

Coahoma County Jr-Sr High School

9th-10th ELA

Week 1

March 23-27, 2020

The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

1 Oscar had always been a young nerd—the kind of kid who read Tom Swift, who loved comic books and watched Ultraman—but by high school his commitment to the Genres had become absolute. Back when the rest of us were learning to play wallball and pitch quarters and drive our older brothers' cars... he was gorging himself on a steady stream of Lovecraft, Wells, Burroughs, Howard, Alexander, Herbert, Asimov, Bova, and Heinlein... You couldn't have torn him away from any movie or TV show or cartoon where there were monsters or spaceships or mutants or doomsday devices or destinies or magic or evil villains. In these pursuits alone Oscar showed the genius his grandmother insisted was part of the family patrimony. Could write in Elvish, could speak Chakobsa, could differentiate between a Slan, a Dorsai, and a Lensman in acute detail, knew more about the Marvel Universe than Stan Lee, and was a role-playing game fanatic.

2 Dude wore his nerdiness like a Jedi wore his light saber or a Lensman her lens. Couldn't have passed for Normal if he'd wanted to. Oscar was a social introvert who trembled with fear during gym class and watched nerd British shows like Doctor Who...and he used a lot of huge-sounding nerd words like indefatigable and ubiquitous...

3 One of those nerds who was always hiding out in the library, who adored Tolkien... You get the picture. His adolescent nerdliness vaporizing any iota of a chance he had for young love. Everybody else going through the terror and joy of their first crushes, their first dates, their first kisses while Oscar sat in the back of the class, behind his DM's screen, and watched his adolescence stream by. Sucks to be left out of adolescence, sort of like getting locked in the closet on Venus when the sun appears for the first time in a hundred years. It would have been one thing if like some of the nerdboys I'd grown up with he hadn't cared about girls, but alas he was still the passionate enamorao who fell in love easily and deeply.

4 He had secret loves all over town, the kind of curly-haired big-bodied girls who wouldn't have said boo to a loser like him but about whom he could not stop dreaming. His affection—that gravitational mass of love, fear, longing, desire, and lust that he directed at any and every girl in the vicinity without regard to looks, age, or availability—broke his heart each and every day. Despite the fact that he considered it this huge sputtering force, it was actually most like a ghost because no girl ever really seemed to notice it. Occasionally they might shudder or cross their arms when he walked near, but that was about it. He cried often for his love of some girl or another. Cried in the bathroom, where nobody could hear him.

RL.9-10.3

Key Ideas and Details

Read the excerpt from the novel *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*.

Reread the following excerpt from the text.

Could write in Elvish, could speak Chakobsa, could differentiate between a Slan, a Dorsai, and a Lensman in acute detail, knew more about the Marvel Universe than Stan Lee, and was a role-playing game fanatic. (paragraph 1)

What does this excerpt reveal about Oscar?

- A. Oscar is a pitiful and unrelatable teenager.
- B. Oscar is someone who prefers to retreat from his peers.
- C. Oscar's unique abilities contrast with his ordinary life.
- D. Oscar's obsessions make him different from most kids his age.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;

5 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line

10 Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:

15 A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie

20 In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

RL.9-10.4

Craft and Structure

Read the poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth.

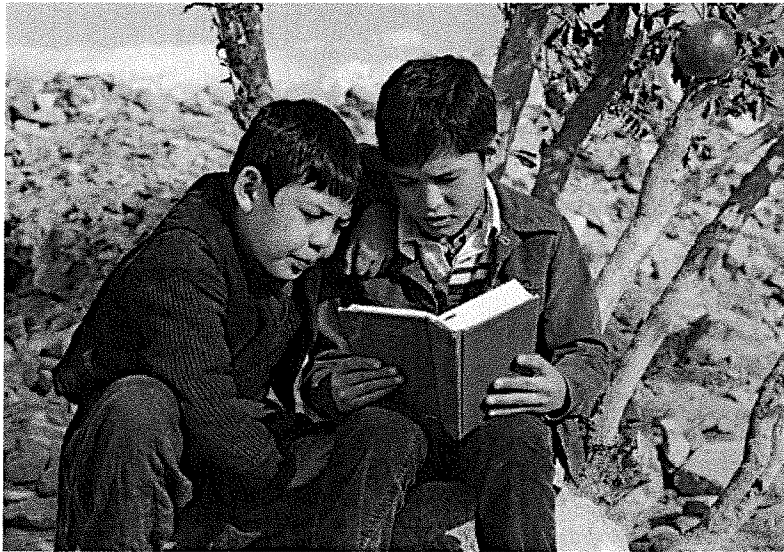
What is the most likely meaning of the word "jocund," as it is used in the poem?

"The waves beside them danced; but they / Out-did the sparkling waves in glee / A poet could not but be gay / In such a jocund company..."

- A. sympathetic
- B. overbearing
- C. sarcastic
- D. cheerful

The Kite Runner

by Khaled Hosseini



1 Even from where I was standing, I could see the fear creeping into Hassan's eyes, but he shook his head. "Amir agha won the tournament and I ran this kite for him. I ran it fairly. This is his kite."

2 "A loyal Hazara. Loyal as a dog," Assef said. Kamal's laugh was a shrill, nervous sound.

3 "But before you sacrifice yourself for him, think about this: Would he do the same for you? Have you ever wondered why he never includes you in games when he has guests? Why he only plays with you when no one else is

around? I'll tell you why, Hazara. Because to him, you're nothing but an ugly pet. Something he can play with when he's bored, something he can kick when he's angry. Don't ever fool yourself and think you're something more."

4 "Amir agha and I are friends," Hassan said. He looked flushed.

5 "Friends?" Assef said, laughing. "You pathetic fool! Someday you'll wake up from your little fantasy and learn just how good of a friend he is. Now, bas! Enough of this. Give us that kite."

6 Hassan stooped and picked up a rock.

7 Assef flinched. He began to take a step back, stopped. "Last chance, Hazara." Hassan's answer was to cock the arm that held the rock.

8 "Whatever you wish." Assef unbuttoned his winter coat, took it off, folded it slowly and deliberately. He placed it against the wall.

9 I opened my mouth, almost said something. Almost. The rest of my life might have turned out differently if I had. But I didn't. I just watched. Paralyzed.

10 Assef motioned with his hand, and the other two boys separated, forming a half circle, trapping Hassan in the alley.

11 "I've changed my mind," Assef said. "I'm letting you keep the kite, Hazara. I'll let you keep it so it will always remind you of what I'm about to do."

12 Then he charged. Hassan hurled the rock. It struck Assef in the forehead.

13 Assef yelled as he flung himself at Hassan, knocking him to the ground.
Wali and Kamal followed.

14 I bit on my fist. Shut my eyes.

RL.9-10.6**Craft and Structure**

Read the excerpt from the novel *The Kite Runner*. Then, answer the following question.

Which is the best description of Amir agha and Hassan's relationship from Hassan's point of view?

- A. Hassan and his friends constantly take advantage of Amir agha.
- B. Amir agha and Hassan are close friends who look after one another.
- C. Amir agha and Hassan rarely get along with one another.
- D. Amir agha and his friends constantly takes advantage of Hassan.