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Textbook Case

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Textbook Case: Questions to consider regarding our last phone call

Susan Holbrook

1. What was the conflict of the conversation? Can you state it one sentence?
2. You said "Can't live with you, can't live without you." Was that an instance of irony, paradox, or cliché? Explain.
3. Metaphors convey information beyond what we get from denotative language. For example, while every human being *has* an asshole, one can't literally *be* an asshole, yet the word was used as if this were so. How did this metaphor add to the conversation?
4. How did our conversation differ from Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*? How was it the same?
5. What would we lose if we were to paraphrase the conversation?
6. What do you think you meant by "I'd prefer not to see you anymore?" What characteristics might you have in common with Melville's *Bartleby*?
7. How did you feel when the main character, me, fell silent? What do you think I was thinking?
8. How did punctuation affect the overall meaning of the conversation?
9. One way to view this conversation is as a lover's spat. How might this be appropriate? How might the conversation be seen as more serious than this?
10. Note the use of "mustard" and "bastard". Why did I use a half-rhyme (or "slant rhyme") there?
11. Do you think I will forgive you? Cite evidence from the conversation to support your answer.

12. Which one of us would be most usefully defined using Miller's concept of tragic heroism? Explain.
13. What was the role of the "goat-footed / balloonMan" in the conversation?
14. One of the moral questions addressed in our conversation is this: Which is more damaging to the spirit, deception of others or self-deception? Well?
15. Recall your closing speech. Was this dialogue or soliloquy? Explain. To me.
16. Choose a character from *The Glass Menagerie*. Was I such a bad girlfriend after all?