



**<sup>1</sup>Subject:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature from the Regions

**Topic:** NATIONAL LITERATURE

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**Semester:** Second

**Grade Level:** 12

**Week:** 9

## Q U E S T

### **Content:**

21<sup>st</sup> Century literature from the region where the school is based in relation to the literature of other regions in various genres and forms in consideration of:

- various dimensions of Philippine literary history from pre-colonial to contemporary;
- canonical authors and works of Philippine National Artists in Literature; and
- names of authors and their works, and backgrounds of the literature from the region where the high school is located.

### **Content Standards:**

The learner will be able to understand and appreciate the elements and contexts of 21<sup>st</sup> century Philippine literature from the regions.

### **Most Essential Learning Competencies:**

Identify representative texts and authors from each region (**EN12Lit-Ib-22**);

Discuss how different contexts enhance the text's meaning and enrich the reader's understanding

Show appreciation of the contributions of the local writers in developing the regional literary traditions (**EN12Lit-Ic-24**).



### MISSION 1

#### **Let's examine!**

**Instructions:** Look at the picture below. Respond to the questions in the box.. Write your answers in the space provided. Answers should be in complete sentences and legibly written.



1. What does the phrase mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What does the phrase mean to you?

\_\_\_\_\_

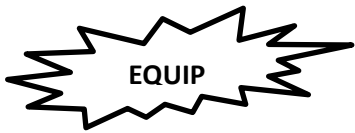
3. Do stars die? When can you say that a "star is dead"?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What connotative meaning can you give to the phrase?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson Development About the Author



**Paz Marquez-Benitez** was the mentor of the first generation of Filipino writers in English language whose students became later became prolific writers.

She was one of the first generation of Filipinos who were trained under the American educational system. A graduate of Bachelor of Arts in 1912, she was among the first class of the University of the Philippines and was absorbed as a faculty member in the University's English Department hailed as an outstanding teacher.

Paz Marquez-Benitez was born to the prominent Marquez family of Quezon province on March 3, 1894. She was married to UP College of Education Dean Francisco Benitez. She passed away on November 10, 1983. Annually, the Ateneo University holds Paz Marquez-Benitez Lectures to honor her memories.

### Dead Stars

Through the open window the air steeped outdoors passed into his room, quietly enveloping him, stealing into his very thought. Esperanza, Julia, the sorry mess he had made of life, the years to come even now beginning to weigh down, to crush- they lost concreteness, diffused into formless melancholy. The tranquil murmur of conversation issued from the brick-tiled azotea where Don Julian and Carmen were busy puttering away among the rose pots.

"Papa, and when will the 'long table' be set?"

"I don't know yet. Alfredo is not very specific, but I understand Esperanza wants it to be next month."

Carmen sighed impatiently. "Why is he not a bit more decided, I wonder. He is over thirty, is he not? And still a bachelor! Esperanza must be tired waiting."

"She does not seem to be much of in a hurry either," Don Julian nasally commented, while his scissors busily snipped away.

"How can a woman be in a hurry when the man does not hurry her?" Carmen returned, pinching off a worm with a careful, somewhat absent air. "Papa, do you remember how much in love he was?"

"In love? With whom?"

"With Esperanza, of course. He has not had another love affair that I know of," she said with a good-natured contempt. "What I mean is that at the beginning he was enthusiastic- flowers, serenades, notes, and things like that-"

Alfredo remembered that period with a wonder not unmixed with shame. That was less than four years ago. He could not understand those months of a great hunger that was not of the body nor yet of the mind, a craving that had seized on him one quiet night when the moon was abroad and under the dappled shadow of the trees in the plaza, man wooed maid. Was he being cheated by life? Love – he seemed to have missed it. Or was the love that others told about a mere fabrication of perfervid imagination, an exaggeration of the commonplace, a glorification of insipid monotones such as made up his love life? Was love a combination of circumstances, or sheer native capacity of soul? In those days love was, for him, still the eternal puzzle; for love, as he knew it, was a stranger to love as he divined it might be.

Sitting quietly in his room, he could almost revive the restlessness of those days, the feeling of tumultuous haste, such as he knew so well in his boyhood when something beautiful was going on somewhere and he was trying to

get there in time to see. "Hurry, hurry, or you will miss it," someone had seemed to urge in his ears. So he had avidly seized on the shadow of Love and deluded himself for a long while in the way for humanity from the time immemorial. In the meantime, he became very much engaged to Esperanza.

