

Name - _____

Start time - __ : __

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

Excerpt: From "Bleak House" by Charles Dickens

"Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.

In consideration of the day and hour of my birth, it was declared by the nurse, and by some sage women in the neighbourhood who had taken a lively interest in me several months before there was any possibility of our becoming personally acquainted, first, that I was destined to be unlucky in life; and secondly, that I was privileged to see ghosts and spirits; both these gifts inevitably attaching, as they believed, to all unlucky infants of either gender, born towards the small hours on a Friday night.

I need say nothing here, on the first head, because nothing can show better than my history whether that prediction was verified or falsified by the result. On the second branch of the question, I will only remark, that unless I ran through that part of my inheritance while I was still a baby, I have not yet, I may safely say, seen the ghost or spirit that is to bring me good fortune."

Questions:

1. Analyze the narrative voice used in this passage. How does the first-person perspective influence the reader's connection to the narrator? What advantages does the use of first-person narration provide in this context?

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2. Consider the narrator's reflection on their birth and the superstitions associated with it. How does the narrator respond to these superstitions? What does their response reveal about their character and beliefs?
3. Reflect on the narrator's sense of identity and self-awareness. How does the narrator view their own life and destiny? How might this self-perception impact their decisions and relationships throughout the story?
4. Identify any literary techniques used in the passage, such as metaphor, symbolism, or irony. How do these techniques enhance the reader's understanding of the narrator's perspective and the underlying themes?
5. Reflect on the potential influence of the superstitions on the relationships between characters. How might the beliefs about the narrator's fate affect how others interact with them? Discuss possible implications on their relationships.
6. Analyze the language and tone used by the narrator. How does the tone shift throughout the passage, and what effect does it create? Consider the narrator's attitudes and emotions as conveyed through the language.