Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ #3

*Read the text and annotate as you go. Answer the questions at the end of the selection.*

He stood before the giant freezer, selecting his supper.

His jaded eyes moved over the stacks of meats down to the frozen vegetables, down to the

breads and pastries, the fruits and ice cream.

He picked out two lamb chops, string beans, and a small box of orange sherbet. He picked the

boxes from the freezer and pushed shut the door with his elbow,

Next he moved over to the uneven stacks of cans piled to the ceiling. He took down a can of

tomato juice, then left the room that had once belonged to Kathy and now belonged to his

stomach.

He moved slowly across the living room, looking at the mural that covered the back wall. It

showed a cliff edge, sheering off to green-blue ocean that surged and broke over black rocks.

Far up in the clear blue sky, white sea gulls floated on the wind, and over on the right a gnarled

tree hung over the precipice, its dark branches etched against the sky.

Neville walked into the kitchen and dumped the groceries on the table, his eyes moving to the

clock. Twenty minutes to six. Soon now.

He poured a little water into a small pan and clanked it down on a stove burner. Next he

thawed out the chops and put them under the broiler. By this time the water was boiling and he

dropped in the frozen string beans and covered them, thinking that it was probably the electric

stove that was milking the generator.

At the table he sliced himself two pieces of bread and poured himself a glass of tomato juice.

He sat down and looked at the red second hand as it swept slowly around the clock face. The

bastards ought to be here soon.

After he’d finished his tomato juice, he walked to the front door and went out onto the porch.

He stepped off onto the lawn and walked down to the sidewalk.

The sky was darkening and it was getting chilly. He looked up and down Cimarron Street, the

cool breeze ruffling his blond hair. That’s what was wrong with these cloudy days; you never

knew when they were coming.

Oh, well, at least they were better than those damned dust storms. With a shrug, he moved

back across the lawn and into the house, locking and bolting the door behind him, sliding the

thick bar into place. Then he went back into the kitchen, turned his chops, and switched off the

heat under the string beans.

He was putting the food on his plate when he stopped and his eyes moved quickly to the

clock. Six-twenty- five today. Ben Cortman was shouting.

“Come out, Neville!”

Robert Neville sat down with a sigh and began to eat.

He sat in the living room, trying to read. He’d made himself a whisky and soda at his small

bar and he held the cold glass as he read a physiology text. From the speaker over the hallway

door, the music of Schonberg was playing loudly.

Not loudly enough, though. He still heard them outside, their murmuring and their walkings

about and their cries, their snarling and fighting among themselves. Once in a while a rock or

brick thudded off the house. Sometimes a dog barked.

And they were all there for the same thing.

Robert Neville closed his eyes a moment and held his lips in a tight line. Then he opened his

eyes and lit another cigarette, letting the smoke go deep into his lungs.

He wished he’d had time to soundproof the house. It wouldn’t be so bad if it weren’t that he

had to listen to them. Even after five months, it got on his nerves.

He never looked at them any more. In the beginning he’d made a peephole in the front

window and watched them. But then the women had seen him and had started striking vile

postures in order to entice him out of the house. He didn’t want to look at that.

He put down his book and stared bleakly at the rug, hearing Verklärte Nacht play over the

loud-speaker. He knew he could put plugs in his ears to shut off the sound of them, but that

would shut off the music too, and he didn’t want to feel that they were forcing him into a shell.

He closed his eyes again. It was the women who made it so difficult, be thought, the women

posing like lewd puppets in the night on the possibility that he’d see them and decide to come

out.

A shudder. ran through him. Every night it was the same. He’d be reading and listening to

music. Then he’d start to think about soundproofing the house, then he’d think about the

women.

Deep in his body, the knotting heat began again, and be pressed his lips together until they

were white. He knew the feeling well and it enraged him that he couldn’t combat it. It grew and

grew until he couldn’t sit still any more. Then he’d get up and pace the floor, fists bloodless at

his sides. Maybe he’d set up the movie projector or eat something or have too much to drink or

turn the music up so loud it hurt his ears. He had to do something when it got really bad.

He felt the muscles of his abdomen closing in like frightening coils. He picked up the book

and tried to read, his lips forming each word slowly and painfully.

But in a moment the book was on his lap again. He looked at the bookcase across from him.

All the knowledge in those books couldn’t put out the fires in him; all the words of centuries

couldn’t end the wordless, mindless craving of his flesh.

The realization made him sick. It was an insult to a man. All right, it was a natural drive, but

there was no outlet for it any more. They’d forced celibacy on him; he’d have to live with it.

You have a mind, don’t you? he asked himself. Well, use it?

He reached over and turned the music still louder; then forced himself to read a whole page

without pause. He read about blood cells being forced through membranes, about pale lymph

carrying the wastes through tubes blocked by lymph nodes, about lymphocytes and phago cytic

cells.

“—to empty, in the left shoulder region, near the thorax, into a large vein of the blood

circulating system.”

The book shut with a thud.

Why didn’t they leave him alone? Did they think they could all have him? Were they so

stupid they thought that? Why did they keep coming every night? After five months, you’d think they’d give up and try elsewhere.

He went over to the bar and made himself another drink. As he turned back to his chair he

heard stones rattling down across the roof and landing with thuds in the shrubbery beside the

house. Above the noises, he heard Ben Cortman shout as he always shouted.

“Come out, Neville!”

Someday I’ll get that bastard, he thought as he took a big swallow of the bitter drink.

Someday I’ll knock a stake right through his goddamn chest. I’ll make one a foot long for him, a

special one with ribbons on it, the bastard.

Tomorrow. Tomorrow he’d soundproof the house. His fingers drew into white-knuckled

fists. He couldn’t stand thinking about those women. If he didn’t hear them, maybe he wouldn’t

think about them. Tomorrow. Tomorrow.

1. What are three ways that Robert Neville copes with the creatures/monsters? Provide textual support for your answers.
2. Who is Ben Cortman? Why does Robert Neville know his name? Provide a theory – it’s all hypothetical at this point, so give me a good guess based on what we have read.

3. What are some of the ways the creatures/monsters try to lure him out? Be specific.

4. Based on all the reading we have done so far, who are ‘they’? Provide specific, text-based evidence for your answer.