“After Twenty Years” Grappling Chart

O. Henry published this short story in 1905, and some of the language and wording may be difficult. Use the column on the right to “grapple” with the text, writing what it means in your own words.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ¶ | What the sentence SAYS | What the sentence MEANS |
| ¶ 1 | The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. |  |
| The time was barely 10 o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh depeopled the streets. |  |
| ¶ 2 | …the officer, with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace. |  |
| ¶ 3 | In the doorway of a darkened hardware store a man leaned, with an unlighted cigar in his mouth. As the policeman walked up to him the man spoke up quickly. |  |
|  | | |
| ¶ 6 | The man in the doorway struck a match and lit his cigar. The light showed a pale, square-jawed face with keen eyes, and a little white scar near his right eyebrow. His scarfpin was a large diamond, oddly set. |  |
| ¶ 9 | You see, the West is a pretty big proposition, and I kept hustling around over it pretty lively. |  |
| ¶ 13 | He was a kind of plodder, though, good fellow as he was. I've had to compete with some of the sharpest wits going to get my pile. A man gets in a groove in New York. It takes the West to put a razor-edge on him." |  |
| ¶ 30 | "Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's nose from a Roman to a pug." |  |