# The Wrong Cue

Notice what readers know before a character does.

**RL.8.6** "Analyze characters' and readers' perspectives and how the differences create effects, including but not limited to suspense, humor and empathy."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two details you know before Tessa does, circle a moment when she acts on a different belief, and number the moments when that difference makes you expect trouble or laugh.

### The Potato Knight

1 From the wings, Luis watched the painted castle wall creep across the stage. Behind it, a wheel snagged on a cable, and the cardboard tower began to tip. Luis, the stage manager, slapped a red paper square onto the light box. At rehearsal, everyone had agreed that red meant stop until the wall was steady. Tessa had missed that meeting because she was getting a tooth filled. Now, waiting behind the curtain in her knight costume, she saw the red glow and grinned. "My cue," she whispered.

2 Tessa charged onto the stage, dragging a wooden sword that was longer than her arm. Luis waved both hands, but she mistook his frantic motions for encouragement. "Fear not, citizens!" she shouted to the empty seats. The castle wall leaned farther. In the front row, her little brother Ben held up the program he had made for her, its cover showing a knight who looked suspiciously like a potato. Tessa bowed to him, still facing away from the wall. Luis lunged for the snagged cable.

3 The cable came free with a sharp snap. Tessa finally turned, just as the tower folded toward her. She ducked behind her oversized shield, and the cardboard crashed at her feet. For a moment, nobody spoke. Then Ben called, "The potato knight survives!" Tessa stared at the red light, then at Luis. He explained the signal she had missed. Her face burned, but she laughed with the others. The next afternoon, she taped a small note beside the light box: RED MEANS WAIT. She did not miss another cue.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the red light mean to Luis and the reader, and what does Tessa think it means?

2. As Tessa bows to Ben, what does the reader know that she does not? How does this difference create suspense?

3. How does Tessa's reading of Luis's waving create humor for readers?

4. Tessa feels embarrassed after Luis explains the signal. What did readers already know that might make them feel sympathy instead of blaming her?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about a new moment at the school play. First reveal something readers know but a character does not, then show the character acting on a mistaken belief, and end by explaining how the difference creates suspense, humor, or empathy.

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## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details you know before Tessa does, circle a moment when she acts on a different belief, and number the moments when that difference makes you expect trouble or laugh. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | What does the red light mean to Luis and the reader, and what does Tessa think it means? | **Luis and the reader know red means stop until the wall is steady. Tessa thinks it is her cue to enter.** |
| 2 | As Tessa bows to Ben, what does the reader know that she does not? How does this difference create suspense? | **The reader knows the castle wall is tipping behind Tessa. Her bow delays her noticing it, so readers wonder whether she will move before it falls.** |
| 3 | How does Tessa's reading of Luis's waving create humor for readers? | **Readers understand that Luis is warning Tessa to stop, but she takes his frantic waving as encouragement and performs more boldly.** |
| 4 | Tessa feels embarrassed after Luis explains the signal. What did readers already know that might make them feel sympathy instead of blaming her? | **Readers knew Tessa missed the rehearsal meeting because she was getting a tooth filled, so she had not learned what the red light meant.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before the next scene, readers see that the dragon costume's tail has come loose, but Niko does not. He stomps proudly onto the stage, sure the tail is sweeping behind him. He bows while it slides off and lands beside his feet. The difference creates humor because readers expect the costume to fall apart while Niko performs with complete confidence.

Accept supported interpretations of the effects, including both suspense and humor in a single moment. For the open task, look for a clear difference between what readers and the character know, an action based on the character's belief, and a fitting explanation of its effect.