

PART B: READING COMPREHENSION
SYNTHESIS TEXT 1

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following excerpt from “Circus in Town,” and answer the multiple-choice questions. For each question, select the **best** answer and record your choice on the **Answer Sheet** provided.

Canadian author Sinclair Ross was writing during the Depression in the 1930s.
In his fiction, he reveals the difficulties of farming life on the Prairies.

adapted from **Circus in Town**

by Sinclair Ross

- 1 It was Jenny’s first circus. A girl in purple tights, erect on a galloping horse, a red-coated brass band, a clown, an elephant ripped through the middle. “And did you see the elephant?” she asked her brother Tom, who had found the piece of poster in the street when he was in town marketing the butter and eggs. “Was it really there? And the clown?”
- 2 But the ecstatic, eleven-year-old quiver in her voice, and the way she pirouetted on her bare toes as he led the horse out of the buggy shafts, made him feel that perhaps in picking up the poster he had been unworthy of his own seventeen years; so with an offhand shrug he drawled, “Everybody said it wouldn’t amount to much. A few ponies and an elephant or two—but what’s an elephant?”
- 3 She wheeled from him, resenting his attempt to scoff away such wonders. The bit of poster had spun a new world before her, excited her, given wild, soaring impetus to her imagination; and now, without in the least understanding herself, she wanted the excitement and the soaring, even though it might stab and rack her.
- 4 It was supper-time, her father just in from the field and turning the horses loose at the water-trough, so off she sped to greet him, her bare legs flashing, her throat too tight to cry out, passionate to communicate her excitement, to find response.
- 5 But the skittish old roan Billie took fright at the fluttering poster, and her father shouted for her to watch what she was doing and keep away from the horses. For a minute she stood quite still, cold, impaled by the rebuff; then again she wheeled, and, as swiftly as before, ran to the house.
- 6 A wave of dark heat, hotter than the summer heat, struck her at the door. “Look—” she pierced it shrilly— “what Tom brought me—a circus,” and with the poster outstretched she sprang to the stove where her mother was frying pork.
- 7 There was no rebuff this time. Instead, an incredible kind of pity—pity of all things on a day like this. “Never mind, Jenny.” A hot hand gentle on her cheek a minute. “Your day’s going to come. You won’t spend all your life among chickens and cows or I’m not the woman I think I am!” And then, bewilderingly, an angry clatter of stovelids that made her shrink away dismayed, in sudden dread of her father’s coming and the storm that was to break.