

Name - _____

Start time - __ : __

End time - __ : __

Read the following passage from a 19th-century novel and answer the questions that follow.

"In the fading glow of a gas-lit street, the cobblestones bore witness to the comings and goings of a society wrapped in layers of propriety and veiled secrets. The opulent ballroom, adorned with crystal chandeliers and adorned tapestries, exuded an air of refined decadence. Within its glittering confines, the dance of social etiquette unfolded—a carefully choreographed masquerade where smiles concealed untold desires and whispers concealed scandalous revelations.

In the midst of the ball, Lady Rosalind, with her gown sweeping the polished floor, moved with a regal grace. Her eyes, a shade of sapphire that betrayed both vulnerability and defiance, scanned the room for a familiar face. As the waltz swirled around her, she found herself entangled in a dance of societal expectations and personal yearnings. In the hushed exchanges behind ornate fans and masked glances, alliances were forged and alliances shattered, like the delicate porcelain figurines that adorned the mantelpiece. Outside the ballroom's gilded doors, gas lamps flickered in the misty night, casting ephemeral shadows on the ivy-clad walls. In this twilight realm between public facade and private desires, Lady Rosalind contemplated the intricate dance of power, privilege, and passion. The secrets whispered in the corridors, the clandestine affairs hidden beneath the veneer of respectability—all threaded into the fabric of a society where appearances were as fragile as the delicate lace on a debutante's gown."

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Questions:

1. Analyze how the gas-lit street sets the atmosphere for the passage. How does the fading glow contribute to the tone and mood of the scene?
2. Explore the symbolism of the opulent ballroom. How does its grandeur symbolize the social strata and expectations of the 19th-century elite?
3. Examine the characterization of Lady Rosalind. How do her regal grace and sapphire eyes contribute to the complexity of her character?
4. Discuss the theme of alliances and betrayals in the passage. How are these themes woven into the fabric of the ballroom scene?
5. Discuss the recurring theme of fragility, from delicate porcelain figurines to lace on a debutante's gown. How does this theme highlight the precarious nature of appearances in the depicted society?
6. Analyze the imagery of gas lamps and ephemeral shadows outside the ballroom. How does this twilight realm add depth to the portrayal of the societal dichotomy?