Why would men so mismanage their lives? Greed, he thought, was what ruined so many. Greed – the desire to crowd into a moment all the enjoyment it will hold, to squeeze from the emotion it will yield. Men commit themselves when but half-meaning to do so, sacrificing possible future fullness of ecstasy to the craving for immediate excitement. Greed – mortgaging the future – forcing the hand of Time, or of Fate.

"What do you think happened?" asked Carmen, pursuing her thought.

"I supposed long-engaged people are like that, warm now, cool tomorrow. I think they are of tener cool than warm. The very fact that an engagement has been allowed to prolong itself argues a certain placidity of temperament – or of affection on the part of either, or both." Don Julian love to philosophize. He was talking now with an evident relish in words, his resonant, very nasal voice toned down to monologue speech. "That phase you were speaking is natural enough for beginning. Besides, that, as I see it, was Alfredo's last race with escaping youth."

Carmen laughed aloud at the thought of her brother's perfect physical repose – almost indolence – disturbed in the role suggested by her Father's figurative language.

"A last spurt of hot blood," finished the old man.

Few certainly would credit Alfonso Salazar with hot blood. Even his friends had amusedly diagnosed his blood as cool and thin, citing incontrovertible evidence. Tall and slender, he moved with an indolent ease that verged on grace. Under straight recalcitrant hair, a thin face with a satisfying breadth of forehead, slow, dreamer's eyes, and astonishing freshness of lips – indeed Alfredo Salazar's appearance betokened little of exuberant masculinity, rather a poet with wayward humour, a fastidious artist with keen, clear brain.

He rose and quietly went out of the house. He lingered a moment on the stone steps, then went down the path shaded by immature acacias, through the little tarred gate which he left swinging back and forth, now opening, now closing, on the gravel road bordered along the farther side by madre cacao hedge in tardy lavender bloom. The gravel road narrowed as it slanted up to the house on the hill, whose wide, open porches he could glimpse through the heat-shrivelled tamarinds in the Martinez yard. Six weeks ago, that house meant nothing to him save that it was the Martinez house, rented and occupied by Judge del Valle and his family. Six weeks ago Julia Salas meant nothing to him; he did not even know her name; but now –

One evening, he had gone 'neighbouring' with Don Julian; a rare enough occurrence, since he made it a point to avoid all appearance of currying favour with the Judge. This particular evening however, he had allowed himself to be persuaded. "A little mental relaxation now and then is beneficial," the old man had said. "Besides, a judge's good will, you know," the rest of the thought – "is worth a rising young lawyer's trouble" – Don Julian conveyed through a shrug and a smile that derided his own wisdom.

A young woman had met them at the door. It was evident from the excitement of the Judge's children that she was a recent and very welcome arrival. In the characteristic Filipino way formal introductions had been omitted – the judge limiting himself to a casual "Ah, ya se conocen?" with the consequence that Alfredo salled her Miss del Valle throughout the evening. He was puzzled that she should smile with evident delight every time he addressed her thus. Later Don Julian informed him that she was not the Judge's sister, as he had supposed, but his sister-in-law, and that her name was Julia Salas. A very dignifies rather austere name, he thought. Still the young lady should have corrected him. As it was, he was greatly embarrassed, and felt that he should explain. To his apology, she replied, "That is nothing, each time I was about to correct you, but I remembered a similar experience I had once before."

"Oh," he drawled out, vastly relieved.

"A man named Manalang – I kept calling him Manalo. After the tenth time or so, the young man rose from his seat and said suddenly, 'Pardon me, but my name is Manalang, Manalang.' You know, I never forgave him!"

He laughed with her.

"The best thing to do under the circumstances, I have found out," she pursued, "is to pretend not to hear, and to let the other person find out his mistake without help."

"As you did this time. Still, you looked amused every time I –"

"I was thinking of Mr. Manalang."

