

Part 1

Directions (1–24): Closely read each of the three passages below. After each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you. You may use the margins to take notes as you read.

Reading Comprehension Passage A

5 The factory made the best centrifugal pumps in the world, and Merle Waggoner owned it. He'd started it. He'd just been offered two million dollars for it by the General Forge and Foundry Company. He didn't have any stockholders and he didn't owe a dime. He was fifty-one, a widower, and he had one heir—a son. The boy's name was Franklin. The boy was named after Benjamin Franklin.

One Friday afternoon father and son came out of Merle's office and into the factory. They went down a factory aisle to Rudy Linberg's lathe.¹

10 "Rudy," said Merle, "the boy here's home from college for three days, and I thought maybe you and him and your boy and me might go out to the farm and shoot some clay pigeons tomorrow."

Rudy turned his sky-blue eyes to Merle and young Franklin. He was Merle's age, and he had the deep and narrow dignity of a man who had learned his limitations early—who had never tried to go beyond them. His limitations were those of his tools, his flute and his shotgun. ...

15 "Let's go ask my boy what he's got on tomorrow," said Rudy. It was a formality. Karl always did what his father wanted him to do—did it with profound love. ...

20 Karl was a carbon copy of his father. He was such a good mimic of Rudy that his joints seemed to ache a little with age. He seemed sobered by fifty-one years of life, though he'd lived only twenty. He seemed instinctively wary of safety hazards that had been eliminated from the factory by the time he'd learned to walk. Karl stood at attention without humility, just as his father had done.

"Want to go shooting tomorrow?" said Rudy.

"Shoot what?" said Karl.

"Crows. Clay pigeons," said Rudy. "Maybe a woodchuck."

25 "Don't mind," said Karl. He nodded briefly to Merle and Franklin. "Glad to." ...

Rudy nodded. He examined the work in Karl's lathe and tapped his own temple. The tapping was a signal that Franklin had seen many times on hunts. It meant that Karl was doing fine.

30 Rudy touched Karl's elbow lightly. It was the signal for Karl to get back to work. Rudy and Karl each held up a crooked finger and saluted with it. Franklin knew what that meant too. It meant, "Good-by, I love you." ...

Merle was sitting at his desk, his head down, when Franklin came in. He held a steel plate about six inches square in his left hand. In the middle of the plate was a hole two inches square. In his right hand he held a steel cube that fitted the hole exactly. ...

35 Franklin sat down gingerly on a hard chair by the wall. The office hadn't changed much in the years he'd known it. It was one more factory room, with naked pipes overhead—the cold ones sweaty, the hot ones dry. Wires snaked from steel box to steel box. The green walls and cream trim were as rough as elephant hide in some places, with alternating coats of paint and grime, paint and grime.

¹lathe — a machine on which a piece of material, such as wood or metal, is spun and shaped against a fixed cutting tool

40 There had never been time to scrape away the layers, and barely enough time, overnight, to slap on new paint. And there had never been time in which to finish the rough shelves that lined the room. ...

Merle slipped the cube through the square hole once more. "Know what these are?" he said.

45 "Yes, sir," said Franklin. "They're what Rudy Linberg had to make when he was an apprentice in Sweden."

The cube could be slipped through the hole in twenty-four different ways, without letting the tiniest ray of light pass through with it.

50 "Unbelievable skill," said Franklin respectfully. "There aren't craftsmen like that coming along any more." He didn't really feel much respect. He was simply saying what he knew his father wanted to hear. The cube and the hole struck him as criminal wastes of time and great hoers. "Unbelievable," he said again.

"It's utterly unbelievable, when you realize that Rudy didn't make them," said Merle gravely, "when you realize what generation the man who made them belongs to."

55 "Oh?" said Franklin. "Who did make them?"

"Rudy's boy, Karl," said Merle. "A member of your generation." He ground out his cigar sadly. "He gave them to me on my last birthday. They were on my desk, hoy, waiting for me when I came in—right beside the ones Rudy gave me thirty-one years before." ...

60 "I could have cried, hoy, when I saw those two plates and those two cubes side by side," said Merle. "Can you understand that?" he asked beseechingly. "Can you understand why I'd feel like crying?" ...

"The cube of Karl's fitted through the hole of Rudy's!" said Merle. "They were interchangeable!"

"Gosh!" said Franklin. "I'll be darned. Really?"

65 And now he felt like crying, because he didn't care, couldn't care—and would have given his right arm to care. The factory whanged and hanged and screeched in monstrous irrelevance—Franklin's, all Franklin's, if he just said the word.

