

The Lantern Choice

Analyze devices in a literary turning point.

11.RL.2.C "Critique how authors use key literary devices (e.g., imagery, personification, symbolism) to contribute to the meaning of a text, including its character development, theme, conflict, and archetypes."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the wind description in paragraph 1 and the gold-eye image in paragraph 2. Circle the two statements that call the light a promise. Use these details to judge how the devices shape Mara's decision.

The Last Lantern

- ① At dusk, Mara climbed the abandoned lighthouse with her grandfather's brass lantern beneath her coat. Below, the harbor boats tilted in mud like tired animals. During the war, the town council had forbidden signals toward the coast: a light meant for friends could also guide an enemy patrol toward the town. Yet Mara's brother, a medic on a supply vessel, had promised to arrive before the first frost. Wind pleaded at the broken windows and tugged her sleeves, as if the tower wanted to turn her back. On the top landing, she crouched behind a stone wall that concealed her from the sea and struck a match.
- ② The flame opened a small gold eye, lighting only the sheltered corner. Mara remembered her grandfather, who had tended this lantern during storms and called its light "a promise made visible." She had come to place it in the seaward window so her brother could find the harbor. Its warm circle rested on her hands; beyond the wall, darkness seemed to wait for her answer. One step would carry the lantern into view. She understood that the same signal might guide her brother to shelter or expose the families sleeping below. Her fingers tightened around the handle.
- ③ A bell sounded twice from the channel. Mara rose, then stopped before stepping out of the sheltered corner. She could not tell whose ship had rung. She lowered the lantern, extinguished it, and ran down the stairs to wake the council. She would not become the lone rescuer from the old tales, acting on courage alone. If the light was a promise, she decided, the promise belonged to the whole town, and the town had to choose what it would risk.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** How does the personified wind strengthen Mara's conflict? Cite its human action and connect it to her choice.

- 2** What does the small gold eye image suggest? Explain how its contrast with waiting darkness develops the stakes.

- 3** Trace the promise symbol's change. How does it connect Mara's development to her rejection of the lone rescuer?

- 4** Does the explicit lone-rescuer reference strengthen the ending or explain too much? Defend your critique with two details and their effects.

3

YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence continuation at the council hall. Include unmistakable personification and a symbolic object other than the lantern. Then write one separate sentence explaining how both devices develop conflict or theme.

Continue and explain

Use four sentences for the scene and one for the explanation. Give the object meaning through the characters' actions.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the wind description in paragraph 1 and the gold-eye image in paragraph 2. Circle the two statements that call the light a promise. Use these details to judge how the devices shape Mara's decision. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the personified wind strengthen Mara's conflict? Cite its human action and connect it to her choice.	The wind pleads like a person urging Mara back. This warning expresses her hesitation about risking the town.
2	What does the small gold eye image suggest? Explain how its contrast with waiting darkness develops the stakes.	The warm gold eye suggests fragile hope; waiting darkness suggests danger. A hopeful signal might also expose the town.
3	Trace the promise symbol's change. How does it connect Mara's development to her rejection of the lone rescuer?	A family promise becomes a shared duty. Rejecting solitary rescue, Mara consults the people who would share its risk.
4	Does the explicit lone-rescuer reference strengthen the ending or explain too much? Defend your critique with two details and their effects.	The lone-rescuer reference rejects isolated heroism; extinguishing the light and waking the council enact shared responsibility. Together they strengthen the ending. Accept supported critiques of over-explanation.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Scene: At the council hall, the clock scolded Mara for every moment she spent waiting at the door. She set a ring of house keys on the table, asking the members to think of all the families behind those doors. One member wanted to signal immediately, while another insisted on sending a lookout first. Mara pushed the keys into the center of the table and waited for everyone to speak.

Explanation: The scolding clock intensifies time pressure, while the shared keys symbolize the homes whose risk demands a collective decision.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

Check four scene sentences plus one explanation. Scolding personifies the clock; the keys symbolize households. Accept supported alternatives.