Don Julian and his communicative friend, the Judge, were absorbed in a game of chess. The young man had tired of playing appreciative spectator and desultory conversationalist, so he and Julia Salas had gone off to chat in the vine-covered porch. The lone piano in the neighbourhood alternately tinkled and banged away as the player's moods altered. He listened, and wondered irrelevantly if Miss Salas could sing; she had such a charming speaking voice. He was mildly surprised to note from her appearance that she was 'unmistakably a sister of the Judge's wife, although Doña Adela was of a different type altogether. She was small and plump, with wide brown eyes, clearly defined eyebrows, and delicately modelled hips – a pretty woman with the complexion of a baby and the expression of a likable cow. Julia was taller, not so obviously pretty. She had the same eyebrows and lips, but she was much darker, of a smooth rich brown with underlying tones of crimson which heightened the impression she gave of abounding vitality.



On Sunday mornings after mass, father and son would go crunching up the gravel road to the house on the hill. The Judge's wife invariably offered them beer, which Don Julian enjoyed and Alfredo did not. After a half an hour or so, the chessboard would be brought out; then Alfredo and Julia Salas would go out to the porch to chat. She sat in the low hammock and he in a rocking chair and the hours – warm, quiet March hours – sped by. He enjoyed talking with her and it was evident that she liked his company; yet what feeling there was between them was so undisturbed that it seemed a matter of course. Only when Esperanza chanced to ask him indirectly about those visits did some uneasiness creep into his thoughts of the girl next door. Esperanza had wanted to know if he went straight home after mass. Alfredo suddenly realized that for several Sundays now he had not waited for Esperanza to come out of the church as he had been wont to do. He had been eager of 'neighbouring'. He answered that he went home to work. And, because he was not habitually untruthful, added, "Sometimes I go with Papa to Judge del Valle's."

She dropped the topic. Esperanza was not prone to indulge in unprovoked jealousies. She was a believer in the regenerative virtue of institutions, in their power to regulate feeling as well as conduct. If a man were married, why, of course, he loved his wife; if he were engaged, he could not possibly love another woman. The half-lie told him what he had not admitted openly to himself, that he was giving Julia Salas something which he was not free to give. He realized that; yet something that would not be denied beckoned imperiously, and he followed on. It was so easy to forget up there, away from the prying eyes of the world so easy and so poignantly sweet. The beloved woman, he standing close to her, the shadows around, enfolding.

"Up here I find – something –"

He and Julia Salas stood looking out into the quiet night. Sensing unwanted intensity, laughed, woman-like, asking, "Amusement?"

"No; youth – its spirit –"

"Are you so old?"

"And heart's desire."

Was he becoming a poet, or is there a poet lurking in the heart of every man?

"Down there," he had continued, his voice somewhat indistinct, "the road is too broad, too trodden by feet, too barren of mystery."

"Down there" beyond the ancient tamarinds lay the road, upturned to the stars. In the darkness the fireflies glimmered, while an errant breeze strayed in from somewhere, bringing elusive, faraway sounds as of voices in a dream. "Mystery –" she answered lightly, "that is so brief –"

"Not in some," quickly. "Not in you."

"You have known me a few weeks; so the mystery."

"I could study you all my life and still not find it."

"So long?"

"I should like to."

Those six weeks were now was swift – seeming in the memory, yet they have been so deep in the living, so charged with the compelling power and sweetness. Because neither the past nor the future had relevance or meaning, he lived only the present, day by day, lived it intensely, with such a wilful shutting out of fact as astounded him in his calmer moments. Just before Holy Week, Don Julian invited the judge and his family to spend Sunday afternoon at Tanda where he had a coconut plantation and a house on the beach. Carmen also came with her four energetic children. She and Doña Adela spent most the time indoors directing the preparation of the *merienda* and discussing the likable absurdities of their husbands – how Carmen's Vicente was so absorbed in his farms that he would not even take time off to accompany her on this visit to her father; how Doña Adela's Dionisio was the most absentminded of men, sometimes going out without his collar, or with unmatched socks. After the *merienda*, Don Julian sauntered off with the judge to show him what a thriving young coconut looked like – "plenty of leaves, close set, rich green" – while the children, convoyed Julia Salas, found unending entertainment in the rippling sand left by the ebbing tide. They were far down, walking at the edge of the water, indistinctly outlined against the gray of the out-curving beach. Alfredo left his perch on the bamboo ladder of the house and followed. Here were her footsteps, narrow, arched. He laughed at himself for his black canvas footwear which he removed forthwith and tossed high up on dry sand. When he came up, she flushed, then smiled with frank pleasure.

"I hope you are enjoying this," he said with a questioning inflection.

