

Questions 43–50 refer to the following passage.

Sapphira and the Slave Girl was the last novel of Willa Cather's illustrious literary career. Although the story takes place in
 Line 1856, well before her own birth, she drew
 (5) heavily on both vivid childhood memories and tales handed down by older relatives to describe life in rural northern Virginia in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Of Cather's novels, *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* is the one most concerned with providing an overall picture of day-to-day life in a specific era. A number of the novel's characters, it would seem, are included in the story only because they are representative of the
 (10) types of people found in 19th century rural Virginia; indeed, a few of them play no part whatsoever in the unfolding of the plot. For instance, we are introduced to a poor white woman, Mandy Ringer, who is portrayed as
 (15) intelligent and content, despite the fact that she has no formal education and must toil constantly in the fields.

The title, however, accurately reflects that the novel is mainly about slavery. Cather's
 (25) attitude toward this institution may best be summed up as somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, she displays almost total indifference to the legal and political aspects of slavery when she misidentifies certain
 (30) crucial dates in its growth and development. She never really offers a direct condemnation of slavery. Yet the evil that was slavery gets through to us in her typically subtle ways. Characters like Mrs. Blake who
 (35) oppose the institution are portrayed in a sympathetic light. Furthermore, the suffering of the slaves themselves and the

petty, nasty and often cruel behavior of the slave owners are painted in stark terms.

43. What is the main topic of this passage?
 (A) Cather's anti-slavery stance
 (B) The backdrop of Cather's last novel
 (C) Cather's strangely titled novel
 (D) Life in the Virginia country
44. The author refers to *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* as
 (A) a heroic tale of the Civil War
 (B) a sweeping epic of the Old South
 (C) using Cather's personal recollections
 (D) a political treatise on slavery
45. The word *vivid* in line 5 is closest in meaning to
 (A) disturbing
 (B) buried
 (C) forgotten
 (D) clear
46. What is NOT true of Mandy Ringer?
 (A) She is a slave.
 (B) She is intelligent.
 (C) She is uneducated.
 (D) She is poor.