Across the Bridge

Trace how two concerns shape a character's choices.

11-12.RL.2.a "Analyze and evaluate their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another within a complex account."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three moments that show Mara's changing loyalty, and circle details that make public safety urgent. Number your underlined moments 1 to 3 to track how the two concerns shape her choices.

The Lantern Walk

1 On the morning of the lantern walk, Mara found her father's red pencil mark on the bridge report: *Replace the east rail bolts before opening*. Beneath it, the council's stamp read *Deferred*. Her father had built the footbridge with neighbors after the old one washed away, and Mara knew how he listened for the first footsteps every spring. Now he folded the report and slipped it into his coat. "The rail held all winter," he said, though his hand stayed on the page. Mara wanted to believe him. She carried the lanterns to the river without speaking.

2 At dusk, people crowded the path, holding paper lanterns above their heads. Mara's younger cousin leaned against the east rail, and it shifted with a small, dry click. Mara pulled him back. Across the bridge, her father was arranging lanterns beside the mayor, who had praised the crew for keeping the crossing open despite the town's thin budget. Mara pictured her father standing alone before those neighbors if she spoke. Then she pictured her cousin reaching for the rail again. She set her lantern down and called for everyone to stop at the bank.

3 The crowd went quiet. Mara showed the report to the mayor, but when someone asked who had signed the inspection, she could not make herself say her father's name. He stepped forward and did it for her. "I should have closed it," he said. The mayor read the council's stamp aloud, and the neighbors began arguing about money, blame, and how to reach the other shore. Mara stayed beside her father as they carried the lanterns back. A week later, she held the new bolts while he tightened them, and neither pretended the old ones had been sound.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Mara's silence in the first paragraph establish a conflict between loyalty to her father and responsibility for others?

2. How does the incident with Mara's cousin change that conflict, and what does Mara's response show?

3. How do her father's admission and the council's stamp complicate who is responsible for the unsafe bridge?

4. Compared with Mara's first response to the report, what does the final repair suggest about the relationship between loyalty and accountability?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a six-sentence alternate ending in which the mayor refuses to close the bridge after seeing the report. Show Mara taking a different concrete action, and make the ending reveal how loyalty and public safety affect each other.

Across the Bridge

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three moments that show Mara's changing loyalty, and circle details that make public safety urgent. Number your underlined moments 1 to 3 to track how the two concerns shape her choices. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Mara's silence in the first paragraph establish a conflict between loyalty to her father and responsibility for others?	**She wants to trust her father and protect him, so she says nothing, even though the report warns that the rail needs new bolts.**
2	How does the incident with Mara's cousin change that conflict, and what does Mara's response show?	**The rail shifts when her cousin leans on it, making the danger immediate. Mara still fears exposing her father, but she puts others' safety first by stopping the crowd.**
3	How do her father's admission and the council's stamp complicate who is responsible for the unsafe bridge?	**Her father accepts responsibility for leaving the bridge open, while the council's decision to defer repairs shows that the town also had a role. Mara can remain beside her father without hiding what happened.**
4	Compared with Mara's first response to the report, what does the final repair suggest about the relationship between loyalty and accountability?	**At first, Mara treats loyalty as staying silent. During the repair, she helps her father while both acknowledge the danger, suggesting that loyalty can include facing a mistake.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The mayor handed back the report and told the crowd to keep moving. Mara stood across the entrance, her lantern trembling against her coat. Her father took his place beside her, though he would not meet her eyes. When the first neighbor turned away, the others followed, carrying their lights down the longer road. "They will remember this," her father whispered, and Mara knew he meant the warning as well as the shame. By morning, he had nailed a CLOSED sign to the bridge, and Mara helped him face the neighbors who wanted an explanation.

Accept interpretations supported by the report, the shifting rail, Mara's choices, and the repair. Alternate endings should contain six sentences, a distinct action by Mara, and a clear connection between loyalty and public safety.