Curtain After Rain

Track choices, plot threads, and a developing message in a short drama.

8.RL.1 "Key Ideas and Plot Details Analyze and explain the development of theme(s) over the course of texts and their relationship to the characters, settings, plots, and overall messages. Explain how different plot patterns (e.g., comedy, drama…"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three moments when a character makes a choice or changes direction, circle dialogue that reveals a character's attitude, and number the events that move the performance from problem to outcome.

The Harbor Backdrop

1 On the morning of the Harbor Festival, Lena found the community theater's painted backdrop floating in a puddle. Rain had leaked through the old roof all night, and tonight's play depended on the backdrop. "We should cancel," said Mr. Vale, the director, staring at the blurred harbor scene. Lena, the stage manager, wanted to agree. Her brother Tomas, who played a pirate, slipped on a wet rag and bowed to an imaginary crowd. Even Lena laughed, but Mr. Vale did not move from the doorway.

2 Lena carried the damaged canvas outside, where sunlight revealed that only the blue paint had run. She remembered the children from the harbor school who had built paper boats for the final scene. If the play ended, their work would disappear too. "Tomas, find every blue tablecloth you can," she said. Mr. Vale frowned. "Cloth cannot become a harbor." "Not alone," Lena answered, "but people can." While Tomas gathered cloths, he accidentally tied one around his waist like a royal cape, making the volunteers laugh.

3 By sunset, blue cloths rippled across the stage, and the paper boats rested on a strip of silver foil. Mr. Vale still rehearsed each line exactly as written, refusing Tomas's suggestion to let the pirate captain welcome the audience. Lena watched the volunteers adjust the cloth when the fan blew it sideways. Instead of stopping them, she asked, "What if the wind is part of the sea?" During the performance, the moving harbor drew applause. Afterward, Mr. Vale quietly handed Lena the theater keys and said, "Tomorrow, you plan the repairs with me."

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Lena change from the opening of the story to the performance? Use a quotation or specific event from the passage to support your answer.

2. What theme develops through Lena's choices? Explain how the damaged theater setting and the plot events help develop that theme.

3. How do the dramatic problem, Tomas's comic moments, and the paper-boat plot thread affect the story's pacing and meaning?

4. Which character is more dynamic, Lena or Tomas? Justify your choice with dialogue or specific events.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly four sentences for an alternate ending to the story. Change one decision made by Lena or Mr. Vale, include one line of dialogue, name the new plot pattern as comic, dramatic, or tragic, and explain how the changed ending alters the story's message.

ANSWER KEY

Curtain After Rain

GRADE 8 · 8.RL.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three moments when a character makes a choice or changes direction, circle dialogue that reveals a character's attitude, and number the events that move the performance from problem to outcome. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Lena change from the opening of the story to the performance? Use a quotation or specific event from the passage to support your answer.	**At first, Lena wants to agree that the play should be canceled. She becomes active and flexible by directing Tomas to find blue cloths and suggesting that the wind can become part of the sea.**
2	What theme develops through Lena's choices? Explain how the damaged theater setting and the plot events help develop that theme.	**A problem can be solved through creative cooperation. The flooded backdrop creates the obstacle, and Lena, Tomas, and the volunteers turn cloths, foil, and wind into a successful harbor scene.**
3	How do the dramatic problem, Tomas's comic moments, and the paper-boat plot thread affect the story's pacing and meaning?	**The possible cancellation creates urgency, while Tomas's cape and pirate ideas briefly relieve the tension. The paper boats add another reason to save the performance, showing that the group's solution protects many people's efforts.**
4	Which character is more dynamic, Lena or Tomas? Justify your choice with dialogue or specific events.	**Lena is more dynamic. She shifts from wanting to cancel to leading the solution, shown when she says, "Not alone, but people can" and later uses the wind as part of the scene. Tomas remains playful and helpful throughout.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Mr. Vale locked the theater and said, "We will cancel before anyone gets hurt." Lena placed the paper boats in the school hallway, where families saw them the next day. This dramatic ending changes Mr. Vale's decision because he chooses safety over taking a creative risk. Its message is that protecting people can matter more than saving a performance.

Accept supported theme statements about creative cooperation, flexibility, or shared effort. For the alternate ending, accept varied ideas if the response has exactly four sentences and includes all required elements.