

## READING TEST

35 Minutes—40 Questions

**DIRECTIONS:** There are several passages in this test. Each passage is accompanied by several questions. After reading a passage, choose the best answer to each question and fill in the corresponding oval on your answer document. You may refer to the passages as often as necessary.

## Passage 1

**LITERARY NARRATIVE:** This passage is adapted from the novel *A Map of Home* by Randa Jarrar (©2008 by Randa Jarrar).

I don't remember how I came to know this story, and I don't know how I can possibly still remember it. On August 2, the day I was born, my *baba* (father) stood at the nurses' station of St. Elizabeth's Medical Center of Boston with a pen between his fingers and filled out my birth certificate. He had raced down the stairs seconds after my birth, as soon as the doctor had assured him that I was all right. While filling out my certificate, Baba realized that he didn't know my sex for sure but that didn't matter; he'd always known I was a boy, had spoken to me as a boy while I was in Mama, and as he approached the box that contained the question, NAME OF CHILD, he wrote with a quivering hand and in his best English cursive, Nidal (strife; struggle). It was not my grandfather's name, and Baba, whose name is Waheed and who was known during his childhood as Said, was the only son of the family, so the onus of renaming a son after my grandfather fell squarely upon his shoulders. It was an onus he brushed off his then-solid shoulders unceremoniously, like a piece of lint or a flake of dandruff; these are analogies my grandfather would the next day angrily pen in a letter sent from Jenin to Boston.

When he'd filled out the entire form, Baba regally relayed it to the nurse, who he remembers was called Rhonda. Then Baba, in flip-flops, turned around and raced up the white-tiled hallway, bypassed the elevator, ran up the three floors to the maternity ward, and burst into the birthing room.

"How is my queen?" said Baba, caressing my mother's face.

"She's lovely," Mama said, thinking he meant me, "and eight whole pounds, the buffalo! No wonder my back was so . . ." Baba's brow furrowed, and Mama couldn't finish her complaint, because, eager to correct his mistake, Baba was already out the door and running down the white-tiled hallway, past new mothers and their red-faced babies, past hideous robes in uncalled-for patterns, bypassing the elevator, and sliding down the banister of the staircase. He raced on, screaming for Rhonda, where is Rhonda, help me, Rhonda, an outcry that provided the staff with three weeks' worth of laughter.

Rhonda emerged with the birth certificate in hand, and Baba, who is not usually known for laziness, grabbed a pen and added at the end of my name a heavy, reflexive, feminizing, possessive, cursive "I."

Moments later, Mama, who had just been informed of my *nom de guerre*, got out of bed and walked us to the elevator, the entire time ignoring my baba, who was screaming, "Nidali is a beautiful name, so unique, come on Ruz, don't be so rash, you mustn't be walking, you need to rest!"

Mama must not have fought long, or who knows: maybe she went to the nurses' station and talked to Rhonda, and maybe Rhonda told her that the birth certificate was already sent out—that Mama would have to go to the office of the City of Boston clerk and see the registrar of vital statistics, where they keep the birth and death certificates—and maybe Mama, who is the most superstitious of all humans (even more than Baba, and to that she'll attest) shuddered at the thought of taking me, a newborn, through the heat and the Boston traffic to a place where, she must've imagined, people went to fill out death certificates, and she must've further imagined that going on such a trip, to such a place, would surely bring about my death—because I still have my name.

Whenever I imagined Baba running out just after my birth and sliding through the hallways like a movie star, I knew he must have embellished. Baba liked to do that: tell stories that were impossible but true all at once, especially if those stories made him look like a rock star. This is because he used to be a writer and was now an architect. Our little apartment was filled with blueprints and plastic models of houses instead of notebooks and poetry: a reality that filled him with great sadness. So Baba put that sadness into these stories.

Mama liked to expose him when he told such stories; she was his paparazzo, his story-cop. This was because she was the true rock star: a musician who no longer played music. Our house was filled with Baba's blueprints and plastic models of houses and with my schoolwork and toys and dolls and a hundred half pairs of socks instead of a piano: a reality that filled her with great sadness.

I knew from the beginning that home meant embellishing, and that's why I loved school. Teachers were there; they taught us facts based on reality.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

1. The point of view from which the passage is told is best described as that of:
  - A. a first person narrator who re-creates a story about her parents and the birth of their first child, events which happened before the narrator was born.
  - B. a first person narrator who offers insight into characters' thoughts and relates actions mainly from a time she was too young to remember.
  - C. an omniscient third person narrator who relates the thoughts and actions of several characters.
  - D. a limited third person narrator who relates events most closely from the perspective of Nidali.
2. The narrator mentions a piece of lint and a flake of dandruff primarily to:
  - F. imply that the narrator's grandfather didn't value family traditions.
  - G. provide examples of movements Baba made while filling out the birth certificate.
  - H. emphasize the importance of naming the baby after the baby's grandfather.
  - J. illustrate the casual way in which the narrator's father ignored a tradition.
3. Based on the passage, Mama's reaction to learning the name Baba gave the baby can best be described as:
  - A. disapproval followed by resignation.
  - B. annoyance followed by amusement.
  - C. embarrassment followed by outrage.
  - D. shock followed by resentment.
4. The sequence of actions described in the seventh paragraph (lines 54–68) can best be characterized as:
  - F. Baba's exaggerated account of Mama's trip to the office of the City of Boston clerk.
  - G. a scenario the narrator imagines could have happened.
  - H. the story of how Nidali got her name from Mama's point of view.
  - J. a memory that the narrator shares to reveal more about her personality.
5. The narrator concludes that Mama didn't go to the office of the City of Boston clerk based on the fact that:
  - A. Baba believed it would be unlucky to change a baby's name at that point.
  - B. going there would've required taking the baby out in a severe winter storm.
  - C. Mama had a tendency to change her mind quickly.
  - D. the narrator still has the name Nidali.
6. In line 78, the phrase *these stories* most nearly refers to:
  - F. the conflicting stories about the origins of Nidali's name.
  - G. Baba's notebooks and poetry.
  - H. the embellished tales Baba liked to tell.
  - J. the narrator's accounts of her family's time in Boston.
7. According to the passage, which of the following emotions do Baba and Mama share regarding their professional lives?
  - A. Pride
  - B. Anxiety
  - C. Sadness
  - D. Contentment
8. Of the following characters, which one does the narrator describe as the most superstitious?
  - F. Mama
  - G. Baba
  - H. Nidali
  - J. Rhonda
9. The narrator most strongly suggests that Mama does which of the following when Baba tells stories?
  - A. Yawns and rolls her eyes in mock boredom
  - B. Goes about her business and ignores him
  - C. Chimes in with exaggerations and white lies
  - D. Corrects him about the accuracy of details
10. In the passage, the narrator makes which of the following distinctions?
  - F. Home is a place of embellished stories, whereas school is a place of facts and reality.
  - G. Mama is a true rock star, whereas Baba is an amateur musician.
  - H. Being an architect made Baba happy, whereas being a writer made him miserable.
  - J. Writing requires great imagination, whereas playing music requires great skill.