Three Sheets

How a garden problem reveals character and theme

5.3.R.3 "Students will determine how literary elements contribute to the meaning of a literary text: • setting • plot • characters (i.e., protagonist, antagonist) • characterization • conflict • theme"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two setting details that create the problem, circle Mina's plan, and number two moments that show how Theo's actions change.

Before the Frost

1 At the school garden, the air smelled of damp soil, and a sharp wind rattled the fence. By morning, frost could ruin the basil and pepper plants the class hoped to sell at Saturday's market. Mina hurried in with a bundle of old sheets. Across the beds, Theo was piling every sheet over his prize peppers. "The basil can wait," he said. "These peppers won the fair."

2 Mina wanted to yank a sheet away, but she saw that Theo's pepper stems were shaking in the wind. She remembered how he had stayed late to water the whole garden during the hot week. "Both crops need help," she said. "What if we tie one sheet across the fence to block the wind, then spread the others over the beds?" Theo frowned. There were only three sheets.

3 Together they fastened one sheet to the fence and laid the other two over both beds, tucking the edges under stones. At dawn, Mina lifted a corner. The leaves beneath were still green. Theo held out a basket for the basil and said, "Let's put both crops on the market table." Mina grinned as they worked side by side. The garden seemed bigger than it had the day before.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the garden's setting create a problem for Mina and Theo?

2. How do Theo's words and actions at the start make him an obstacle for Mina?

3. What does Mina's memory of Theo watering the garden show about her, and how does it affect her choice?

4. How does Theo's action at the end help show a message of the story?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a different ending that begins after Theo frowns at Mina's plan. In four sentences, show a new choice Mina makes, how Theo responds, and what their actions suggest about sharing.

ANSWER KEY # Three Sheets

GRADE 5 · 5.3.R.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two setting details that create the problem, circle Mina's plan, and number two moments that show how Theo's actions change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the garden's setting create a problem for Mina and Theo?	**Frost could ruin the plants before the market, so Mina and Theo need to protect them that night.**
2	How do Theo's words and actions at the start make him an obstacle for Mina?	**Theo piles every sheet over his peppers and says the basil can wait, leaving nothing to protect the basil.**
3	What does Mina's memory of Theo watering the garden show about her, and how does it affect her choice?	**Mina recognizes that Theo cares about the garden, even though he is being unfair. Instead of taking a sheet, she suggests a plan to protect both crops.**
4	How does Theo's action at the end help show a message of the story?	**Theo offers to put both crops on the market table. His change shows that sharing and working together can help everyone.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Mina asked Theo to put one sheet over each bed and use the third wherever leaves were still exposed. Theo refused until Mina handed him the first sheet for his peppers. He then covered the basil while she tucked the third sheet around both beds. By morning, both crops were safe, and Mina knew that sharing had protected more than one person's work.

Accept answers that connect a detail from the story to its effect on the problem, a character's choice, or the message. For the alternate ending, look for a new choice, Theo's response, and a clear idea about sharing.