



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 9

Answer Key

The Quiet Hour

At exactly six o'clock every evening, a tone sounded across the city of Meridian, and every citizen fell silent for sixty uninterrupted minutes. The Quiet Hour, as it was called, had been law for as long as seventeen year old Ren could remember, introduced two generations earlier after what the official history called "the Noise Years," a chaotic period of arguments, protests, and what the government now referred to only as "unnecessary discord."

Ren had never questioned the Quiet Hour, not really, until the evening she noticed her grandmother's lips moving silently during the sixty minutes, shaping words with no sound behind them. When the tone finally released the city back into ordinary speech, Ren asked her grandmother what she had been saying. Her grandmother hesitated, glancing toward the window as though the walls themselves might be listening, then admitted quietly that she had been reciting a poem, one she had memorized as a girl, before poetry itself had quietly disappeared from the city's schools.

"Why would they take poetry away?" Ren asked, genuinely confused. Her grandmother's answer surprised her. "Poetry asks people to feel things out loud, together, at the same time. A room full of people feeling the same thing at once can decide to change something. It's much harder to organize sixty minutes of enforced silence into anything at all." Ren turned this idea over for days afterward, uncertain what to do with it, since nothing in her life had ever suggested there was anything to organize against in the first place.

The following week, during the Quiet Hour, Ren found herself moving her own lips silently, shaping words to a poem her grandmother had taught her that same evening. She did not fully understand yet what she was building toward, only that something in her

chest felt different than it had the day before, lighter and more dangerous at once. Outside her window, Meridian sat in its familiar, obedient silence, sixty minutes of nothing at all, and for the first time in her life, Ren wondered what the city might sound like if that silence ever truly broke.

Circle the Correct Answer

1. What is the Quiet Hour, according to the passage?

Answer: b) A mandatory sixty minutes of enforced silence across the city

2. Why was the Quiet Hour originally introduced, according to the official history?

Answer: b) In response to the chaotic "Noise Years" of protest and discord

3. What was Ren's grandmother secretly doing during the Quiet Hour?

Answer: b) Reciting a poem she had memorized as a girl

4. According to the grandmother, why might poetry be considered dangerous by those in power?

Answer: b) It helps people feel something together, which can lead to organized change

True or False

5. Ren had always questioned the Quiet Hour before this story begins.

Answer: False

6. Poetry had quietly disappeared from the city's schools.

Answer: True

7. By the end of the story, Ren has begun silently reciting poetry herself during the Quiet Hour.

Answer: True

Fill in the Blank

8. The grandmother said a room full of people feeling the same thing at once can decide to _____ something.

Answer: change

9. Ren describes the feeling in her chest as lighter and more _____ at once.

Answer: dangerous

Think and Explain

10. This story functions as an allegory, or symbolic critique, of a broader social idea. What real-world concern about power and control do you think the Quiet Hour represents? Use evidence from the text to support your interpretation.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that the Quiet Hour may represent the suppression of free expression, collective action, or dissent by those in power, supported by the grandmother's explanation that shared emotional experiences, like poetry, can lead people to organize and demand change.

11. Analyze how the author uses Ren's grandmother as a narrative device to advance the story's theme. What would be lost if this information had been given directly by a narrator instead of through this character?

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that the grandmother provides generational contrast and firsthand memory of a time before poetry disappeared, making the loss feel personal and credible rather than abstract, and that hearing it through dialogue allows the reader to experience Ren's gradual realization alongside her, rather than being told the theme outright.