Mr Jones
by Truman Capote

Read the following story. At each response, write your ideas, questions, and predictions before passing your story along.

During the winter of 1945 I lived for several months in a rooming house in Brooklyn. It was not a shabby place, but a pleasantly furnished, elderly brownstone kept hospital-neat by its owners, two maiden sisters.

Mr. Jones lived in the room next to mine. My room was the smallest in the house, his the largest, a nice big sunshiny room, which was just as well, for Mr. Jones never left it: all his needs, meals, shopping, laundry, were attended to by the middle-aged landladies. Also, he was not without visitors; on the average, a half-dozen various persons, man and women, young, old, in-between, visited his room each day, from early morning until late in the evening. He was not a drug dealer or a fortuneteller; no, they came just to talk to him and apparently they made him small gifts of money for his conversation and advice. If not, he had no obvious means of support.

Response #1:
Thoughts: I never had a conversation with Mr. Jones himself, a circumstance I've often since regretted. He was a handsome man, about forty. Slender, black-haired, and with a distinctive face: a pale, lean face, high cheekbones, and with a birthmark on his left cheek, a small scarlet defect shaped like a star. He wore gold-rimmed glasses with pitch-black lenses: he was blind, and crippled, too - according to the sisters, the use of his legs had been denied him by a childhood accident, and he could not move without crutches. He was always dressed in a crisply pressed dark grey or blue three-piece suit and a subdued tie - as though about to set off for a Wall Street office. However, as I've said, he never left the premises. Simply sat in his cheerful room in a comfortable chair and received visitors. I had no option of why they came to see him, these rather ordinary-looking folk, or what they talked about, and I was far too concerned with my own affairs to much wonder over it.

Ideas: When I did, I imagined that his friends had found in him an intelligent, kindly man, a good listener in whom to confide and consult with over their troubles: a cross between a priest and a therapist.

Predictions: Mr. Jones had a telephone. He was the only tenant with a private line. It rang constantly, often after midnight and as early as six in the morning.

Response #2:
Thoughts: 

Ideas: 

Predictions: 
I moved to Manhattan. Several months later I returned to the house to collect a box of books I had stored there. While the landladies offered me tea and cakes in their lace-curtained "parlor", I inquired of Mr. Jones.

The women lowered their eyes. Clearing her throat, one said: "It's in the hand of the police."

The other offered: "We've reported him as missing person."

The first added: "Last month, twenty-six days ago, my sister carried up Mr. Jones's breakfast, as usual. He wasn't there. All his belongings were there. But he was gone.

"It's odd-"

"-how a man totally blind, a helpless crippled."

Response #3:

Thoughts:

Ideas:

Predictions:

Ten years pass.

Now it is a zero-cold December afternoon, and I am in Moscow. I am riding in a subway car. There are only a few other passengers. One of them is a man sitting opposite to me, a man wearing boots, a thick long coat and a Russian-style fur cap. He has bright eyes, blue as a peacock's. After a doubtful instant, I simply stared, for even without the black glasses, there was no mistaking that lean distinctive face, those high cheekbones with the single scarlet star-shaped birthmark.

I was just about to cross the aisle and speak to him when the train pulled into a station, and Mr. Jones, on a pair of fine sturdy legs, stood up and strode out of the car. Swiftly, the train door closed behind him.

Response #4:

Thoughts:

Ideas:

Predictions: