When Lights Go Out

Trace how a character's choice changes the story.

RL.4.3 "Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama to explain the impact on the plot, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle a detail that shows how Nia feels, then underline one thing she does and draw an arrow to an event her action causes.

The School Play

1. On the night of the school play, the gym was packed. Nia, the stage manager, stood behind a curtain with her cue cards. She liked knowing exactly what would happen next. When the lights flickered, she checked the flashlight in her pocket, but she hoped she would not need it. Onstage, the actors began a scene about travelers lost in a forest.

2. Just as an actor called, "Which way is home?" the gym went dark. The actors fell silent, and someone in the crowd gasped. Nia's hands shook. She could wait for a teacher, but the travelers would be stuck in the middle of their scene. "The moon is out!" she called, sweeping her flashlight across the stage. Its beam reached the actors.

3. One actor looked up and whispered, "Follow the moon." The others stepped into Nia's beam and finished the scene without the stage lights. From behind the curtain, Nia moved the beam along their path. When the lights came back, the audience clapped louder than before. Nia still liked her cue cards, but she tucked the flashlight beside them, ready for surprises.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why is the blackout especially hard for Nia? Use a detail about her thoughts or feelings.

2. How does the blackout change what happens onstage? Give two details from the story.

3. Why does Nia call, “The moon is out!” instead of waiting for a teacher? How does her choice move the play forward?

4. What do Nia's actions after the actor says, “Follow the moon,” show about her? How do they help the scene end?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine Nia does not have a flashlight. Write 3 or 4 sentences about a different choice she could make, how the actors would respond, and how the play would end. Use one detail from the story to make your new ending fit.

ANSWER KEY

When Lights Go Out

GRADE 4 · RL.4.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle a detail that shows how Nia feels, then underline one thing she does and draw an arrow to an event her action causes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why is the blackout especially hard for Nia? Use a detail about her thoughts or feelings.	**Nia likes knowing what will happen next, but the blackout is unexpected. Her shaking hands show that she is nervous.**
2	How does the blackout change what happens onstage? Give two details from the story.	**The actors fall silent when the gym goes dark. They then follow Nia's flashlight beam and finish the scene without the stage lights.**
3	Why does Nia call, “The moon is out!” instead of waiting for a teacher? How does her choice move the play forward?	**She does not want the actors to be stuck in the middle of the scene. Her call gives an actor an idea, and the actors continue.**
4	What do Nia's actions after the actor says, “Follow the moon,” show about her? How do they help the scene end?	**Nia keeps helping even though her hands shook earlier. She moves the beam along the actors' path so they can finish the scene.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Without her flashlight, Nia would remember that the actors were playing travelers lost in a forest. She would call, “Listen, the village bell is ringing!” and tap a metal chair from behind the curtain. The actors would stay still and say they had found their way home by following the bell. When the lights returned, the audience would clap for a scene that continued in the dark.

For the marking job, accept any feeling detail and an action linked to a reasonable later effect. For Your Turn, accept a different choice that fits the play and clearly changes what the actors do and how the scene ends.