

NAME:

DATE:

CLASS:

***A Problem*      LITERARY ANALYSIS: Characterization & Theme**

**PART I. CHARACTERIZATION**

To better understand characters, think about the information you learn about characters and how you learn it. Think also about character development—changes the character undergoes through the course of the story or new information that the author reveals about the character.

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete the following chart with examples from the story of direct and indirect characterization of each character listed. If there is no example of either direct or indirect characterization, write none.

CHARACTER	TEXTUAL EVIDENCE OF DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION	TEXTUAL EVIDENCE OF INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION
Treasury official	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Sasha	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
The Colonel	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Ivan Markovitch	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

**PART II. THEME**

The dual theme of honor and dishonor runs through “A Problem.” “What does it mean to be an honorable person?”

In Chekhov’s story, Sasha Uskov, causes “a problem” for his family that threatens to tarnish his family’s honor. However, the action needed to protect the family’s reputation cannot be considered an honorable one.

**DIRECTIONS:** Define “honor” as it is demonstrated by the characters and events. Then, identify two examples of honor and two examples of dishonor illustrated in the story completing the following chart. Circle the quality exemplified and explain why you think each example is a good illustration of honor or dishonor. You may explain from a character’s point of view or from your own point of view.

**Definition of honor as it is demonstrated by the characters and events:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Honor/Dishonor Textual Evidence</b> _____ _____ _____ _____	<b>Explanation</b> _____ _____ _____ _____
<b>Honor/Dishonor Textual Evidence</b> _____ _____ _____ _____	<b>Explanation</b> _____ _____ _____ _____
<b>Honor/Dishonor Textual Evidence</b> _____ _____ _____ _____	<b>Explanation</b> _____ _____ _____ _____
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<b>A Problem</b>	<b>Open-Book Quiz</b>
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**DIRECTIONS:** *Identify the letter of the choice that best answers the question.*

**1. At the beginning of "A Problem," the Uskovs send half their servants out to the theater or the circus, while the rest stay in the kitchen. Why do they do this?**

- A. to reward the servants for doing their jobs well
- B. to keep the servants from finding out what Sasha did
- C. to show Ivan Markovitch how wealthy and powerful the Uskovs are
- D. to give the Colonel's wife, her sister, and the governess some privacy

**2. What is the Colonel's reason for arguing against helping Sasha?**

- A. He believes they can successfully keep the story out of the papers.
- B. He believes Sasha will do the same thing again if they help him this time.
- C. He dislikes Ivan Markovitch and automatically disagrees with everything Ivan says.
- D. He knows that Sasha really wants to go to Siberia and does not want to stand in his way.

**3. Which of the following is NOT one of the reasons Ivan Markovitch gives for helping Sasha?**

- A. Sasha grew up without parents to guide him.
- B. Sasha's dead mother would want them to help him.
- C. Sasha's friend Handrikov said he would pay the debt.
- D. Sasha was already being punished by his guilty conscience.

**4. Why does the Colonel change his mind in "A Problem"?**

- A. Ivan makes him feel sorry for Sasha's dead mother by saying that he thinks she is present in the room, weeping for her boy.
- B. Sasha falls on his knees and begs the Colonel for help, which impresses the Colonel enough to change his mind.
- C. The Treasury official finally convinces the Colonel that it would be terrible if the story got into the newspapers.
- D. The Colonel's wife convinces him that Sasha is really a good boy who never meant to hurt anyone.

**5. Which of the following is an example of direct characterization in "A Problem"?**

- A. when Sasha thinks to himself that he is not a criminal
- B. when Ivan Markovitch speaks for Sasha to the other uncles
- C. when the author states that Sasha was sick of life and found it very hard
- D. when the Colonel leaves by another door so that he won't have to see Sasha

**6. Which of the following is an example of indirect characterization in "A Problem"?**

- A. when the Treasury official is described as taciturn and dull-witted
- B. when the reader discovers that Sasha is twenty-five years old
- C. when the author states that Ivan Markovitch is kind-hearted
- D. when Sasha thinks to himself that he is not a criminal

**7. In "A Problem," Sasha's character is revealed mostly through**

- A. description of his appearance.
- B. description of his personality.
- C. his thoughts and actions.
- D. what other characters think about him.

**8. How does Sasha feel about having been caught doing wrong in "A Problem"?**

- A. ashamed
- B. indifferent
- C. terrified
- D. depressed