

## Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following passage is from the novel *Middlemarch* by George Eliot, the pen name of Mary Ann Evans (1819–1880). In the passage, Rosamond and Tertius Lydgate, a recently married couple, confront financial difficulties.

Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how Eliot portrays these two characters and their complex relationship as husband and wife. You may wish to consider such literary devices as narrative perspective and selection of detail.

Rosamond coloured deeply. “Have you not asked Papa for money?” she said as soon as she could speak.

“No.”

Line “Then I must ask him!” she said, releasing her  
5 hands from Lydgate’s and rising to stand at two yards’ distance from him.

“No, Rosy,” said Lydgate decisively. “It is too late to do that. The inventory will be begun tomorrow. Remember it is a mere security; it will make no  
10 difference; it is a temporary affair. I insist upon it that your father shall not know unless I choose to tell him,” added Lydgate with a more peremptory emphasis.

This certainly was unkind, but Rosamond had  
15 thrown him back on evil expectation as to what she would do in the way of quiet, steady disobedience. The unkindness seemed unpardonable to her; she was not given to weeping and disliked it, but now her chin and lips began to tremble and the tears welled up.

20 Perhaps it was not possible for Lydgate, under the double stress of outward material difficulty and of his own proud resistance to humiliating consequences, to imagine fully what this sudden trial was to a young creature who had known nothing but indulgence and  
25 whose dreams had all been of new indulgence, more exactly to her taste. But he did wish to spare her as much as he could, and her tears cut him to the heart. He could not speak again immediately, but Rosamond did not go on sobbing; she tried to conquer her  
30 agitation and wiped away her tears, continuing to look before her at the mantelpiece.

“Try not to grieve, darling,” said Lydgate, turning his eyes up towards her. That she had chosen to move  
35 away from him in this moment of her trouble made everything harder to say, but he must absolutely go on. “We must brace ourselves to do what is necessary. It is I who have been in fault; I ought to have seen that I could not afford to live in this way. But many things have told against me in my practice, and it really just  
40 now has ebbed to a low point. I may recover it, but in the meantime we must pull up—we must change our way of living. We shall weather it. When I have given this security I shall have time to look about me; and you are so clever that if you turn your mind to  
45 managing you will school me into carefulness. I have been a thoughtless rascal about squaring prices—but come, dear, sit down and forgive me.”

Lydgate was bowing his neck under the yoke like a creature who had talons but who had reason too,  
50 which often reduces us to meekness. When he had spoken the last words in an imploring tone, Rosamond returned to the chair by his side. His self-blame gave her some hope that he would attend to her opinion, and she said, “Why can you not put off having the inventory made? You can send the men away  
55 tomorrow when they come.”

“I shall not send them away,” said Lydgate, the peremptoriness rising again. Was it of any use to explain?

60 “If we left Middlemarch, there would of course be a sale, and that would do as well.”

“But we are not going to leave Middlemarch.”

“I am sure, Tertius, it would be much better to do so. Why can we not go to London? Or near Durham,  
65 where your family is known?”

“We can go nowhere without money, Rosamond.”

“Your friends would not wish you to be without money. And surely these odious tradesmen might be made to understand that and to wait if you would  
70 make proper representations to them.”

“This is idle, Rosamond,” said Lydgate angrily. “You must learn to take my judgement on questions you don’t understand. I have made necessary  
75 arrangements, and they must be carried out. As to friends, I have no expectations whatever from them and shall not ask them for anything.”

Rosamond sat perfectly still. The thought in her mind was that if she had known how Lydgate would behave, she would never have married him.

80 “We have no time to waste now on unnecessary words, dear,” said Lydgate, trying to be gentle again. “There are some details that I want to consider with

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you. Dover says he will take a good deal of the plate  
back again, and any of the jewellery we like. He  
85 really behaves very well.”  
“Are we to go without spoons and forks then?” said  
Rosamond, whose very lips seemed to get thinner  
with the thinness of her utterance. She was  
determined to make no further resistance or  
90 suggestions.