Name _____ Date _____

A Complex Character with Conflicting Motives: The Scholarship Interview

Directions: Read the story carefully, paying close attention to what the characters say and do. Then answer each question, checking every choice against the exact words of the story.

The Scholarship Interview

Marisol had rehearsed her answers on the bus, mouthing them against the window until the woman beside her quietly changed seats. *I want to challenge myself and see what's out there.* By the time she reached the foundation's office downtown, the sentences felt smooth and weightless, like stones she had carried in her pocket too long.

The interviewer, Mr. Hale, was younger than she had expected, and he smiled as he shook her hand and glanced at her application. "Architecture at Whitford," he said, "is a long way from home."

Marisol told him it was eleven hundred miles, a distance she had looked up more than once.

He asked about her classes, her robotics team and the summer program she had attended, and she answered each question cleanly. Then he turned a page and asked, "You list a job here, at Sunrise Wash and Fold?"

"My family's laundromat," Marisol said, and she heard her own voice change in a way she could not control. "I've worked there since I was eleven, and I do the books every Sunday. Last spring the big dryer broke, and I found a used part online and fixed it with my uncle so we didn't have to close." She realized she was leaning forward and made herself sit back. "Sorry. That's not really relevant."

"It might be," Mr. Hale said, writing something on his pad. "You know, you just described that dryer the way most people describe the school they want."

Marisol laughed, but she pulled her sleeve down over the pale bleach spot from last Saturday's shift.

Her phone buzzed in her bag, and she did not need to look at it. Her mother texted at four every afternoon, when the after-work rush began, to say who was watching the change machine, and today it was her little brother, Tomás, who was nine and still forgot things.

"Last question," Mr. Hale said, setting down his pen. "If you win this scholarship, will you go?"

It was the easiest question on her list, and she had an answer ready, the best one, the one about challenging herself.

"Yes," she said, and then, before she could stop herself, she added, "I think so. My mother says the machines can wait. I'm not sure they can."

Mr. Hale nodded slowly, the way people nod when they are deciding not to say something, and then he thanked her and walked her to the door.

On the bus home, she finally took out her phone and read her mother's message: *Change machine jammed, but Tomás fixed it. He says he watched you do it last week.*

Marisol read the message three times before she opened her browser, typed *Whitford*, and looked at a photo of its library until her stop.

1. Which choice best identifies the two wishes that pull Marisol in opposite directions throughout "The Scholarship Interview"?

A. She wants to win the scholarship and leave for Whitford, and she also wants to keep looking after her family's laundromat.

B. She wants to study architecture, but her mother insists that she stay home and run the laundromat.

C. She wants to impress Mr. Hale, and she also wants the interview to end as quickly as possible.

D. She wants to repair machines for a living, and she also wants to study architecture.

2. By the time Marisol reaches the foundation's office, her practiced sentences feel "smooth and weightless, like stones she had carried in her pocket too long." What does this comparison suggest about her rehearsed answers?

A. She has forgotten most of what she planned to say.

B. She carries a few stones to calm her nerves before interviews.

C. Repeating them so often has made them easy to say but empty of meaning for her.

D. They feel heavy, and she dreads having to say them aloud.

3. After hearing about the broken dryer, Mr. Hale observes that Marisol "just described that dryer the way most people describe the school they want." What does his observation reveal about her?

A. She would be happier studying engineering than architecture.

B. Her tie to the laundromat runs deeper than her prepared answers let on.

C. She has wasted interview time on a story that does not matter.

D. She has not yet chosen a school to attend.

4. While describing the dryer, Marisol catches herself leaning forward and "made herself sit back." After Mr. Hale's comment, she pulls her sleeve down over a bleach spot from last Saturday's shift. What do these two actions have in common?

A. Both show that she is cold in the foundation's office.

B. Both show that she has grown bored with Mr. Hale's questions.

C. Both try to keep the laundromat's hold on her out of view.

D. Both are meant to draw Mr. Hale's attention to her work.

5. Which two details show that the laundromat stays on Marisol's mind even in the middle of the interview? Select two.

- ☐ A. Mr. Hale shakes her hand and glances at her application.
- ☐ B. She answers questions about her classes and her robotics team.
- ☐ C. She thinks about her nine-year-old brother, who forgets things, watching the change machine.
- ☐ D. She knows without looking that the buzz in her bag is her mother's four o'clock text.
- ☐ E. She notices that Mr. Hale is younger than she expected.

6. When Mr. Hale asks whether she will go if she wins, Marisol says "Yes," but then she adds that her mother says the machines can wait and that she herself is "not sure they can." What does her full answer reveal about her?

A. She wants to go, but she doubts that the laundromat can manage without her.

B. She has already decided to turn down the scholarship.

C. She is certain that the laundromat will close if she leaves.

D. She is repeating her mother's view because she agrees with it.

7. Just before Marisol answers, the narrator calls this "the easiest question on her list" and mentions that she had an answer ready. Why is this detail placed right before her answer?

A. It suggests that Marisol has stopped caring about the interview.

B. It sets up a contrast: the question she was most prepared for is where her real doubt breaks through.

C. It shows that Mr. Hale saved his hardest question for last.

D. It proves that Marisol answers exactly as she rehearsed.

8. After Marisol's answer, Mr. Hale "nodded slowly, the way people nod when they are deciding not to say something," and then he walks her to the door. What does this reaction add to the scene?

A. It shows that he was not listening to her answer.

B. It shows that her honest answer registers with him, while leaving the outcome of the interview uncertain.

C. It shows that he plans to call her mother after the interview.

D. It reveals that he has already chosen her for the scholarship.

9. On the bus home, Marisol reads that her brother fixed the jammed change machine and says he watched her do it last week, and then she looks at a photo of Whitford's library. How does this ending move her conflict forward?

A. It shows that she has decided to turn down the scholarship.

B. It reveals that her mother is angry that she missed a shift.

C. It proves that the laundromat cannot run unless she is there.

D. It hints that the laundromat may manage without her, and it turns her thoughts back toward Whitford.

10. Which idea does Marisol's conflict between leaving and staying help "The Scholarship Interview" explore?

A. Families are happiest when their children stay close to home.

B. Reaching for your own future can pull against loyalty to the people who rely on you.

C. Honest answers always cost people the things they want most.

D. People who rehearse what they will say cannot be trusted.