

Comprehension Questions for *Palm Springs*

Check your comprehension of the following expressions.

When we see Nyles and Sarah first speak, Sarah says, **“That’s very forward of you.”** What does she mean?

1. You’re romantically aggressive.
2. You’re emotionally abusive.
3. You’re very politically progressive.
4. You’re thinking too much of the future.
5. You have a real plan, don’t you?

Roy makes a gesture and says, **“What do you say, do you wanna dance a little bit?”**, what does he mean?

1. Do you want to leave this party?
2. Do you want to sleep with me?
3. Do you want to fight me for money?
4. Do you want to use drugs with me?
5. Do you want to enjoy the party?

Sarah says, **“Nobody can stand the idea of being alone, so we buy into this pageantry and celebrate... it’s bullshit.”** What does she mean?

1. Love isn’t real, but we are scared of being alone so we create fancy love stories to pretend it is.
2. Love is difficult, so people like to pretend everything is okay and beautiful even when it’s so hard.
3. Love is fake, but people are scared of loneliness, so we have fancy events like weddings to distract ourselves from the truth.
4. Everyone wants to be alone, but we keep falling in love against our better judgment.

Nyles says that **“Sarah treats her life like it’s her own private soap opera.”** What does this mean?

1. Sarah always wants to “stay clean” and avoid trouble with people.
2. Sarah “washes away” anyone and anything that complicates her life.
3. Sarah is overly concerned with the moral cleanness of everyone around her. .
4. Sarah constantly fills her life with cheap drama.

Roy says, **“That little stint in the hospital really opened my eyes, though...”** What does he mean?

1. My time in the hospital showed me the truth.
2. My time working in the hospital helped me to understand the truth.
3. Visiting the hospital helped me to discover the truth about this time loop.
4. Staying in the hospital gave me the break I needed.
5. I learned a lot from the doctors and nurses at the hospital.

Nyles says to Sarah, **“Less mundane. That’s a super-low bar, that’s a great place to start.”** What does he mean?

1. I’m confident that I can make your life better in many ways.
2. I’m scared, but I’m willing to try make your life a little less boring.
3. Normal is a good place to start in a relationship.
4. Less boring? Let’s go get a drink and start with that.
5. You have very low expectations, which is a good thing.

Discussion Questions for *Palm Springs*

1. Do you consider this movie Science Fiction? In what way(s) do you think it is or isn't SF? In what ways does it use tropes from other genres? In what ways does it combine SF tropes with tropes from other genres?
2. How is Sarah different from a typical American SF protagonist, and how is she different from a typical SF protagonist?
3. Life in the time-loop is very different from life outside of the time-loop, in ways that sound enviable at first: you cannot die in the loop, you always get the chance to try again, you never have to work... However, over time Nyles and Sarah experience the time loop as a form of torture. How should we read the time-loop itself?
4. One night, Nyles and Sarah see dinosaurs walking past on the horizon. How should we read this event?
5. At a pivotal moment in the movie, Sarah asks Nyles to try leave it with her, and he asks her to stay in it with him. What do you make of this exchange, and what does it reveal about each character?
6. Write your own question here:

Whatever questions you don't answer as a group—and also, the questions you *do* answer as a group—continue to think and ruminate on them.

Creative Exercise

Time-loop narratives are not common, but they're also not rare. Consider Istvan Csicsery-Ronay's idea of SF borrowing plot-structures from other genres. What is a genre that you've never seen featured in a time-loop narrative, but which you think would be interesting? Sketch out some ideas for a story or film using a time-loop that uses tropes from this other genre. Think about the following aspects of your story:

- a. major characters
- b. major plot events
- c. major conflicts
- d. important places or locations