FREN 2200 (Stephenson) Name:

French for Reading Knowledge Date:

### Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893)

Read Maupassant's excerpted short story "Le Horla" (190-197 on class handout or [click here](http://pages.uncc.edu/katherine-stephenson/wp-content/uploads/sites/221/2018/11/LeHorlaTxt.pdf)) while doing the exercises below.

# Pre-reading activities

# 1. Grammar

a. This literary text is unusual in that, because of the narrative frame, which is in the present tense, the protagonist’s narration of his story in the literary tense *le passé simple* (the past definite) is regularly interspersed with present-tense comments to the audience of the narrative frame (the doctors and scientists to whom he is telling his story). Do not let that confuse you about the past-tense narrative, which is primarily in the *passé simple* and the *imparfait* (the imperfect). This text provides you with good practice with the *imparfait*, both in differentiating between the its various translations and in seeing clearly the difference between it, the *passé composé*, and the *plus-que-parfait* (the pluperfect). The first paragraph of the second part of the story contains all these tenses and more. Choose the appropriate one of the 3 translations provided for the verbs in the translation below of this first paragraph and indicate what tense they are in.

*Winter* passed / was passing / had passed ( tense)*, spring* began / was beginning / had begun ( tense)*. Now, one morning, as I* walked / was walking / had walked ( tense) *near my rose garden, I distinctly* saw / was seeing / had seen ( tense)*, right by me, the stem of one of the most beautiful roses break as if an invisible hand had picked it, then the flower followed the curve that an arm would have traced in carrying it towards someone’s mouth, and* remained / was remaining / had remained ( tense) *suspended in the absolutely clear air, totally free-standing, still, horrifying, not 3 steps away from me.*

b. After this incident, the narrator has a revelation recounted in the paragraph below. Translate the verbs & verbal expressions below, paying special attention to the relation between the tenses.

Then I (*rentrai*) home, shaken to the core. Gentlemen, (*écoutez*) to me, I (*suis*) calm; I (*ne croyais pas*) in the supernatural, I (*n’y crois même pas*)

now, but, from that moment on, I (*fus*)

as certain as I am of night and day that near me was an invisible being who (*m’avait hanté*) , then (*m’avait quitté*) , and who (*revenait*) .

##### Reading

# Read the second part of “ Le Horla ” on pages 193-197 (from line 118 to the end). You may use a dictionary, but you should try to limit yourself to looking up no more than 10 words per page. This will force you to make choices and rely on the reading strategies you’re developing to guess at less essential words. You must learn how to identify words and sentences essential to understanding a text, and this comes with practice. As you read, do exercise 1 below as well to increase your understanding of what you are reading.

# Post-reading activities

## Comprehension

**1. Gaining meaning from structure.** It is important to understand how any text is organized and structured. In a narrative, there are particular sections, at the least a beginning, middle and end. After the protagonist has the revelation transcribe above, he discusses how the proof of the existence of this invisible being was obtained through a series of incidents. Indicate the various elements of that proof, in the order in which they are recounted, by completing the sentences below.

1. A glass

1. Doors
2. Milk
3. A page from the book he’s reading
4. When he runs over to it to try and grab hold of whatever it is, his chair

as if someone while trying to get away. Then his lamp and his window

1. He finally “sees” it when he , feels it reading over his shoulder, and he jumps up, turns around, and

but doesn’t

**2. Faites le choix le plus conforme au texte** (last page of handout or online text):

1. a b c d 2. a b c d 3. a b c d 4. a b c d

5. a b c d 6. a b c d 7. a b c d

##### Translation: Translate the following sentences of the text into good modern English. These sentences do not present a summary of the text but rather focus on covering specific grammar points we’ve studied or interesting translation problems. You may use a dictionary. The translation does not have to parallel the sophisticated style of the original, but must use good English. Do not produce a translation which sounds like French; i.e., do not be overly influenced by the French so that you, for example, retain French sentence structure or use close cognates when another word in English would make for better-sounding English. There are several phrases that you will have to find equivalent expressions in English for, that if you translate literally will sound foolish or nonsensical.

1. Je ne vis rien d’abord puis tout à coup il me sembla qu’une page du livre venait de tourner toute seule. Aucun souffle d’air n’était entré par la fenêtre (155-57).
2. … [I]l me semblait que cette eau glissait de gauche à droite, lentement, rendant plus précise mon image de seconde en seconde. Ce qui me cachait ne paraissait point posséder de contours nettement arrêtés, mais une sorte de transparence opaque s’éclaircissant peu à peu.

Je pus enfin me distinguer complètement ainsi que je fais chaque jour en me regardant.

Je l’avais vue (202-09).

1. Donc, messieurs, un être nouveau qui sans doute se multipliera bientôt comme nous nous sommes multipliés, vient d’apparaître sur la terre.

Ah! Vous souriez! Pourquoi? Parce que cet être invisible demeure invisible. Mais notre oeil, messieurs, est un organe tellement élémentaire qu’il peut distinguer à peine ce qui est indispensable à notre existence. Ce qui est trop petit lui échappe…. Il ignore les milliards de petites bêtes qui vivent dans une goutte d’eau (222-28).

1. Qui est-ce? Messieurs, c’est celui que la terre attend après l’Homme! Celui qui vient nous détrôner (241-42).
2. Je vous dis qu’il est venu. Il rôde inquiet lui-même, comme les premiers hommes, ignorant encore sa force et sa puissance, qu’il connaîtra bientôt, trop tôt (253-55).
3. Je ne sais si cet homme est fou ou si nous le sommes tous les deux… ou si… si notre successeur est réellement arrivé (269-70).