

The author of this passage has a strangely touching experience with a creature she can't even see without a microscope. Read the passage. Then answer questions 13 through 17.

The Rotifer

THOUGH I SIT hunched studiously over my microscope, I am gazing dreamily past it and out the open window, at the lazy afternoon campus. But the lab instructor, a graduate student who dreams of the day when he will be an assistant professor, comes hovering down the row of tables, and I return to my microscope. I do not plan to become a biologist. Two sciences are required, and I regard with detachment the sophomores' frogs' legs and sheep's livers, each with a name tag attached, which float in the barrel of formaldehyde in the corner. It gives off a technical, advanced, arcane smell, but it does not stir me. Next year I shall be off to another lab and another science and shall putter about with Bunsen burners or magnetic fields.

It is late in the fall, although it is still warm here in Texas, and the faint sounds of football practice drift in through the open window. We forty freshmen in this room have, since our arrival at the state university from the sleepy cactus towns and the raw cities and the piny woods and plains, been learning of the protozoa, the one-celled creatures who simply divide when they want to become two, and are not always sure whether they are plants or animals. The lab instructor has hovered over us yearningly, wanting us to get a *good* view of the amoeba, to really *appreciate* the spyrogyra.

But today, as he gives each of us a glass slide with a drop of pond water on it, he tells us that we are leaving the protozoa and beginning the long evolutionary climb. Today we shall see the rotifers, who belong to the metazoa. We too, at the other end of the microscope, are metazoa; the rotifer, like us, has a brain, a nervous system, and a stomach.

I am fairly good, by this time, at adjusting my microscope. I know that those long, waving fronds are reflections of my own eyelashes, and I recognize algae when I see it, greenish leafy stuff rather like the broccoli on a dormitory dinner plate. Soon I find the rotifers—furiously alive, almost transparent little animals, churning powerfully along in their native ocean.

Watching, I am a witness to a crisis in the life of a rotifer. He is entangled in a snarl of algae, and he can't get loose. His transparent little body chugs this way and that, but the fence of algae seems impenetrable. He turns, wriggles, oscillates, but he is caught. *Rest a moment*, I whisper to him, *lie still and catch your breath and then give a good heave to the left*. But he is in a wild panic, beyond any reasonable course of action. It seems to me that his movements are slowing down, as if he is becoming exhausted.

Maybe I can help him. Perhaps I can put my finger on the edge of the glass slide and tip it ever so slightly, tilt it just enough so that the water will wash him over the barrier. Cautiously, gently, I touch the slide.

But the result is a violent revolution in the whole rotifer universe! My rotifer and his algae prison wash recklessly out of sight, and whole other worlds of rotifers and algae and amoebae and miscellaneous creatures of the deep reel by, spinning on the waves of a cataclysm. My rotifer is gone, lost to me. Huge and clumsy, more gargantuan than any

Gulliver, I am separated from him forever by my monstrous size, and there is no way I can get through from my dimension to his.

The bell rings; lab is over. I take my slide out from under my microscope; there on it is the merest drop of water, and I look at it uncertainly. I start to wipe it off, to put the slide away, but I hesitate and look at it again. The lab instructor, seeing me still standing there, hurries over. "Did you get a *good* conception of the ciliary movement?" he asks me anxiously.

"I guess so," I answer, and I polish the slide until it is dry and shiny and put it away.

High School
The Rotifer

1. When the author says, "... and there is no way I can get through from my dimension to his," she means (3.12.5 DOK 2: Drawing conclusion about the author's use of language)
 - a. she is unable to wipe the rotifer from the slide.
 - b. she is much too large to interact with rotifer. *
 - c. the rotifer is fully protected by the water surrounding it.
 - d. the rotifer has suddenly disappeared on the slide
2. The author would most likely agree with which of the following statements? (3.12.2 DOK 2: drawing conclusion about a character—below the intent of the indicator)
 - a. Humans must try to help rotifers.
 - b. Not every organism is important.
 - c. Lab instructors often hinder student work.
 - d. One's best efforts are not always helpful. *
3. Based on the passage, how will the author most likely apply what she has learned to her everyday life? (3.12.3 DOK 3: hypothetical situation of theme/lesson about a human experience)
 - a. She will take classes and study to become a biologist.
 - b. She will forget about the rotifer and her experience.
 - c. She will reread her assignment and think about the rotifer.
 - d. She will be more aware of her surroundings and its impact. *
4. Which describes how the tone of the passage would change if told by the rotifer? (3.12.6 DOK 3: hypothetical situation about a change of tone)
 - a. reflective to tense *
 - b. factual to opinionated
 - c. humorous to scornful
 - d. personal to impersonal
5. Which event in the rising action **most** influences the climax? (3.12.1 DOK 2: drawing conclusion about the interrelationship among plot elements)
 - a. When the protozoa is studied.
 - b. When the lab instructor offers help.
 - c. When the rotifer gets stuck in the algae. *
 - d. When the author adjusts the microscope.
6. Which statement describes how the falling action would be different if it were told from 3rd person point of view? (3.12.4 DOK 3: hypothetical situation about a change in point of view)
 - a. The reader would not have learned the impact of the main character. *
 - b. The reader would not have learned that the setting was in a lab class.
 - c. The reader would not have learned that the leaves were falling outside.
 - d. The reader would not have learned how to adjust the microscope correctly.