What Remains

Track how imagery, setting, and a repeated object shape meaning in a literary text.

ELA.11.R.1 "Reading Prose and Poetry"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline two details that make the theater seem human, circle each reference to the ticket cutter, and number three clues about why the father came to the theater, so you can track how the author develops the passage's meaning.

The Last Showing

1 On the morning the Rialto Theater was scheduled for demolition, I slipped through a gap in the plywood fence with my father's old camera under my coat. Inside, the lobby smelled of rain-soaked plaster and the sharp sweetness of popcorn that had vanished years ago. Sunlight fell through the broken marquee, laying pale letters across the tile: NOW, then a fragment of SHOW. I photographed the words before a gust disturbed the dust. It rose around my shoes like a small audience leaving its seats, and for a moment the empty building seemed to be waiting for an announcement.

2 My father had ushered there as a teenager, but he never spoke about the theater without changing the subject. When I asked why, he pointed to a scorched patch above the ticket booth. "The fire started backstage," he said. "Nobody died, but the town acted as if the place had betrayed it." His voice was flat, yet he rubbed the brass ticket cutter hanging from his key ring. I noticed that he had brought it with him. While workers stacked orange barriers along the curb, he stood outside the fence, facing the boarded entrance as though he expected someone to hand him a stub.

3 Before noon, a crane swung its metal jaw above the roof. My father finally stepped through the gap in the fence and placed the ticket cutter on the lobby floor. I wanted to stop him, but he shook his head. Then he asked for my camera. He framed the cutter beneath the broken sign and pressed the shutter. "Now it has a place to go," he said. When the first wall fell, the letters on my screen still spelled NOW. I understood that he had not come to save the theater. He had come to choose what its ending would keep.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1 How does the comparison of the dust to "a small audience leaving its seats" affect the reader's view of the empty theater?

2 What do the father's actions, especially changing the subject and rubbing the ticket cutter, reveal about his connection to the theater?

3 Explain how the ticket cutter changes from paragraph 2 to paragraph 3. What does this change suggest?

4 Why is the word "NOW" important at both the beginning and the end of the passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose one detail other than the ticket cutter that develops from the beginning to the end of the passage. In exactly two sentences, state a claim about its meaning and explain how it develops an idea about memory or loss.

What Remains

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline two details that make the theater seem human, circle each reference to the ticket cutter, and number three clues about why the father came to the theater, so you can track how the author develops the passage's meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the comparison of the dust to "a small audience leaving its seats" affect the reader's view of the empty theater?	**It makes the theater seem alive with the memory of its former crowds, emphasizing the loss created by its emptiness.**
2	What do the father's actions, especially changing the subject and rubbing the ticket cutter, reveal about his connection to the theater?	**He has a painful but meaningful personal attachment to the theater and its history.**
3	Explain how the ticket cutter changes from paragraph 2 to paragraph 3. What does this change suggest?	**It changes from a private object he carries on his key ring to an object he deliberately photographs. This suggests that he is choosing to preserve the memory of the theater rather than the building itself.**
4	Why is the word "NOW" important at both the beginning and the end of the passage?	**At first, it is a broken fragment from the theater's sign. At the end, it remains in the photograph, connecting the theater's destruction to the father's choice to preserve a moment from its past.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The fence functions as a boundary between the father and a past he has avoided. His movement through its gap shows that he finally enters the memory in order to preserve part of it, not to reclaim the building.

Accept supported interpretations that explain how a specific craft detail, such as the fence, dust, marquee, camera, or setting, develops meaning. Responses should use accurate passage evidence and connect that evidence to an idea about memory, loss, or preservation.