"Very much. It looks like home to me, except that we do not have such a lovely beach."

There was a breeze from the water. It blew the hair away from her forehead, and whipped the tucked-up skirt around her straight slender figure. In the picture was something of eager freedom as of wings poised in flight. The girl had grace, distinction. Her face was not notably pretty; yet she had a tantalizing charm, all the more compelling because it was an inner quality, an achievement of the spirit. The lure was there, of naturalness, of an alert vitality of mind and body, of a thoughtful, sunny temper, and of a piquant perverseness which is sauce to charm.

"The afternoon has seemed very short, hasn't it?" Then, "This, I think is the last time-we can visit."

"The last? Why?"

"oh, you will be too busy perhaps."

He noted an evasive quality in the answer. "Do I seem especially industrious to you?"

"If you are, you never look it."

"Not perspiring or breathless, as a busy man ought to be."

"Always unhurried, too unhurried, and calm." She smiled to herself.

"I wish that were true," he said after a meditative pause. "A man is happy if he is, as you say, calm and placid. It was strange to him that could be wooing thus: with tone and look and covert phrase. "I should like to see your home town."

"There is nothing to see – little crooked streets, bunut roofs with ferns growing on them, and sometimes squashes." That was the background. It made her seem less unrelated, yet withal more distant, as if that background claimed her and excluded him.

"Nothing? There is you."

"Oh, me? But I am here."

"I will not go, of course, until you are there."

"Will you come? You will find it dull! There isn't even one American there!"

"Well, Americans are rather essential to my entertainment."

She laughed. "We live on Calle Luz, a little street with trees."

"Could I find that?"

"If you don't ask for Miss del Valle," she smiled teasingly.

"I'll inquire about the house of the prettiest girl in the town."

"There is where you will lose your way." Then she turned serious. "Now, that is not quite sincere."

"It is," he averted slowly, but emphatically.

"I thought you, at least, would not say such things."

"Pretty-pretty- a foolish word! But there is none more handy I did not mean that quite –"

"Are you withdrawing the compliment?"

"Re-enforcing it, maybe. Something is pretty when it pleases the eye- it is more than that when--"

"If it saddens?" she interrupted hastily.

"It must be ugly." Towards the west, the sunlight lay on the dimming waters in a broad, glinting streamer of crimsoned gold.

"Why did you say this is the last time?" he asked quietly as they turned back.

"I am going home." The end of an impossible dream!

"When?" he asked, after a long pause.

"Tomorrow. I received a letter from Father and mother yesterday. They want me to spend the Holy Week at home." She seemed to be waiting for him to speak, "That is why I said this is the last time."

"Can't I come to say goodbye?"

"Oh, you don't need to."

"No, but I want to."

"There is no time."

The golden streamer was withdrawing, shortening, until it looked no more than a pool far away at the rim of the world. Stillness, a vibrant quiet that affects the sense as does solemn harmony, a peace that is not contentment but a cessation of tumult when all violence of feeling tones down to the wistful serenity of regret. She turned and looked into his face, in her dark eyes a ghost of sunset sadness.

"Home seems so far from here. This is almost like another life."

"I know. This is Elsewhere, and yet strange enough, I cannot get rid of the old things." "Oh, old things, mistakes, encumbrances, old baggage." He said it lightly, unwilling to mark the hour. He walked close, his hand sometimes touching hers for one whirling second.

Don Julian's nasal summons came to them on the wind. Alfredo gripped the soft hand so near his own. At his touch, the girl turned her face away, but he heard her voice say very low. "Goodbye."

## II

ALFREDO Salazar turned to the right where, farther on, the road broadened and entered the heart of the town – Chinese stores sheltered under low-hung roofs, of indolent drug stores and tailor shops, of dingy shoe-repairing establishments and a cluttered goldsmith's cubbyhole where a consumptive bent over a magnifying lens. Into the quickly deepening twilight, the voice of the biggest of the church bells kept ringing its insistent summons. Flocking came the devout with their long wax candles. The gaily decked rice-paper lanterns were again on display while from the windows of the older houses hung colored glass globes, heirlooms from a day when grass pith wicks floating in coconut oil were the chief lighting device.

