn't even think about it; soon as I saw nobody was there I went looking for my Great-grandmother. Found her too. She was in the fourth room I tried, a little tiny old lady in a big old bed. Not enough sun or nothing. I was in the room before she saw me.
- 11 "Ohhh, it's my Baby, my Sweet Tee Baby." She laughed. She was so glad to see me.
- 12 And I ran to the bed and hugged her hard because I was so glad to see her too. And I started to cry.
- 13 "Why what is the matter, Tee?"
- 14 "Oh, Grandma." I was talkin and cryin at the same time. "Grandmama, I ain't never gonna have no boyfriend and nobody will ever love me but you, and I couldn't even get in here to see you and I ain't gonna never have nobody."
- 15 My Great-grand hugged me hard.
- 16 "Hush your mouth, girl," she laughed, "hush up now. You talk like you ain't kin to me. You'll have the ones you want and the ones you don't. Sweet Tee, they be on you like bees to the cone. And you ain't done with me neither, not yet." And she seemed to be laughing more.
- 17 Well, that old nurse came in just then and made me go.
- 18 "When you get home, look on my dresser. Don't forget. Look on my dresser," my Great-grandmother called to me on my way out.

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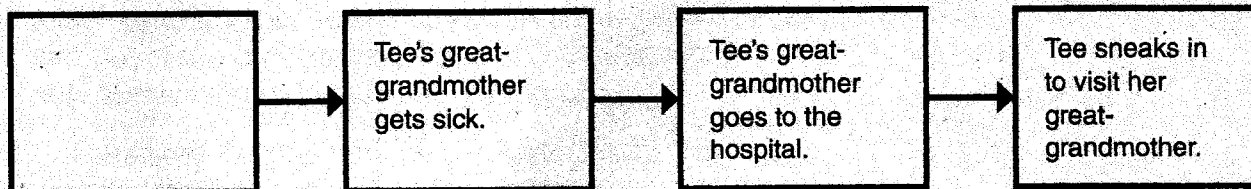
- 19 That evening after my Mama and Daddy went out to the hospital I went into my Great-grand's room and sat in her chair. Her room smelled old and warm and sweet like she did.
- 20 I went over to her dresser like she told me. I looked at the pictures all framed in lace and gold. There were aunts and uncles I didn't know. And Mama when she was a little girl and Mama's Mama, my Grandmother and my Great-grand's own daughter who was gone before I was born.
- 21 And right by the picture of Mama's Mama was a lace hanky with an envelope half folded in it. And the envelope had my name on it! Tee!
- 22 I unfolded the hanky and took the envelope over to the rocker and sat down and opened it up. There was something inside warm and black as night, a stone with a letter scratched on one side like an A. The stone!
- 23 Oh, I held it and kissed it and rocked and cried in that chair and that was where they found me when they came in that evening. My Mama and my Daddy and my Great-grandmother well again!
- 24 They laughed when they saw me sitting curled up asleep in my Great-grand's chair with the lucky stone clutched in my hand. They say they did anyway.
- 25 Next day I got in the mail my very first valentine, a big red heart edged in lace, and my Great-grandmother laughed and called me Honeycone, and it seemed like I smiled all day. It was the prettiest thing I had ever seen and it was signed just J.D., and I didn't even know that anybody called by that was looking at me when I watched him in school so much.
- 26 The world is a wondrous place.
- 27 Now that is the story of how I got my lucky stone and how it started being lucky for me. There is more to it than that though, and someday I might tell you about that too.

Use the excerpt from *The Lucky Stone* (pp. 52–54) to answer questions 1–8.

- 1 From which point of view is the story told?
- A First person, told by Tee's great-grandmother
 - B First person, told by Tee
 - C Third person, told by an all-knowing narrator
 - D Third person, told by a narrator who knows Tee's thoughts only
- 2 In paragraph 2, the great-grandmother uses a simile, or comparison, involving "bees to the cone." What does she mean?
- F She understands that not receiving any valentines stings or hurts Tee's feelings.
 - G Many boys will one day be drawn to Tee and want to be her boyfriend.
 - H Tee will one day be so busy that she will not worry about boyfriends.
 - J Tee will develop a sweeter personality as she grows older.

- 3 In the South, iced tea with sugar is a popular drink called "sweet tea." What does her use of the nickname Sweet Tee convey about the great-grandmother's character?
- A She is often thirsty and tries to hide this symptom of her illness.
 - B She comes from the North but likes eating and drinking food from the South.
 - C She is very well educated and likes to show off her knowledge.
 - D She is clever with words and feels affection for her great-granddaughter.

4 The diagram below shows part of the plot's rising action, from left to right.



Which of the events below is missing from the first box of the diagram?

- F Tee tells her great-grandmother her worries about not getting a valentine.
- G Tee's great-grandmother refuses to go to the hospital.
- H The nurse will not let Tee visit her great-grandmother.
- J Tee gets a valentine.



5 In the context of paragraph 18, what does the word dresser mean?

- A Someone who helps another person put on clothing
- B A piece of furniture
- C A bedroom closet
- D A machine that stamps addresses onto envelopes

6 Which of the following is an example of dialect from the story?

- F *After a few days Mama and Daddy wanted to take her to the hospital, but she didn't want to go.*
- G *And I ran to the bed and hugged her hard because I was so glad to see her too.*
- H *"Hush your mouth, girl," she laughed, "hush up now. You talk like you ain't kin to me."*
- J *"When you get home, look on my dresser. Don't forget. Look on my dresser," my Great-grandmother called to me on my way out.*

7 Why does the great-grandmother tell Tee where the lucky stone is?

- A She believes she will get better if Tee brings the stone to the hospital.
- B She is sure she is dying and wants Tee to find and inherit the stone.
- C She wants to bring Tee luck and make Tee feel better.
- D The stone is heart-shaped, like a valentine.

8 Which theme, or message about life, does the story most clearly support?

- F The love of an older family member is more valuable than romantic love.
- G Family love and family traditions bring people comfort.
- H The secrets of the past are often hard to understand.
- J People make their own luck.

