

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.**

## ***from The Wild Prince***

*by Brian Selznick*

- 1 This is my backyard. Over there is the hill where everyone goes sledding in the winter, and over there is the small yellow bush, and over there is the big tree that I now know is going to die in a few years and fall down. The tree will slowly rot away until the only thing left of it is this memory and the words written across the paper you are now touching, which was, of course, made from some other tree that someone else, somewhere, might be remembering right now. And over there, if you squint because the sun is in your eyes, is the huge rumbling air-conditioning unit that cools the entire house. Come and take a closer look with me. The ground here is muddy and covered in weeds, and when I first moved into this house I played here in the dirt.
- 2 Kneel down in the weeds here. This is exactly where I was when I found him. I was kneeling, just like you are now, digging and playing, when I made a most incredible discovery. I thought at first he was a twig or a strange little rock, but I pulled him out of the grass and looked at him lying there in the palm of my hand. I had discovered a tin soldier, the way others before me had discovered Egyptian tombs and sunken ocean liners. Who had left this soldier behind? What kid had forgotten him? The soldier was covered in dirt, and he immediately became my treasure. I washed him carefully and examined him closely. His red-painted uniform was faded and scratched, and there was still a hint of a black mustache on his tiny face. His outstretched hand was empty. I turned him over and saw that the letters *WP* were stamped into his base. His tin hat had faded, and he wore some kind of backpack that I figured had once been black and gray.
- 3 I brought him everywhere with me, keeping him hidden in my pocket. Sometimes at night I would stare at him, hoping he would reveal something to me about his past, but he stood steadfast and silent. This mystery made me feel dizzy sometimes, and I loved him. I did drawings for him, pictures of battles that I thought he might like, and I imagined his friends, all thinking him lost, wishing he were with them again so they

could tell stories about the past and laugh and sing. I imagined my soldier had sacrificed himself for the others, so they could escape. I was sure my soldier was a hero and a true friend. He had to be brave to be outside in the tall weeds by himself for so long, never moving, never shivering, never crying. Even as his paint faded and his gun was lost, he didn't lose faith. Maybe he knew that I'd find him one day. Why be scared when you know you are going to be saved? I imagined the rain falling on him, and the snow, and the bugs crawling over him. And still he didn't move. Had he been there for weeks? Months? Years? How long had he waited for me to show up? How had he known I would come? I didn't know, but I was glad he waited. I'd never saved anyone before, and the responsibility was huge.

- 4        Now look over there, on the other side of my yard, past the small yellow bush, and you'll see the edge of a forest that divides our property from the new development going up across the way. I was afraid my soldier wouldn't like being cooped up in my pocket all day, so I built him a castle. I spent hours and hours building bridges and turrets and tunnels that snaked in and out of the ever-growing fortress of twigs at the edge of this forest. A miniature world rose here, all for my single, lonely, faded soldier, who had nothing in the world except me.

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**1** Which word has the same connotation as *steadfast* as it is used in paragraph 3?

- Ⓐ Unwavering
  - Ⓑ Still
  - Ⓒ Unresponsive
  - Ⓓ Shallow
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**2** Based on what the narrator imagines, which detail from paragraph 3 supports the key idea that if the soldier were a real person, he would have the qualities to cope with real-life problems?

- Ⓐ The soldier being alone outside for a long time
- Ⓑ The stillness of the soldier in cold and wet conditions
- Ⓒ The faded paint on the soldier and his missing weapon
- Ⓓ The soldier believing that he would one day be found

- 3** Decide whether each detail develops the theme that relationships come with obligations.

Select **ONE** correct answer in each row.

	<b>Develops the Theme</b>	<b>Does Not Develop the Theme</b>
Although the soldier is covered in dirt, the narrator immediately treasures him.	(A)	(B)
Contemplating the mystery of the soldier's past makes the narrator feel dizzy.	(A)	(B)
The narrator imagines the soldier sacrificed himself to help his friends escape.	(A)	(B)
The narrator wonders whether the soldier has been there for weeks.	(A)	(B)
Because the narrator has never saved anyone before, he takes the responsibility seriously.	(A)	(B)

- 4 Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

*A miniature world rose here, all for my single, lonely, faded soldier, who had nothing in the world except me.*

What does this sentence convey about the narrator?

- (A) He intends to search for another soldier to add to the world he created.
  - (B) He worries about what will happen to the soldier in the future.
  - (C) He resents the soldier because he believes the soldier has grown too needy.
  - (D) He feels a strong sense of responsibility to the soldier he discovered.
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- 5 What is the most likely reason the author shifts from a descriptive to a chronological structure in paragraphs 1 and 2?

- (A) To emphasize that the narrator's feelings about the discovery begin to change
- (B) To create suspense by gradually revealing details about the narrator's discovery
- (C) To describe why the narrator decided to dig in the place the discovery was made
- (D) To explain how the narrator came to face a conflict as a result of making the discovery

- 6 Which statement best explains the irony in paragraphs 2 and 3?
- Ⓐ The narrator discovers the soldier in a location that he has already explored many times before.
  - Ⓑ The narrator fails to recognize the significance of the letters stamped into the base of the soldier.
  - Ⓒ The narrator hates that the soldier was buried for so long, but then he keeps it hidden in his own pocket.
  - Ⓓ The narrator digs up the soldier completely covered in mud, which enhances his estimation of its value.
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- 7 Which quotation from the story shows that the narrator is recalling a time from earlier in childhood?
- Ⓐ *over there is the big tree that I now know is going to die in a few years and fall down* (paragraph 1)
  - Ⓑ *Come and take a closer look with me.* (paragraph 1)
  - Ⓒ *I imagined the rain falling on him, and the snow, and the bugs crawling over him.* (paragraph 3)
  - Ⓓ *I spent hours and hours building* (paragraph 4)

- 8 Read these quotations from the excerpt.

*The ground here is muddy and covered in weeds, and when I first moved into this house I played here in the dirt.* (paragraph 1)

*Kneel down in the weeds here. This is exactly where I was when I found him. I was kneeling, just like you are now, digging and playing, when I made a most incredible discovery.* (paragraph 2)

How does the author's use of descriptive language in these quotations affect the reader?

- (A) It captures the narrator's emotional reaction to the discovery.
- (B) It suggests that the backyard is an ideal place to play.
- (C) It places the reader in the moment with the narrator.
- (D) It provides hints to the reader about the narrator's later actions.

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- 9 How does the author's use of questions in paragraph 3 contribute to the tone of the story?

- (A) The questions that have no answer contribute to the introspective tone.
- (B) The questions about the narrator's arrival contribute to the cooperative tone.
- (C) The questions about the soldier's lack of fear contribute to the triumphant tone.
- (D) The questions that relate to passing time contribute to the urgent tone.

**10** In paragraph 3, the narrator describes an imaginary flashback to the time the soldier was buried. Which idea in the excerpt does the flashback help explain?

- Ⓐ Why the narrator makes a detailed inspection of the soldier
- Ⓑ Why the narrator keeps the soldier secret
- Ⓒ Why the narrator tries to get the soldier to tell how he had been lost
- Ⓓ Why the narrator treats the soldier kindly