I. AFTER YOU READ THE STORY

I.a. Understanding the Plot

Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1. Why does Paul have to come back to school one afternoon?
2. Why are his teachers angry with him?
3. Where does Paul go after the meeting? What is his job there?
4. What does Paul think about his neighborhood, Cordelia Street? What is his feeling about the world of the theater and concert hall?
5. Why is he taken out of school? What is he forced to do?
6. Where does Paul run away to? What does he do there?
7. How does he pay for the trip?
8. What happens to Paul after he reads the newspaper that tells what he has done?

I.b. Close Reading

a. Part 1 (pages 1-4)

The italicized words in the sentences below are keys to understanding the conflict between Paul and his teachers and between Paul's feelings about everyday life and the excitement of the theater. Answer the questions that follow the sentences. Paragraph numbers are given to help you find the correct answers.

1. Paul's suspension from school lasted one week. What had he done to deserve that punishment? (paragraph 3)

2. Paul's teachers were angry because he obviously was not interested in his lessons, and they saw this as a sign of contempt. When they asked if he wanted to come back to school, did he show contempt again? What did he answer? Why? (paragraph 3)
3. Paul's attitude toward life could be seen in the jeweled pin in his neat tie—a touch of **elegance**. What other such sign did he present to the world? (paragraph 1)

4. Paul's teachers didn't find his red carnation elegant or his flashing eyes attractive. On the contrary, they found these things **offensive**. As a result, what did they feel at the end of the meeting? (paragraph 6)

5. In the concert hall—a very **artificial** place—Paul worked as an usher, running up and down the aisles, showing people to their seats. How does this job make him feel? (paragraph 8)

6. Paul always felt **depressed** after a concert. Why? (paragraph 9)

7. Paul wanted to enter the bright **elegance** of the Schenley Hotel. Why? What does he imagine it is like inside? (paragraph 9)

b. **Part 2 (pages 4-6)**

In Part II, Cather continues to show us the contrast in Paul's mind between the real world of his neighborhood, Cordelia Street, and the dream world of the theater and concert hall. In this exercise, you are asked to recall the details that make up Cather's picture of Cordelia Street.

1. "In Paul's world, natural things were nearly always ugly." (paragraph 16) Reread paragraph 11, and then list eight things about Cordelia Street that Paul found ugly, boring, or depressing.

2. Where did Paul spend the night? How did he spend the night? Why did he spend it that way? (paragraphs 11, 12)

3. Paragraphs 11 and 13 introduced us to the people of Cordelia Street. Who were they? What kind of jobs did they hold? What did they talk about when they gathered on their front steps?

4. Before he left his house, how did Paul "get rid" of the feel of Cordelia Street? (paragraph 14)

5. When Paul was removed from school, what four things happened that removed him further from the world he loved and pushed him closer to the world he hated? (paragraph 18)
c. Part III (pages 6-9)

Flowers are important to Paul. In Part 1, he faces his teachers wearing a red carnation in his coat. In Part II, he tells his classmates that he sends flowers to his actor friends. In Part ID, flowers remain important. Answer the following questions. Paragraph numbers are given to help you find the correct answers.

1. Why does Paul order flowers sent to his room? What do the flowers add to the room? (paragraph 21)

2. In the taxi, Paul notices two things about the shop windows, one outside, one inside. What are they? (paragraph 24)

3. At the train tracks, what does Paul understand about the flowers that he saw “that first night in New York”? Why does he bury one of his red carnations in the snow? (paragraph 29)