Name _____ Date _____

How Setting Shapes Character and Plot: Snowed In

Directions: Read the scene. Then answer each question.

Snowed In

By noon the snow had buried the mailbox, and by three o'clock the radio announced that every road in the county was closed. Mom texted from the hospital where she worked: the roads were too dangerous, so she would have to stay the night. "Imani is in charge," the message ended. Jamal read it twice and groaned.

Imani was sixteen and, as far as Jamal could tell, in charge of nothing except her phone. On snow days she usually stayed in her room with the door shut, music leaking out from underneath it.

At five-thirty, the lights flickered twice and went out. The furnace stopped humming, and within an hour the house was so cold that Jamal could see his breath in the kitchen.

Imani came downstairs with her phone at four percent. Without a word, she dragged both of their mattresses into the living room, piled every blanket in the house on top of them, and handed Jamal the thick wool one. Then her phone died.

With nothing else to do, they played cards by flashlight. Imani won the first four games and Jamal won the fifth, and somewhere in the middle of the sixth she admitted that she was terrified of her driving test next week. Jamal admitted that he was terrified of pretty much everything about seventh grade. Neither of them laughed.

Around midnight, the furnace rumbled back to life, and every lamp in the house blazed on at once. Jamal looked at the bright room, then at his sister. "Can we turn them off?" he asked. Imani studied him for a second. Then she switched off the lamp and dealt another hand.

1. How does the blizzard set the plot in motion?

A. It gives Jamal a chance to go sledding with friends.
B. It keeps Mom at work overnight, leaving Jamal and Imani at home together.
C. It knocks a tree onto the house.
D. It closes the hospital, so Mom has to come home early.

2. The story says Imani was sixteen and, "as far as Jamal could tell, in charge of nothing except her phone." What does this show about how Jamal sees his sister at the start?

A. He thinks she pays more attention to her phone than to him.
B. He thinks she runs a phone store.
C. He is jealous because he does not have a phone.
D. He thinks she is very good at being in charge.

3. How does the power outage change what Imani does?

A. It makes her spend even more time alone in her room.

B. It pushes her to take charge and look after Jamal.

C. It makes her leave the house to look for help.

D. It makes her call Mom and ask her to come home.

4. Which two details show the setting pushing Jamal and Imani closer together? Select two.

☐ A. "they played cards by flashlight"

☐ B. "Imani was sixteen"

☐ C. "Then her phone died."

☐ D. "music leaking out from underneath it"

☐ E. "Jamal read it twice and groaned."

5. During the sixth game, Imani admits that she is "terrified of her driving test next week" and Jamal admits his own fears. Neither of them laughs. What does this moment show?

A. Imani is trying to get out of watching Jamal.

B. They are starting to share private worries and take each other seriously.

C. They are arguing about who has won more games.

D. Jamal is making fun of Imani's driving.

6. When the power comes back, Jamal asks, "Can we turn them off?" Why does he want the lamps off?

A. He wants to keep the closeness that the dark, quiet house gave them.

B. He wants to save money on the electric bill.

C. He is afraid the power will go out again.

D. He wants Imani to go back upstairs to her room.

7. Suppose the power had stayed on all evening. What does the story suggest would probably have happened instead?

A. Mom would have made it home before dark.

B. Imani would probably have stayed in her room with her phone, as she usually does on snow days.

C. They would have played cards for even longer.

D. Jamal and Imani would have driven to the hospital to see Mom.

8. How does the setting shape the characters over the course of the story?

A. The storm makes them angrier at each other as the night goes on.

B. The storm and the dark house take away their usual distractions, so they get to know each other better.

C. The setting has no real effect, since they act the same at the end as at the start.

D. The cold makes Jamal sick, so Imani has to call a doctor.