When the Moon Fell

A model narrative about suspense, choice, and trust

11.3.W.1 "Students will compose narratives reflecting real or imagined experiences that: • include engaging plots involving well-developed, complex characters resolving conflicts • establish narrator(s) that enhance(s) the narrative • are..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the moment the story moves into the past, then number the events in the order they happened. Circle each use of "hold" and notice how its meaning changes.

The Moon Above the Stage

1 The cardboard moon began to tilt while Mara was singing beneath it. From the lighting booth, I watched its silver edge drift across the dark curtain, one slow inch at a time. The audience saw a beautiful eclipse; I saw the cable rubbing against a metal hook. My hand hovered over the headset button. Mara had spent six months preparing this performance, and a visiting director sat in the third row. If I called a stop, everyone would look up. If I stayed silent, the moon might fall. Hold, I told myself.

2 An hour earlier, I had found the moon's safety clip lying on the floor beside the ladder. I picked it up, cold and strangely light, and called to Mara. She was practicing her entrance, counting breaths under her breath. Her father had taken an extra shift to buy a train ticket to tonight's performance, and she wanted this one chance to matter. I knew the set crew could check the clip, but that might delay the show. "It's probably from the spare," I said when she asked what I had found. Hold, I told myself.

3 Now a thin snap cut through Mara's last note. I pressed the headset button. "Stop the show. Clear the stage," I said, and my voice sounded louder than the orchestra. Mara stepped back as the moon struck the boards with a hollow crack. For a moment she stared toward the booth, not at the fallen prop. After the crew cleared it, she sang the final verse under bare lights. Backstage, I showed her the clip. "You should have told me," she said. I wanted to explain the ticket, the director, everything. Instead, I said, "I know." This time, I did not hold anything back.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the narrator begin with the tilting moon instead of the earlier discovery of the clip?

2. How does the first-person narrator reveal both care for Mara and a failure to protect her?

3. Choose two precise details from the scene. How does each help you imagine the danger or the narrator's reaction?

4. How does the meaning of "hold" change between the first two paragraphs and the final sentence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one 80-105-word first-person paragraph about a different conflict. Start at a tense moment, flash back to an earlier choice, then return to a decision that changes a relationship. Include a sensory detail, dialogue, and a repeated word or phrase whose meaning shifts.

ANSWER KEY # When the Moon Fell

GRADE 11 · 11.3.W.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the moment the story moves into the past, then number the events in the order they happened. Circle each use of "hold" and notice how its meaning changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the narrator begin with the tilting moon instead of the earlier discovery of the clip?	**Beginning with the tilting moon creates immediate suspense. The flashback then reveals why the narrator hesitates to stop the show.**
2	How does the first-person narrator reveal both care for Mara and a failure to protect her?	**The narrator knows how much the performance means to Mara and fears delaying it, but hides the clip instead of asking the crew to check it.**
3	Choose two precise details from the scene. How does each help you imagine the danger or the narrator's reaction?	**The moon's edge moves "one slow inch at a time," making its fall feel imminent. The "thin snap" signals that the danger has become urgent.**
4	How does the meaning of "hold" change between the first two paragraphs and the final sentence?	**At first, "hold" means staying silent and delaying action. In the final sentence, the narrator stops withholding the truth from Mara.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The recorder's red light blinked while Ana waited for my answer. Clean, I thought, staring at the polished microphone. Yesterday I had cut her account of the eviction from our podcast because I feared the judges would call it political. The edit made our story smoother and her voice smaller. Now the studio smelled of warm plastic, and Ana asked, "Did you remove what I said about my home?" I could still blame the software. Instead, I stopped the recording and admitted what I had done. Clean, I realized, meant leaving her words in. Ana slid her headphones toward me again.

Accept other interpretations supported by specific language from the passage. For the original paragraph, check the sequence, the narrator's competing motives, and whether the repeated phrase gains a new meaning.