Soon a double row of light emerged from the church and uncoiled down the length of the street like a huge jewelled band studded with glittering clusters where the saints' platforms were. The sight of Esperanza and her Mother sedately pacing behind Our Lady of Sorrows suddenly destroyed the illusions of continuity and broke up those lines of light into component individuals. Esperanza stiffened self-consciously, tried to look unaware, and

could not. The line kept moving on, wending its circuitous route away from the church and then back again, where, according to the old proverb, all processions end.

Toward the end of the row of Chinese stores, he caught up with Julia Salas. The crowd had dispersed into the side streets, leaving Calle Real. It was past eight, and Esperanza would be expecting him in a little while: yet the thought did not hurry him as he said "Good evening" and fell into step with the girl.

"I had been thinking all this time that you had gone," he said in a voice that was both excited and troubled.

"No my sister asked me to stay until they are ready to go."

The provincial docket had been cleared, and Judge del Valle had been assigned elsewhere. As lawyer – and as lover – Alfredo had found that out long before.

"Mr. Salazar," she broke into his silence, "I wish to congratulate you." Her tone told him that she had learned, at last.

"For what?"

"For your approaching wedding." "I should have offered congratulations long before, but you know mere visitors are slow about getting the news," she continued.

He listened so much to what she said as to the nuances in her voice. He heard nothing to enlighten him, except that she had reverted to the formal tones of early acquaintance. No revelation there; simply the old voice – cool, almost detached from personality, flexible and vibrant, suggesting potentialities of a song.

"Are weddings interesting to you?" he finally brought out quietly.

"When they are of friends, yes."

"Would you come if I asked you?"

"When is it going to be?"

"May," he replied briefly after a long pause.

"May is the month of happiness they say," she said, with what seemed to him a shade of irony.

"They say," slowly, indifferently. "Would you come?"

"Why not?"

"No reason. I am just asking. Then you will?"

"Then I will be there."

The gravel road lay before them; at the road's end the lighted windows of the house on the hill. There swept over the spirit of Alfredo Salazar a longing so keen that it was pain, a wish that, that house were his, that all the bewilderments of the present were not, and that this woman by his side, were his long wedded wife, returning with him to the peace of home.

"Julita," he said in a slow, thoughtful manner, "did you ever have to choose between something you wanted to do and something you had to do?"

"No!"

"I thought maybe you had had that experience; then you could understand a man who was in such a situation."

"You are fortunate," he pursued when she did not answer.

"Is-is this man sure of what he should do?"

"I don't know, Julita. Perhaps not. Because there is a point where a thing escapes us and rushes downward of its own weight, dragging us along. Then it is foolish to ask whether one will or one will not, because it no longer depends on him."

"But then why-why" her muffled voice came. "Oh, what do I know? That is his problem after all."

"Doesn't it interest you?"

"Why must it? I-I have to say goodbye, Mr. Salazar; we are at the house."

Without lifting her eyes she quickly turned and walked away.

Had the final word been said? He wondered. It had. Yet a feeble flutter of hope trembled in his mind though set against that hope were three years of engagement, a very near wedding, perfect understanding between the parents, his own conscience, and Esperanza herself – Esperanza no longer young, Esperanza the efficient, Esperanza the literal minded, the intensely acquisitive. He looked attentively at her where she sat on the sofa, appraisingly, and with a kind of aversion which he tried to control. She was one of those fortunate women who have the gift of uniformly acceptable appearance. She never surprised one with unexpected homeliness nor with startling reserves of beauty. At home, in church, on the street, she was always herself, a woman past first bloom, light and clear of complexion, spare of arms and of breast, with a slight convexity to thin throat; a woman dressed with self-conscious care, even elegance; a woman distinctly not average. She was pursuing an indignant relation about something or other, something about Calixta, their note-carrier, Alfredo perceived, so he merely half-listened, understanding imperfectly. At a pause he drawled out to fill in the gap: "Well, what of it?" The remark sounded ruder than he had intended.

"She is not married to him," Esperanza insisted in her thin, nervously pitched voice. "Besides, she should have thought of us. Nanay practically brought her up. We never thought she would turn out bad." What had Calixta done? Homely, middle-aged Calixta?

"You are very positive about her badness," he commented dryly. Esperanza was always positive.

"But do you approve?"

“Of what?”  
“What she did.”  
“No,” indifferently.  
“Well?”

He was suddenly impelled by a desire to disturb the unvexed orthodoxy of her mind. “All I say is that it is not necessarily wicked.”

