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## **CRITICAL READING QUIZ**

## Conviction: A Sequel to Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice by Skylar Hamilton Burris

The questions in this test are modeled after the SAT critical reading questions and the SAT II Literature subject test questions. They will help students to practice critical reading techniques. You will be answering questions on content, form, style, and vocabulary in context. After reading each passage, choose the best answer for each question.

In spring, a young girl's fancy turns to devising creative plots for thwarting the attentions of her unwelcome suitors. At least, that was the activity in which Miss Georgiana Darcy's mind was most disagreeably engaged, shortly after the departure of Mr. Niles Davidson from the drawing room. The young politician had taken an obvious, albeit unreciprocated, interest in the lady. His regard had at first discomforted and then flattered her, but after a time his company had merely grown tedious. Once the gentleman had safely exited Pemberley, Georgiana's sister-in-law issued her verdict. "We must winter in London," Elizabeth told Miss Darcy, "where you will, with any luck, encounter more promising possibilities."

"Mr. Davidson is a resident of London," replied Georgiana. Indeed, the parliamentarian had only been vacationing in Derbyshire and would return tomorrow to the city.

"I had forgotten," said Mrs. Darcy. "And although that fact does no bode well for the prospects of London, I still believe that from the wide array of gentlemen you encounter in that quarry, you may perhaps extract a single gem."

Georgiana laughed, but there was a note of uneasiness trapped within the sound. Miss Darcy was aware that she was now expected to be on the lookout for a suitable husband, and her family no doubt assumed she would find a match within the next two years. And yet Georgiana thought herself content to reside at Pemberley indefinitely; at least, she had no substantial desire to enter the valley of the great unknown.

- 1. The first line of this passage is a play on words. It is based on the adage, "In Spring, a young girl's fancy turns to \_\_\_\_\_". What word is missing from the blank?
  - (A) Hate
  - (B) Love
  - (C) Shopping
  - (D) Money
  - (E) Clothes

- 2. What is the profession of Mr. Davidson?
  - (A) Gentleman farmer
  - (B) Merchant
  - (C) Attorney
  - (D) Politician
  - (E) Clergyman
- 3. Where does this passage take place?
  - (A) London
  - (B) Derbyshire
  - (C) Washington, D.C.
  - (D) Bath
  - (E) Rome
- 4. Which of the following is NOT an accurate description of Georgiana, as depicted in the above passage?
  - (A) She is shy
  - (B) She is restless and wants to see the world
  - (C) She is content at home
  - (D) She is in no hurry to marry
  - (E) She is quiet
- 5. What relation is Georgiana to Mrs. Darcy?
  - (A) Sister
  - (B) Cousin
  - (C) Sister-in-law
  - (D) Niece

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(E) Servant

Spring gave way to summer, and summer faded into autumn. I mention this, dear reader, not in order to insult your intelligence by assuming you do not comprehend the sequence of the seasons, but merely as a convenient means of transition. Autumn brought with it the promise of new life (a symbolic contradiction, admittedly, but unfortunately for the race of authors, humanity often fails to order itself according to literary convention). In this case, the new life was to be that of Jonathan Bennet Bingley, the anticipated child of Elizabeth's sister Jane.

The Darcys journeyed to Hetrfordshire to be present for the birth of their nephew, though the hapless Georgiana was placed in London and left to the supervision of her companion Ms. Annsely, for her brother would not dare deprive her of society. Miss Darcy had hinted that she would not mind, terribly, spending a month or two without the benefit of callers. He in turn had told her that she would not thank him if she were forced to pass her time in the

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15 company of his mother-in-law. "It is a price I am reluctantly willing to pay for the 16 privilege of my marriage," he had said. "But you, Georgiana, have no such 17 incentive to endure it."

Thus, Mr. and Mrs. Darcy had traveled alone to Hertfordshire. And so it was that Elizabeth Darcy found herself returning to Netherfield after calling on an old family friend. Such a return journey is of no interest in itself, and it would not even be worth a narrative mention were it not for the fact that she spied a curious sight. As she approached the Bingleys' estate, Mrs. Darcy noticed a stranger walking away from it. He was of above average height and appeared distinguished, though she could not see his face. He walked, however, with a languid gate, and though her own steps on the gravel pathway were by no means quiet, he did not sense her presence. Indeed, she might have deemed him to be wholly oblivious of his surroundings, had he not taken a moment to stoop to the ground, retrieve a stray ball that had been released by a servant's child, and roll it back in the young boy's direction. She watched the elegant stranger's back as he rose from this incongruous crouching position and meandered on to an illustrious carriage, which he entered disinterestedly. Elizabeth had only time to raise her eyebrows before the horses were off.

