

PART C: PROSE

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following selection and answer the questions on pages 8 to 13 of the written-response booklet.

adapted from **A Bedtime Story**

by Gilles Pinette

- 1 George Longarrow slowly sank into the worn groove of his favourite brown and orange floral print armchair. He kicked off his tan and beaded moccasins and called Benjamin and Tara, his two grandchildren, to come and sit with him. They called back from the kitchen that they were just finishing decorating their cookies with their grandmother. George peered toward the kitchen and from his odd angle he was just able to see his wife place the finished Christmas goodies on the counter to cool. He thought about his two grandchildren. Tara was four and a real sparkplug. With her dark eyes and long black hair she was a doll-like image of her mother. Already Tara had picked up some of her mother's habits and mannerisms. She would often twist and play with the length of her hair in her hand when she was talking, and she sternly insisted on all her beverages being in a coffee mug and cupped both hands around the mug while drinking just as her mother still did. Benji, on the other hand, must have been more like his father. Benji was a plump little boy with jet black hair and startling blue eyes. George thought he was the type of boy that other children would tease, but Benji was smart and a quick thinker.
- 2 Hope rarely talked of Benji and Tara's father. She had left the Reserve at sixteen, telling George that she never wanted to return to his backward, old-fashioned life and that she had plans to go and make it in the outside world. During the five years following, George heard not a word from his daughter. Then she showed up at his house with two children and he welcomed all three into his household. Hope was George's youngest daughter of six children, but the rest had all moved away. At Christmas they all sent cards and letters that talked about their lives.
- 3 George's thoughts were interrupted by Benji climbing onto his legs and Tara trying hard to squeeze in beside George and the armrest of his chair. George extended his forearm around Tara and gave her a squeeze. "Since it is the night before Christmas, I am going to tell you a story that my father told me and I told all my children and when you have children, I would hope that you would tell them. It is about Nanabush and how he made Christmas what it is today."
- 4 "Is Nanabush Santa Claus, Grampa?" asked Benji.
- 5 "No, Grandson, Nanabush was a mischievous person who helped create our world."
- 6 "Does Mommy know Nanabush?" queried Tara.
- 7 "Yes, child. I introduced her to him many years ago when she was a girl just like you."
- 8 "Is Mommy coming home soon?"
- 9 "Mommy will be home shortly. In fact, by the time you wake tomorrow morning, Mommy will be here to sing and decorate the tree and open the gifts that you and Benji made her out of those beads

and leather.” George peered out his window. A storm had crept up and the wind was now pelting the window with snow. Hope had gone into the nearby town to buy the kids gifts at the department store. George shook his head. Those store-bought gifts just didn’t reflect what he felt was important at Christmas time. Family and sharing. He turned his attention back to the children. “But for now, I will tell you a Christmas story and then you must go to bed.”

10 “Okay, Grampa.”

11 *Many moons ago, as Nanabush was ice fishing on the Great Spirit Lake, he caught a very special fish. This fish was clear like the cool water and would not be seen at all if it were not for two golden eyes. And even these eyes were not visible when the fish closed her eyelids.*

12 *As Nanabush pulled the invisible fish from the water, she spoke to him.*

13 *“Oh great Nanabush, spare me for I am nothing but a stinky clear fish and my body tastes like the inside of a bear’s intestine. If you grant me freedom, I shall bestow two wishes on you.”*

14 *Nanabush considered this for a moment and after remembering his experience with eating bear’s intestine, decided to give the fish her freedom. His two wishes were very simple. A companion to share life with and an ice fishing shack with a heater.*

15 *However, Nanabush wanted to have proof of his remarkable catch, so he cut the eyelids off the fish and then let her go. That is why to this day, fish have no eyelids.*

16 *The transparent fish was angered by this act of dishonour, but was wise beyond most mortals. She decided to remind Nanabush and the rest of mankind of the qualities they lacked. She released a great spirit to make mankind giving, caring, loving, compassionate, and kind every year around the time she was caught. That day was the twenty-fifth of December and that released spirit was the Spirit of Christmas.*

17 George looked down at the two children as he finished reciting his story. “Time for bed now. Tomorrow is going to be a long day. We have to decorate the tree and prepare dinner for everyone coming.”

18 “Will Mommy be here, Grampa?” Tara asked.

19 “Yes, child,” he replied, but George was beginning to worry about Hope. He marched the children into their bedroom to tuck them in and occupied their thoughts with talk of snowmen and snow angels. Hope thought it was important to have store-bought gifts for Benji and Tara, but all they really wanted was for her to be with them on Christmas. Now, they might not even get that. George looked outside into the cold dark.

20 Miles away, Hope cursed the winter and the snow and her father for being too old-fashioned to install a phone. She looked around the little hotel room that she and her two Kmart bags of toys occupied. She cursed her car and herself and Greyhound bus lines for holiday schedules. She thought about her children. They would wake up tomorrow and only have her parents’ homemade gifts to open. She felt disappointed and wished she was with them.

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Total Value: 33 marks

Suggested Time: 45 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the story entitled “A Bedtime Story” on pages 4 and 5 in the **Readings Booklet**. Select the **best** answer for each question and record your choice on the Response Form provided.

19. The atmosphere in paragraph 1 is one of
- A. haste.
 - B. mystery.
 - C. annoyance.
 - D. contentment.
20. In paragraph 1, “Tara was four and a real sparkplug” is an example of
- A. flashback.
 - B. foreshadowing.
 - C. direct presentation.
 - D. indirect presentation.
21. According to the grandfather, Nanabush can best be described as
- A. a creator.
 - B. Santa Claus.
 - C. a storyteller.
 - D. the Spirit of Christmas.
22. In the grandfather’s story, the fish caught in the Great Spirit Lake was
- A. blind.
 - B. bitter.
 - C. transparent.
 - D. unintelligent.

23. Nanabush decides not to eat the fish because he
- A. can't catch the fish.
 - B. wants to keep the fish.
 - C. won't like the fish's taste.
 - D. is afraid of the fish's power.
24. The story of Nanabush is italicized to
- A. show it is untrue.
 - B. show it is translated.
 - C. emphasize the dialogue.
 - D. emphasize the story within a story.
25. The children's Christmas celebration will be diminished if
- A. their mother does not return in time.
 - B. they do not finish making their gifts.
 - C. they do not get a call from their mother.
 - D. their store-bought gifts do not arrive in time.
26. In paragraph 20, the point of view of the story as a whole shifts to
- A. objective.
 - B. omniscient.
 - C. first person.
 - D. limited omniscient.
27. Compared to George's view of Christmas, Hope's view can best be described as more
- A. innocent.
 - B. traditional.
 - C. materialistic.
 - D. sophisticated.