Name_____

Date_____

"The Runaway"

Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

Directions: Read the story. Then answer the questions below.

My name is Uma.

I was 17 when I ran away from home **for good**.

I stole $45 from my dad's drawer one morning.
He had already left for work.
I stuffed some clothes in my backpack.

I headed for the bus station.
I caught the first bus that came in.

It did not matter to me where I was going.
It just mattered that I was leaving.

That night I ended up in Springfield, Massachusetts.

I got here around sunset.

My first night here, I was scared. I was alone. I slept behind an old store so no one would see me.

That first night I was so cold. The January wind was so cold it stung my face.

Today, I am still in Springfield. I am 28 years old. I have a son who is 11.

I wait tables at a restaurant. The food is not so good. The people who eat there are not so nice.

I think about my dad sometimes.

"Do I have a grandma?" my kid asks.

"No," I say.

"Do I have a grandpa?" he asks.

"Not to speak of," I say. That is when I think of my dad.

I think about what he is doing.

I think about if he misses me or not. I don't miss him much at all. But it's nice to feel like someone misses you.

Questions:

1) What does the expression "for good" mean as used in the beginning of this story?

- A. forever
- B. for a little while
- C. to have a good time
- D. to make things better

2) How old was Uma when she ran away?

- A. 11
- B. 16
- C. 17
- D. 28

3) Where did Uma get $45?

- A. She stole it.
- B. She borrowed it.
- C. She worked for it.
- D. She got it from her drawer.

4) How did Uma run away?

- A. She walked.
- B. She drove.
- C. She caught the bus.
- D. She caught the train.

5) Uma probably didn't care where the bus was going because she

- A. was exhausted
- B. was desperate
- C. had a fight with her dad
- D. thought she would come back

6) What kind of person does Uma seem to be?

- A. honest
- B. funny
- C. irresponsible
- D. sad

7) Uma slept behind the store because

- A. it was an easy place to find food
- B. no one would see her there
- C. there were other people nearby
- D. her friends wanted her to stay there

8) In what month did Uma run away?

- A. August
- B. January
- C. December
- D. Not enough information is provided

9) Where does Uma work?

- A. She works at a school.
- B. She works at a restaurant.
- C. She works at a bus station.
- D. She works at a store.

10) When does Uma think about her dad?

- A. all the time
- B. never
- C. when her child asks about his grandpa
- D. when she works at the restaurant

11) What does Uma say about herself in the story?

    I.   She is a runaway.
    II. She wants a new job.
    III. She is sad.

    A. I only
    B. I and II
    C. II and III
    D. I, II, and III

12) Given what you know from the story, which of the following is Uma likely to do?

    A. go back home
    B. get a new job
    C. kiss her child
    D. stay in Springfield

13) Why does Uma run away from home?

    A. Her father abused her.
    B. She stole money from her father.
    C. She was pregnant.
    D. The story does not say why.

Is it ever a good idea to run away? Explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Answers and Explanations

1) **A**
   for good *(adjective) (idiom):* forever.

   Near the beginning of the story, Uma says, "I was 17 when I ran away from home for good." Uma goes on to say that she "ended up in Springfield, Massachusetts." Then Uma says, "Today, I am still in Springfield. I am 28 years old." We can understand from this information that when Uma said she ran away *for good*, she meant she ran away forever, and does not have plans to return. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

   Since Uma is still in Springfield 11 years later, she did not run away for a little while. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Uma does not say that she left to have a good time. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. Uma also does not say that she left to make things better. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

2) **C**
   Near the beginning of the story, Uma says, "I was 17 when I ran away from home for good." Therefore **(C)** is correct. Uma has "a son who is 11," but Uma was 17 when she ran away. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Uma was 17 when she ran away, not 16. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Uma is 28 years old now. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

3) **A**
   Near the beginning of the story, Uma says, "I stole $45 from my dad's drawer one morning." From this we know where Uma got the money from. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

   Uma did not borrow the money. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Uma works for her money now, but she stole the $45 then. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. Uma got the money from her father's drawer, not her drawer. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

4) **C**
   At the beginning of the story, Uma tells us that she ran away for good. Uma stole some money, packed a backpack, and "caught the first bus that came in." We can understand from this information that Uma ran away by catching the bus. Therefore **(C)** is correct. The story does not provide information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

5) **B**
   Near the middle of the story, Uma says, "It did not matter to me where I was going. It just mattered that I was leaving." We can understand from this information that Uma wanted to leave so badly that she did not care where she was going. This means Uma was desperate to leave. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

