

LIRA TOWN COLLEGE

P.O. BOX 125, LIRA

S.3 ENGLISH PASSAGE

Read this passage carefully and answer questions that follow.

The untilled field

Mwangi thought of nobody else but his wife Wanjiku. She was lazy; always going to work in the day when everybody else had done half their digging. By the time she reached the field, it was already so hot that to lift a hoe was almost torture. The heat of the sun disturbed the flies from their rest so that they buzzed around her as she slowly lifted her tool. She had to drop it again to strike the biting fly. There was no point in continuing to labour. After all she would come here tomorrow and the day after. Even the day after she would be here.

She sat down in the cool shade of a *muthaithi* tree and soon fell asleep. Mwangi watched her from afar, where he was herding his cattle. By now it was his field alone which lay untilled, and the rains were near. An hour went by, two hours, three hours and Wanjiku still slept. Was she dead? Could a snake have beaten her? He would have heard her cries. Mwangi decided to find out.

He left his cattle and slowly approached the spot where his wife lay. He looked back to see whether the cattle would stray far before he returned to them. Satisfied that they would not, he moved on. He quickened his step, hoping that she would wake up before he reached her. He did not want to show her that he had all along been watching her. But he would never be satisfied until he knew whether or not his wife's expression betrayed any guilty conscience for the neglect of her duties. He changed his pace. Quietly he stalked her as a lion *stealthily* hunts a deer, or like a cobra just about to strike. He feared to make a rustle.

Mwangi remembered the cows and goats he had paid her father as a dowry. The marriage feast *surpassed* any he had ever seen, or even heard of. Is this the wife he had married, the woman he had dearly paid for? Was she created only for child-bearing? What was she for? He would soon learn from the appearance of her face when a sleep. He reached her.

There she was, sleeping like a log, except that a log does not breathe. The sight shocked him. Where he had expected to find at least a slight element of guilt, he found only a pure, peaceful, calm face – only blissful happiness. Wanjiku was content to lie idle, a basket, a hoe, and a *panga* by her side.

He stood there, not knowing what to do next.....

Questions:

- 1 Mwangi crept towards his wife because he wanted to see
 - a) Whether she was dead
 - b) Whether she had fallen asleep
 - c) Whether she looked guilty for being so lazy
 - d) What she was doing.

- 2 When he reached his wife, he was shocked because
- a) She did not look guilty
 - b) She was dead
 - c) She was not breathing
 - d) She was asleep
- 3 From this extract we
- a) Can tell that Mwangi loved his wife
 - b) Can see that Mwangi hated his wife
 - c) Can not tell whether he loved or hated
 - d) Can tell that Mwangi over worked his wife.
4. Which of the following is closest in meaning to the word stealthily (line 40)?
- a) Angrily
 - b) Carefully
 - c) In a guilty manner
 - d) Fiercely
5. Surpassed (1.45) probably means here
- a) Took place earlier
 - b) Was very surprising
 - c) Was bigger than
 - d) Was smaller than
6. What do you think of Wanjiku's behavior?
7. What do you think of Mwangi? Do you think he was too patient? What do you think he should have done?
8. What do you think they said to each other after Mwangi woke Wanjiku up? s

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