

Blizzard Bag 2

All English 12 classes

Targets:

1. Students can give qualities to a character in a play.
2. Students can use textual evidence to support a claim about a character from a play.

Read the following excerpt from *The Man in a Case*. Answer the 5 multiple choice questions and the extended response on your own paper.

The Man in a Case

*A small garden. Byelinkov is pacing.
Enter Varinka, out of breath.*

Byelinkov:

You are ten minutes late.

5 **Varinka:**

The most amazing thing happened on my way over here. You know the woman who runs the grocery store down the road. Well, she heard we were to be married and she gave me this basket of apricots to give to you. She said to me, Varinka, you are marrying the most honorable man in the entire village. In this village he is the only man fit to speak with my son-in-law.

Byelinkov:

I don't care for apricots. They give me hives.

Varinka:

20 I can return them.

Byelinkov:

I don't know this woman or her pompous son-in-law. Why would she give me her cakes?

25 **Varinka:**

She adores you!

Byelinkov:

She is emotionally irresponsible.

Varinka:

30 She adores you by reputation. Everyone adores you by reputation. I tell everyone I am to marry Byelinkov, the finest teacher in the country.

Byelinkov:

35 You tell them this?

Varinka:

If they don't tell me first.

Byelinkov:

Pride can be an imperfect virtue.

40 **Varinka:**

It isn't pride. It is the truth. You are a great man!

Byelinkov:

I am the master of Greek and Latin at a local school at the end of the village.

(Varinka kisses him)

Varinka:

And I am to be the master of Greek and Latin's wife!

50 **Byelinkov:**

Being married requires a great deal of responsibility. I hope that I am able to provide you with all that a married man must properly provide a wife.

55 **Varinka:**

We will be very happy.

Byelinkov:

Happiness is for children. We are entering into a social contract, an amicable agreement to provide us with a secure and satisfying future.

Varinka:

You are so sweet! You are the sweetest man in the world!

65 **Byelinkov:**

I'm a man set in his ways who saw a chance to provide himself with a small challenge.

Varinka:

70 Look at you! Look at you! Your sweet round spectacles; your dear collar always starched, always raised, and my most favorite part, the sweet little galoshes, rain or shine, just in case. My Byelinkov, never taken by surprise. Except by me.

Byelinkov:

You speak about me as if I were your pet.

Varinka:

80 You are my pet! My little school mouse.

Byelinkov:

A mouse?

Varinka:

85 You're smiling. I knew I could make you smile today.

Byelinkov:

I am a responsible man. Every day I have for breakfast black bread, fruit, hot tea, and every day I smile three times. In
90 twenty years I have never been late to school. I am a responsible man, but no dancing bear.

Varinka:
Dance with me.

95 **Byelinkov:**
Now? It is nearly four weeks before the wedding.

Varinka:
100 It's a beautiful afternoon. We are in your garden. The roses are in full bloom.

Byelinkov:

The roses have beetles.

Varinka:
Dance with me!

105 **Byelinkov:**
You are a demanding woman.

Varinka:
You chose me. And right. And left. And turn.

110 **Byelinkov:**
And right. Give me your hand. You dance like a school mouse. It's a beautiful afternoon! We are in my garden. The roses are in full bloom! And turn. (*Twirls Varinka around*)
115

Adapted from Wendy Wasserstein, "The Man in a Case." © 1986 by Wendy Wasserstein.

- 1) What do lines 1–45 reveal about Byelinkov?
- A. He is logical.
 - B. He is modest.
 - C. He is apathetic.
 - D. He is disagreeable.
- 2) What do lines 11–115 reveal about Byelinkov?
- A. He is angrier than Varinka had previously believed.
 - B. He is clumsier than he had pretended to be.
 - C. He is happier than he seemed at first.
 - D. He is sadder than Varinka.
- 3) What does Byelinkov most likely mean when he says “I am a responsible man, but no dancing bear” (lines 91–92)?
- A. He will perform essential tasks, but he will not do tricks.
 - B. He is marrying Varinka, but he has a job to think about, too.
 - C. He feels life is unhappy, but he will continue to work hard.
 - D. He is not going to be silly, but he will go along with Varinka.
- 4) What do the opening stage directions and Byelinkov’s comments in line 4 suggest about him?
- A. He is overworked.
 - B. He is impatient.
 - C. He is philosophical.
 - D. He is sensitive.
- 5) In what way is Varinka different from Byelinkov?
- A. She is more responsible.
 - B. She is less interesting.
 - C. She is more spontaneous.
 - D. She is less proud.

Extended Response: Use evidence from the play to prove – Do you believe that Byelinkov and Varinka will have a long and happy marriage? Write a complete paragraph that cites the literature to support your answer.