

Name: _____
Mrs. Orepitan
English I Pre-AP/GT, Period ____
Date: _____

The Assignment:

Read the passage carefully and then in a well-organized essay, explain how the author uses diction, imagery, and detail to arouse the reader's sympathy for the dog. In your essay, consider how the dog's treatment in the story reflects the unhappiness that can occur when people misunderstand each other.

"A New England Nun" – by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman

Line ...Among her forebodings of disturbance, not the least
(5) was with regard to Caesar. Caesar was a veritable hermit
of a dog. For the greater part of his life he had dwelt in
his secluded hut, shut out from the society of his kind and
all innocent canine joys. Never had Caesar since his early
youth watched at a woodchuck's hole; never had he
known the delights of a stray bone at a neighbor's
kitchen door. And it was all on account of a sin committed
(10) when hardly out of his puppyhood. No one knew the
possible depth of remorse of which this mild-visaged,
altogether innocent-looking old dog might be capable;
but whether or not he had encountered remorse, he had
encountered a full measure of righteous retribution. Old
(15) Caesar seldom lifted up his voice in a growl or a bark; he
was fat and sleepy; there were yellow rings which looked
like spectacles around his dim old eyes; but there was a
neighbor who bore on his hand the imprint of several of
Caesar's sharp white youthful teeth, and for that he had
lived at the end of a chain, all alone in a little hut, for
(20) fourteen years. The neighbor, who was choleric and
smarting with the pain of his wound, had demanded
either Caesar's death or complete ostracism. So Louisa's
brother, to whom the dog had belonged, had built him his
little kennel and tied him up. It was now fourteen years
(25) since, in a flood of youthful spirits, he had inflicted that
memorable bite, and with the exception of short excursions,
always at the end of the chain, under the strict
guardianship of his master or Louisa, the old dog had
remained a close prisoner. It is doubtful if, with his
(30) limited ambition, he took much pride in the fact, but it is
certain that he was possessed of considerable cheap
fame. He was regarded by all the children in the village
and by many adults as a very monster of ferocity. St.
George's dragon could hardly have surpassed in evil
(35) repute Louisa Ellis's old yellow dog. Mothers charged
their children with solemn emphasis not to go too near
him, and the children listened and believed greedily, with
a fascinated appetite for terror, and ran by Louisa's house
stealthily, with many sidelong and backward glances at
(40) the terrible dog. If perchance he sounded a hoarse bark,
there was a panic. Wayfarers chancing into Louisa's yard
eyed him with respect, and inquired if the chain were
stout. Caesar at large might have seemed a very ordinary
dog, and excited no comment whatever; chained, his
(45) reputation overshadowed him, so that he lost his own
proper outlines and looked darkly vague and enormous.
Joe Dagget, however, with his good-humored sense and
shrewdness, saw him as he was. He strode valiantly up to
(50) him and patted him on the head, in spite of Louisa's soft
clamor of warning, and even attempted to set him loose.
Louisa grew so alarmed that he desisted, but kept
announcing his opinion in the matter quite forcibly at
intervals. "There ain't a better-natured dog in town," he
(55) would say, "and it's downright cruel to keep him tied up
there. Some day I'm going to take him out."
