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Figurative Meanings



Tina stood at the top of her staircase with an imaginary microphone in her hand. Her blond hair was a silk sheet flowing down her back. Tina's dream was to one day become a famous singer. When she was alone in the house, she would often stand at the top of the stairs and pretend she was making her grand entrance onto a concert stage. With her eyes shining like diamonds, Tina took a few steps down the stairs and began singing at the top of her lungs. For her, there were a million people at the bottom of the stairs screaming her name. As she continued singing, her voice grew louder. Tina did not even hear the front door open or see her parents walk in with bags of groceries hanging from their hands.

"Hey Miss Superstar, come help us unload the groceries," Tina's dad said.

Tina's eyes flew open, and red roses appeared on her cheeks. Although Tina wanted to be a famous singer one day, she was shy about singing in front of other people—including her parents. She felt like a rabbit wanting to find a burrow to crawl into, but she managed to muster up the strength to look at her parents and to go to the car to carry in the rest of the groceries.

1.

Tina's eyes flew open, and red roses appeared on her cheeks.

Based on the context, what does the sentence above tell the reader about Tina?

- A. Her dad has brought roses home for her.
- B. A fever is causing her cheeks to turn red.
- C. She is embarrassed and starts blushing.
- D. She is happy that her parents are home.

2.

Her blond hair was a silk sheet flowing down her back.

What does the sentence above tell the reader about Tina?

- A. She enjoys brushing her long, blond hair.
- B. Her hair is smooth, straight, and long.
- C. Her back is very straight when she stands.
- D. She has a silk sheet hanging from head.

3.

For her, there were a million people at the bottom of the stairs screaming her name.

What is the meaning of the underlined phrase in this sentence from the passage?

- A. The people were loud and yelling.
- B. The people had a lot of money.
- C. There was a large number of people.
- D. There were people singing along.

I was paired up with Parker, the class clown, for the animal reports we had to present in science. Parker was known not only for being intelligent but also for rarely turning in his homework. I had the feeling that I would be doing most of the work.

Mrs. Gonzi told us to plan times after school and on weekends to work on the reports with our partner. Each time I tried to get together with Parker to work on the project, Parker always had an excuse. Finally, he had agreed to meet at my house at noon on Saturday afternoon. I waited and waited until 1:00 p.m. I couldn't help it when I began pacing back and forth across the living room while periodically peeking out the window to see if Parker might be walking toward my house. There was no sign of Parker anywhere. To add fuel to the fire, the phone just kept ringing when I tried calling him to see where he was. The project was due on Tuesday, so I decided to start without Parker. I worked on it the rest of Saturday and finally finished late Sunday evening. I was so tired from working all weekend that I hit the sack right after I finished the project. It didn't take me long to fall asleep.

On Monday in class, Parker asked if we could meet after school to do the project. I told him that I had already done it. Out of frustration, I also told him that he would not be off the hook because I would be letting Mrs. Gonzi know that I did the project all on my own.

4. What does off the hook mean in this passage?

- A. released from responsibility
- B. included in group projects
- C. bothered with extra homework
- D. punished by the teacher

5. If a person hits the sack, it means he or she

- A. hits a punching bag.
- B. goes to sleep.
- C. recycles a sack.
- D. finishes a project.

6. The idiom to add fuel to the fire means

- A. to call someone on the phone.
- B. to wait for someone to show up.
- C. to make a bad situation worse.
- D. to pour gasoline onto a fire.

I was scrambling to get to class before the first period bell rang. Mom had overslept because she had not set her alarm clock the night before. Quickly, I rushed to my locker, grabbed my books, and hurried off to my math class. A split second after I sat down, the tardy bell rang. Whew! I had barely made it to class on time. But in the rush to beat the clock, I had left my pencils and pens in my locker.

I looked over to Alejandro and asked, "Dude, can I borrow a pencil for the rest of the day? I will pay you back tomorrow by bringing you a brand new one."

Alejandro replied with a warm smile, "Charlie, just take this one. Pencils are a dime a dozen. There's no need to bring me another one. Anyway, I'm always finding stray pencils out in the hallway. I'm sure I will find myself needing to borrow one from you one of these days."

I responded with a toothy grin and said, "Thanks, I really appreciate it." If Alejandro is ever in a pickle like I just was and needs to borrow a pen or pencil—or any school supply for that matter—then I will definitely be there to help him out. He is such a nice guy.

7. Which of the following is the meaning of the idiom in a pickle?

- A. being out of danger
- B. being in a difficult situation
- C. getting in trouble with the law
- D. making a big effort

My alarm clock sprang to life promptly at 9:00 a.m. It yelled at me to get out of bed. I wanted to sleep a little longer but knew I had to wake up. Time never waits for anyone. As I sat up, the mattress springs hummed a squeaky tune. Today was the first day of summer vacation, and I was meeting my buddies at the basketball court in the nearby park. I got dressed and quickly ate a bowl of cereal. A short while later, I was headed out the door.

On my way to the park, I noticed that the sun was playing hide-and-seek with the clouds. As long as it doesn't rain on us, I'll be happy. When I arrived, my best friend Joe and his older brother Gary were taking turns shooting hoops.

"Hey guys! What's up?" I said.

"Yo, Charlie! Good to see you!" Gary replied.

Looking off in the distance, Joe said, "I think I see Cooper coming this way."

When Cooper arrived at the court, the four of us started playing basketball: Cooper and I against Charlie and Gary. We agreed that the first team to earn 50 points was the winner. The losing team would treat the winners to ice cream. We worked up a good sweat as the sun kissed our cheeks. We made sure to stop for water breaks so we would not get overheated. The Oklahoma sun can be brutal in the summer.

With the score tied at 49 to 49, I dribbled the ball to the net, jumped, aimed, and propelled the ball towards the net. The ball dove like a swimmer into the basket. Cooper and I had won the game! The sweetest victory, however, would be tasting the cold ice cream hitting my mouth. Before heading to the ice cream shop, we made plans to meet here again next Monday for another round of our favorite sport.

8. Which sentence from the passage makes something seem human that is not human?

- A. A short while later, I was headed out the door.
 - B. I wanted to sleep a little longer but knew I had to wake up.
 - C. "Yo, Charlie! Good to see you!" Gary replied.
 - D. My alarm clock sprang to life promptly at 9:00 a.m.
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9. Which sentence from the passage makes something seem human?

- A. When I arrived, my best friend Joe and his older brother Gary were taking turns shooting hoops.
 - B. We worked up a good sweat as the sun kissed our cheeks.
 - C. A short while later, I was headed out the door.
 - D. Looking off in the distance, Joe said, "I think I see Cooper coming this way."
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10. Which sentence from the passage makes something seem human?

- A. The losing team would treat the winners to ice cream.
 - B. I got dressed and quickly ate a bowl of cereal.
 - C. The sweetest victory, however, would be tasting the cold ice cream hitting my mouth.
 - D. On my way to the park, I noticed that the sun was playing hide-and-seek with the clouds.
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