“Why shouldn’t it be? You talked like an immoral man. I did not know that your ideas were like that.”

“My ideas?” he retorted, goaded by a deep, accumulated exasperation. “The only test I wish to apply to conduct is the test of fairness. Am I injuring anybody? No? Then I am justified in my conscience. I am right. Living with a man to whom she is not married – is that it? It may be wrong, and again it may not.”

“She has injured us. She was ungrateful.” Her voice was tight with resentment.

“The trouble with you, Esperanza, is that you are” he stopped, appalled by the passion in his voice.

“Why do you get angry? I do not understand you at all! I think I know why you have been indifferent to me lately. I am not blind, or deaf; I see and hear what perhaps some are trying to keep from me.” The blood surged into his very eyes and his hearing sharpened to points of acute pain. What would she say next?

“Why don’t you speak out frankly before it is too late? You need not think of me and of what people will say.” Her voice trembled.

Alfredo was suffering as he could not remember ever having suffered before. What people will say – what will they not say? What don’t they say when a long engagements are broken almost on the eve of the wedding?

“Yes,” he said hesitatingly, diffidently, as if merely thinking out aloud, “one tries to be fair – according to his lights – but it is hard. One would like to be fair to one’s self first. But that is too easy, one does not dare”

“What do you mean?” she asked with repressed violence. “Whatever my shortcomings, and no doubt they are many in your eyes. I have never gone out of my way, of my place, to find a man.”

Did she mean by this irrelevant remark that he it was who had sought her; or was that a covert attack on Julia Salas?

“Esperanza” a desperate plea lay in his stumbling words. “If you suppose I – “Yet how could a mere man word such a plea?

“If you mean you want to take back your word, if you are tired of – why don’t you tell me you are tired of me?” she burst out in a storm of weeping that left him completely shamed and unnerved.

The last word had been said.



MISSION 2

Let’s do it!

**Instructions:** Complete the table by supplying the needed information. Refer to your module 6 on the definition/discussion on the composite/elements of a short story (fiction).

Dead Stars (by Paz Marquez-Benitez)		
Setting:	(Place)	(Time)
Characters: (Below the character, identify what type of character he/she is according to development in the story.)	Protagonist	Antagonist
	ROUND / FLAT / DYNAMIC	ROUND / FLAT / DYNAMIC
Plot Pattern and Technique		
Point of View		
Symbolisms		
Theme		

### MISSION 3

**Instructions:** Respond to the questions in complete sentences.

1. How is Alfredo Salazar related to Esperanza? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the significance of Julia Salas' role to both Esperanza and Alfredo?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Read the continuation of the story at <https://www.sushidog.com> . Which weigh heavier, doing what is ought to be done or to do what you really want? Support your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### References

Dead Stars by Paz Marquez-Benitez retrieved from <https://www.sushidog.com>

Paz Marquez-Benitez retrieved from <https://www.rizal.lib.admu.edu.ph>

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Baronda, A. J. C. (2016). 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature from the Philippines and the World. JFS Publishing Services.





*21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature from the Regions*  
**Week 9 Assessment**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Encircle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Which of the following characters in the story is the **protagonist**?
  - a. Alfredo
  - b. Julia
  - c. Esperanza
2. Which of the following characters in the story is the **antagonist**?
  - a. Alfredo
  - b. Julia
  - c. Esperanza
3. What kind of conflict is shown in the story "Dead Stars"?
  - a. man vs. man
  - b. man vs. himself
  - c. man vs. society
4. Which of the following best represents dead star?
  - a. lost hope
  - b. lost chance
  - c. lost opportunity
5. Which statement best describe the theme of the story?
  - a. A love lost now is a love lost forever.
  - b. The chance of meeting your destined life partner can be slim, so take all your time to have fun while waiting for your destiny.
  - c. There is a tricky road between choosing the path of happiness or choosing the right path for everyone's sake.
6. Which statement best describe the atmosphere of the story?
  - a. Esperanza and Alfredo were happily in love with each other.
  - b. Alfredo was torn between choosing his heart's desire and choosing to do what is right.
  - c. Julia Salas is determined to ruin Esperanza and Alfredo's relationship.

II. Respond to the situation below in 3 to 5 sentences.

**If you were Alfredo Salazar, would you marry Esperanza or  
break up with her and pursue Julia Salas?**