

Literary Reading: Author's Craft, Figurative Language & Tone



Name: _____ Date: _____

Read the literary passage below. Analyze the author's intentional use of figurative language, diction, and atmospheric mood.

The Whispering Gears of Prague

This is an original practice passage, not a reproduction of a primary source. Read the answer explanations as interpretations of the provided text.

High above the cobblestones of the Old Town Square, the astronomical clock stood like an iron sentinel holding court over the centuries. Inside its towering stone ribcage, hundreds of bronze cogs ground against one another with the dry, rasping breath of an ancient beast. Master Hanuš squinted through the gloom, his trembling fingers guiding a brass gear into alignment.

Every rotation was a calculated heartbeat. The mechanical figures along the parapet—Death clutching an hourglass, Vanity clutching a looking-glass—waited in shadowy anticipation. When the midnight chime finally struck, the bronze bell tolled not with musical joy, but with the cold, heavy finality of an iron gavel, echoing across the silent rooftops of Bohemia.

1. The author describes the clock tower as an 'iron sentinel' and its interior as a 'stone ribcage' with cogs grinding with the 'rasping breath of an ancient beast.' What literary device is dominantly employed here, and what effect does it create?

- A. Comic hyperbole used to make the clock appear harmless and silly
- B. Personification and animalistic zoomorphism that transform the mechanical clock into a menacing, living entity
- C. Simple rhyming alliteration used to establish a playful, upbeat rhythm
- D. Scientific terminology used to describe precision medieval horology

2. What subtle shift in MOOD occurs between the first paragraph and the final sentence of the excerpt?

- A. From intense claustrophobia to a triumphant celebratory party
- B. From quiet, meticulous craftsmanship to an ominous, chilling sense of mortality and inescapable fate
- C. From humorous slapstick to scientific boredom
- D. From tranquil sunny morning to a raging ocean storm

3. The author writes that the midnight bell tolled 'with the cold, heavy finality of an iron gavel.' This simile primarily conveys that:

- A. The clockmaker was on trial for breaking imperial city laws.
- B. The chime sounded exactly like a wooden school bell.
- C. The stroke of midnight feels like an unyielding judicial verdict signaling the irreversible passage of time.
- D. The bells were made of cheap, poorly forged scrap metal.