**Mr. Fegley**

**English:**

**Questions for “‘Repent Harlequin!’ Said the Ticktockman”**

1. Why do you think the author begins with a quotation from Henry David Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” essay?

2. What are the different reactions to the Harlequin at different socio-economic levels of society?

3. The author refers to several historical figures when he says that to the people ‘down below’ (the lowest-class people) the Harlequin was a hero, like Simon Bolivar (who helped free Latin America from rule by Spain), Napoleon, Robin Hood, Richard Bong (who is the U.S.’s highest-scoring air ace, having shot down at least forty Japanese planes during WWII), Jesus, and Jomo Kenyatta, the founder, Prime Minister, and President of Kenya, who fought against colonialism in Africa. The author also refers to the wealthy of this future society (who regard Harlequin as a menace) being similar to Shipwreck Kelly, a famous football player (and later coach) who was so nicknamed because he made a ‘shipwreck’ of opposing defensive lines. Given the kinds of figures to whom the author compares Harlequin—revolutionaries, rebels, founders of nations, war heroes—and the one figure to which the author compares those who are at the top, a man nicknamed for reducing his opposition to ‘shipwrecks,’ what could we infer will probably be the fate of the Harlequin, even before we’ve read the end of this story?

4. What is the official title of the Ticktockman, and why does no one call him Ticktockman to his mask?

5. From his air-boat, what does Harlequin observe about what this society values?

6. What does the Harlequin do to disrupt the order and punctuality of the shift workers at the Time-Motion Study Building, a disruption that has ripple effects far beyond that particular business?

7. Why do you think the author uses a deliberate run-on sentence to describe the scene of Harlequin dropping those jellybeans? What effect does this run-on sentence structure have on the tone of that scene and how does it reflect the Harlequin’s personality?

8. When Harlequin’s ordered to appear before the Ticktockman at 7 PM, what does Harlequin do and when does he do it?

9. The author abruptly shifts to telling us about the beginnings of this time-obsessed society. How does that society begin; how does it come about?

10. How does the Master Timekeeper aka Ticktockman keep everyone punctual?

11. Why is being punctual considered patriotic?

12. The author only mentions once that this society is waging a war. He does not mention with what other country or countries, or what the war is supposedly about, or any other details. It is only mentioned once. Looking at these three sentences, “The schedules had to be met. After all, there *was* a war on! But, wasn’t there always?”, what can we infer about this society?

13. How does Harlequin’s girlfriend Pretty Alice feel about his being late on purpose?

14. How does Harlequin fool the authorities at the 115th International Medical Association Invocation, and how do the physicians respond to his antics?

15. What ‘footnote’ scene is described in parentheses regarding Marshall Delahanty and his wife? 16. When Marshall’s wife sees and recognizes the turn-off notice, she prays it’s for her husband or one of the kids and is not for her; how do you feel about her reaction?

17. When Marshall’s wife opens the turn-off notice and sees it’s for him, not for her, what is the significance of the line “The next trooper in the line had caught the bullet”?

18. Why was it futile for Marshall Delahanty to run away?

19. Oftentimes, authors let you make up your own mind about how to feel about what they have written. At the end of this little section about Marshall Delahanty, the author speaks directly to the reader and tells the reader not to laugh and says, “It isn’t funny.” How do you feel about the author doing this?

20. What does Harlequin say to the shoppers at the Efficiency Shopping Center?

21. How do you feel about the author doing this?

22. Why are the construction workers reluctant to help apprehend Harlequin when they are ordered to do so by the office of the Master Timekeeper?

23. Why is it that no one was injured in the debacle that happens when the construction workers tried to capture Harlequin?

24. The spectacle of the (unsuccessful) attempt to capture Harlequin attracts quite a crowd; what are the results of this

25. What methods do the authorities use to capture Harlequin aka Everett C. Marm?

26. If Everett Marm’s been late a total of sixty-three years, what can we infer about how long people generally live (assuming that they are always on time) in this future society in the twenty-fourth century?

27. Why doesn’t Ticktockman just ‘turn off’ (kill) Everett?

28. What do they do to Everett Marm, and why?

29. What is the effect on the public of seeing Everett Marm on the communications web saying he had been wrong before and that it is good to conform and be punctual?

30. It was often said of Benito Mussolini, the former police officer who created Fascism and became the Fascist dictator of Italy, that he made Italy’s trains run on time. In fact, this is not actually true; Italy’s trains were still occasionally late, even under the rule of Mussolini (although the Italian train system was improved from its state after World War I, but most of that was done before the Fascists came to power). So instead of being an example of the ‘efficiency’ of Fascism, this claim has now come to be associated with the exaggerated claims, dishonesty, and hypocrisy of totalitarian regimes. How is this reflected in the final lines of this short story?

31. Someone points out to the Master Timekeeper that he himself was late; the Master Timekeeper dismisses this. He can get away with being late; no one will be able to hold him accountable for his hypocrisy or his lateness. How do you feel when people are late for things that you have planned?

32. If in the future human beings can live much longer than they do now due to advances in medicine/technology, as seems to be the case in this short story, how do you think that would affect people’s perceptions of and feelings about time? If people were able to live for two hundred or more years, and feel young and healthy and vibrant for the majority of that time, how would they look at and feel about time itself?