- 6. Which of the following best describes the tone of this passage?
  - (A) Pessimistic
  - (B) Lightheartedly tongue-in-cheek
  - (C) Bitterly ironic
  - (D) Serious
  - (E) Deeply satirical
- 7. Instead of "Autumn" in line 4, which of the following would NOT be a "symbolic contradiction"?
  - (A) Winter
  - (B) Fall
  - (C) Spring
  - (D) None of the above
  - (E) All of the above
- 8. What does "hapless" mean (line 10)?
  - (A) Fortunate
  - (B) Ill-fated
  - (C) Shy
  - (D) Lucky
  - (E) Stupid

- 9. How does Mr. Darcy regard his mother-in-law?
  - (A) As an evil woman
  - (B) As someone to be endured
  - (C) As a close friend
  - (D) Almost as his own mother
  - (E) As an enjoyable companion
- 10. Which of the following does NOT describe the stranger?
  - (A) Apparently distinguished
  - (B) Languid
  - (C) Considerate
  - (D) Tall
  - (E) Uptight
- 11. What does languid mean (line 25)?
  - (A) Hurried
  - (B) Relaxed
  - (C) Awkward
  - (D) Graceful
  - (E) Limping
- 12. What does illustrious mean (line 31)?
  - (A) Memorable
  - (B) Ostentatious
  - (C) Inelegant
  - (D) Nondescript
  - (E) Ugly
- 13. What does incongruous mean (line 30)?
  - (A) Fitting
  - (B) Uncomfortable
  - (C) Out of place
  - (D) Natural
  - (E) Silly
- 14. Who is Ms. Annsley?
  - (A) Mr. Darcy's sister
  - (B) Elizabeth's friend
  - (C) Mr. Darcy's mother-in-law
  - (D) Georgiana's companion
  - (E) Georgiana's music tutor

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Jacob Markwood looked silently about the congregation. Elizabeth began to anticipate his words with some interest. Church attendance, for her, had become an unwelcome obligation these past several months. It had required all of her self-discipline to concentrate on the former clergyman's sermons. Because she had heard Mr. Markwood speak so feelingly of God the evening before, she now hoped he might have the ability to inspire her sincere attention. But when he first began to preach, she was at once astonished and disappointed. He breathed hellfire and damnation.

It was not that Mrs. Darcy was among those who considered it impolite for a clergyman to mention sin. It was just that he was so vehement, so merciless, in his condemnation. He described the state of mankind in the most desperate and graphic terms. Men were vile; they were but worms, incapable of pure understanding; they were proud, backbiting, gossiping creatures who wounded each other more with weapons of speech than with weapons of war. Mr. Markwood's manner was articulate; his voice was powerful; and his words were not unpoetic. But his tone was bitter and unrelenting. After an escalating barrage of critical accusations, during which he described man as an invalid choking on his own vomit, Mr. Markwood fell suddenly and unexpectedly silent.

- 15. Why is Mrs. Darcy initially disappointed by Mr. Markwood's sermon?
  - (A) It mentions sin
  - (B) It suggests man is fallen
  - (C) It is too long
  - (D) It is overly vehement
  - (E) It lacks literary depth
- 16. What can we deduce about the former clergyman's sermons?
  - (A) They were literary
  - (B) They were vivid
  - (C) They were upbeat
  - (D) They were boring
  - (E) They were theologically unsound
- 17. What literary device is used in line 14?
  - (A) Simile
  - (B) Personification
  - (C) Alliteration
  - (D) Apostrophe
  - (E) Paradox

- 18. Which of the following is used as a metaphor for men?
  - (A) Serpents
  - (B) Worms
  - (C) Vile
  - (D) Gossipers
  - (E) Soldiers
- 19. What does graphic mean (line 12)?
  - (A) Detailed
  - (B) Ugly
  - (C) Pretty
  - (D) Condensed
  - (E) Uncertain
- 20. When Mr. Markwood describes man as "an invalid choking on his own vomit," what literary device is he using?
  - (A) Personification
  - (B) Metaphor
  - (C) Metonymy
  - (D) Paradox
  - (E) Irony