"What'll you do with it—buy a theater in New York?" said Merle abruptly.

"Do with what, sir?" said Franklin.

70 "The money I'll get for the factory when I sell it—the money I'll leave to you when I'm dead," said Merle. He hit the word "dead" hard. "What's Waggoner Pump going to be converted into? Waggoner Theaters? Waggoner School of Acting? The Waggoner Home for Broken-Down Actors?"

75 "I—I hadn't thought about it," said Franklin. The idea of converting Waggoner Pump into something equally complicated hadn't occurred to him, and appalled him now. He was being asked to match his father's passion for the factory with an equal passion for something else. And Franklin had no such passion—for the theater or anything else. ...

"Don't sell on my account," said Franklin wretchedly.

"On whose account would I keep it?" said Merle.

80 "Do you have to sell it today?" said Franklin, horrified.

"Strike while the iron's hot, I always say," said Merle. "Today's the day you decided to be an actor, and, as luck would have it, we have an excellent offer for what I did with my life."

"Couldn't we wait?"

85 "For what?" said Merle. He was having a good time now.

"Father!" cried Franklin. "For the love of heaven, father, please!" He hung his head and shook it. "I don't know what I'm doing," he said brokenly. "I don't know for sure what I want to do yet. I'm just playing with ideas, trying to find myself. Please, father, don't sell what

90 you've done with your life, don't just throw it away because I'm not sure I want to do that with my life too! Please!" Franklin looked up. "I'm not Karl Linberg," he said. "I can't help it. I'm sorry, but I'm not Karl Linberg." ...

—Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
excerpted from "This Son of Mine..."
The Saturday Evening Post, August 18, 1956

- 1 The author's description in lines 1 through 5 introduces a conflict by including details about
 - (1) an industry competitor
 - (2) an unexpected financial loss
 - (3) a revised production schedule
 - (4) a business opportunity
- 2 Merle's invitation (lines 8 through 10) illustrates his
 - (1) pride in Franklin
 - (2) anger at Rudy
 - (3) respect for the Linberg family
 - (4) concern about the Waggoner factory
- 3 Rudy's "deep and narrow dignity" (line 12) hints at his
 - (1) contentment with his position in life
 - (2) respect for Merle's bond with Franklin
 - (3) pride in Franklin's decisions
 - (4) ambition to take over the company
- 4 Lines 17 through 21 suggest that Karl's attitude is a result of his
 - (1) health
 - (2) upbringing
 - (3) schooling
 - (4) status
- 5 Lines 35 through 42 serve to illustrate the
 - (1) tension between Merle and Rudy
 - (2) conflict between Franklin and Karl
 - (3) relationship between Merle and Franklin
 - (4) competition between Rudy and Karl
- 6 The references to the plate and cubes (lines 32 through 34 and lines 55 through 61) create a connection to
 - (1) Merle's desired relationship with his son
 - (2) Karl's ambitious drive to improve the business
 - (3) Franklin's obedience to his father
 - (4) Rudy's devotion to the business
- 7 Franklin's response in lines 49 through 52 reveals his desire to
 - (1) pacify his father
 - (2) recreate the fine workmanship
 - (3) collaborate with his father
 - (4) take over the factory
- 8 Which lines reveal a shift in Franklin's perspective?
 - (1) "The tapping was a signal that Franklin had seen many times on hunts" (lines 26 and 27)
 - (2) "Yes, sir," said Franklin. "They're what Rudy Linberg had to make when he was an apprentice in Sweden" (lines 45 and 46)
 - (3) "The idea of converting Waggoner Pump into something equally complicated hadn't occurred to him, and appalled him now" (lines 74 and 75)
 - (4) "I'm not Karl Linberg," he said. "I can't help it. I'm sorry, but I'm not Karl Linberg" (lines 90 and 91)
- 9 Which quotation best reflects a central theme in the text?
 - (1) "He was Merle's age, and he had the deep and narrow dignity of a man who had learned his limitations early" (lines 11 and 12)
 - (2) "He seemed sobered by fifty-one years of life, though he'd lived only twenty" (lines 18 and 19)
 - (3) "The cube could be slipped through the hole in twenty-four different ways, without letting the tiniest ray of light pass through with it" (lines 47 and 48)
 - (4) "He was being asked to match his father's passion for the factory with an equal passion for something else. And Franklin had no such passion" (lines 75 through 77)