The story does not say that Uma was exhausted. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Uma steals money from her dad at the beginning of the story, but the story does not say that Uma had a fight with her dad. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. Since Uma has stayed away for 11 years, she probably did not think that she would come back home. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

6) **D**
Uma ran away from home when she was 17, and hasn't returned in 11 years. Her child asks her if she has grandparents, and Uma says no. Uma says she does not miss her dad. Since Uma left home and won't even acknowledge her parents to her own child, we can understand that Uma did not come from a happy home. Uma works at a restaurant where the food is bad and the customers are not nice. This probably makes Uma's life now pretty hard. At the end, Uma says, "It's nice to feel like someone misses you." From this we know that Uma would like to feel like someone cares about her. Taken together, these things make Uma seem sad. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

At the beginning of the story, Uma steals money from her father. Also, when Uma's child asks her about his grandparents, she tells him that he doesn't have any. Both of these things are dishonest, so Uma does not seem to be an honest person. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Uma seems sad, not funny. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Uma holds a job, even though it is hard. She also takes care of her child, which is a responsible thing to do. So, Uma is not irresponsible. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

7) **B**
In the middle of the story, Uma describes the first night she ran away: "I slept behind an old store so no one would see me." We can understand from this that Uma slept behind the store because she did not want anyone to see her there. Therefore **(B)** is correct. The story does not provide information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(C)** and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

8) **B**
Near the middle of the story, Uma describes her first night after she ran away: "The January wind was so cold it stung my face." We can understand from this that Uma ran away in January. Also, near the beginning of the story, Uma says that she ran away one morning. Near the middle of the story, Uma says, "That night I ended up in Springfield, Massachusetts." We can understand from this that Uma ran away in the morning and was in Springfield that night. This means that the first night in Springfield was the same day that Uma ran away. Since that first night was in January, Uma ran away in January. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

The story does not provide information to support answer choices **(A)** and **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect. There is enough information to determine what month Uma ran away in. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

9) **B**
Near the middle of the story, Uma says, "I wait tables at a restaurant." We can understand from this that Uma works at a restaurant. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

The story says nothing about a school. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Uma caught a bus at the bus station, but she does not work there. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. Uma slept behind an old store, but she does not work at a store. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

10) **C**

Near the end of the story, Uma's child asks about his grandparents: "'Do I have a grandpa?' he asks. 'Not to speak of,' I say. That is when I think of my dad." We can understand from these sentences that Uma thinks about her dad when her child asks her about his grandpa. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

Near the end of the story, Uma says, "I think about my dad sometimes." This means she does not think about him all the time. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Again, Uma thinks about her dad "sometimes," so she does think about him. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. The story does not say that Uma thinks about her dad at the restaurant. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

11) **A**

At the beginning of the story, Uma says that she "ran away for good." This makes Uma a runaway. This supports **option (I)**. Uma says that she works at a restaurant where the food is not good and the customers are not nice, but she does not say that she wants a new job. This eliminates **option (II)**. Uma hasn't seen her home in 11 years and works a terrible job. This makes Uma sound sad, but she did not <u>say</u> that she was sad. This eliminates **option (III)**. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

12) **D**

Uma has been in Springfield for 11 years. Uma has a job in Springfield and a child. She says she does not miss her dad. Uma has stayed in Springfield for a long time, has lots of ties there, and doesn't want to go back home, so it seems likely that Uma will stay in Springfield. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

Uma was so desperate to leave home that she didn't even care where she ended up. Also, Uma says she doesn't miss her dad. Since Uma really wanted to leave home and doesn't seem to have a reason to go back, it seems unlikely that Uma will go back home. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. The way that Uma describes her job makes the job sound bad, but we don't know enough about Uma or her situation to know whether she wants another job or is able to get one. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. The story does not give enough information to know if Uma is likely to kiss her child. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

13) **D**

The story gives us a lot of possible reasons why Uma ran away from home, but does not give us enough information to be sure why Uma ran away from home. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

Uma stole money from her father, and says that she did not miss her father, so it seems that Uma does not like her father. However, Uma did not say that the reason she left was because her father abused her. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Uma stole money in order to run away. She did not run away <u>because</u> she stole money. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Uma ran away 11 years

ago and has a child who is 11 years old. This means that Uma may have been pregnant when she ran away from home, but Uma did not say that was why she ran away from home. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.