Name _____ Date _____

Citing Strong Textual Evidence: What the Neighbors Saw

Directions: Read the story carefully, paying attention to what the narrator states directly and what the details only suggest. Then answer each question, using the exact words of the story to decide which evidence is strongest.

What the Neighbors Saw

After his wife, Ingrid, died in March, Mr. Halvorsen became the most closely watched man on Calder Street. For thirty years Ingrid had ridden the 7:15 bus downtown, and for thirty years he had walked her to the corner each morning and waited until the doors closed behind her. Now he walked nowhere. He still set two coffee cups on the porch table every morning, though he only ever filled one.

In June the hammering started. It came from his garage after dark, steady and patient, sometimes until midnight. Mrs. Pruitt, who ran the block association and most of the conversations on the block, said what several people were thinking: "A man that age, banging around in the dark? Grief does strange things to people." Her husband joked that the old man was building a boat to sail away from all of us, and everyone laughed, though not very hard.

My bedroom window faced his garage, so I saw more than most. I saw him unload long, pale boards from the lumberyard truck, and once a can of green paint. I saw him step out at dawn with sawdust in his eyebrows. Three times I walked as far as the end of his driveway, meaning to ask what he was making, and three times I turned around. Asking felt like admitting that I had been watching.

By August the rumors had grown. Someone said he was selling furniture online because he needed money, and someone else said his daughter in Oregon wanted to move him into a home. Mrs. Pruitt started a petition about "noise after ten o'clock," and twelve neighbors signed it. My mother didn't sign, but she didn't argue, either. In all those weeks, nobody knocked on his door to ask.

Then, in the last week of summer, the hammering stopped, and the second coffee cup disappeared from the porch table.

On the first morning of school, my little brother and I walked to the corner and found a bench there. For as long as I could remember, the bus stop had been a metal pole and a patch of dirt worn smooth by waiting feet. The bench was green, with armrests carved in the shape of leaves, and someone had burned words into the backrest: *For Ingrid, who waited here, and for everyone still waiting.*

Mr. Halvorsen was on his porch with his single cup. When the bus pulled up, he lifted the cup toward us, the way people raise a glass at a wedding, and I lifted my hand back. Mrs. Pruitt, out walking her dog, stopped and read the backrest for a long time. She said nothing at all, which on Calder Street was a kind of apology.

I had watched his garage all summer and never once seen what he was making.

1. Which of these statements does the narrator of "What the Neighbors Saw" state directly, instead of leaving it for readers to infer from other details?

A. The narrator's mother disagreed with the petition.

B. Twelve neighbors signed Mrs. Pruitt's petition.

C. Mr. Halvorsen built the bench at the bus stop.

D. Mr. Halvorsen knew what the neighbors were saying about him.

2. Which quotation best supports the inference that, months after his loss, the widower keeps up a daily habit that belonged to his married life with Ingrid?

A. "After his wife, Ingrid, died in March, Mr. Halvorsen became the most closely watched man on Calder Street."

B. "He still set two coffee cups on the porch table every morning, though he only ever filled one."

C. "Now he walked nowhere."

D. "I saw him step out at dawn with sawdust in his eyebrows."

3. In the paragraph where the hammering begins, the narrator describes Mrs. Pruitt as someone "who ran the block association and most of the conversations on the block" before quoting her guess about the old man. What does this description imply about her?

A. She tends to steer what the neighbors talk about.

B. She is the oldest person living on Calder Street.

C. She is the narrator's closest friend on the street.

D. She rarely speaks at neighborhood meetings.

4. Which two quotations, taken together, give the strongest support for the inference that the neighbors formed opinions about the widower's work without ever asking him about it? Select two.

☐ A. "In all those weeks, nobody knocked on his door to ask."

☐ B. "My bedroom window faced his garage, so I saw more than most."

☐ C. "A man that age, banging around in the dark? Grief does strange things to people."

☐ D. "On the first morning of school, my little brother and I walked to the corner and found a bench there."

☐ E. "I saw him step out at dawn with sawdust in his eyebrows."

5. Even after walking to the end of his driveway three times, the narrator never questions the old man about the garage. Which quotation explains the reason for this silence most directly?

A. "Asking felt like admitting that I had been watching."

B. "My bedroom window faced his garage, so I saw more than most."

C. "Three times I walked as far as the end of his driveway, meaning to ask what he was making, and three times I turned around."

D. "By August the rumors had grown."

6. Because the story never says who built the bench, readers have to infer it. Which line provides the strongest evidence that the bench came out of the widower's garage?

A. "My bedroom window faced his garage, so I saw more than most."

B. "I saw him unload long, pale boards from the lumberyard truck, and once a can of green paint."

C. "Her husband joked that the old man was building a boat to sail away from all of us, and everyone laughed, though not very hard."

D. "Someone said he was selling furniture online because he needed money, and someone else said his daughter in Oregon wanted to move him into a home."

7. The words burned into the bench honor Ingrid. Which earlier sentence best explains why the bench was placed at this particular spot rather than somewhere else on Calder Street?

A. "For thirty years Ingrid had ridden the 7:15 bus downtown, and for thirty years he had walked her to the corner each morning and waited until the doors closed behind her."

B. "My mother didn't sign, but she didn't argue, either."

C. "Now he walked nowhere."

D. "In June the hammering started."

8. In the final scene, the widower appears genuinely pleased to see the children waiting at the new bench. Which quotation demonstrates his feeling most clearly?

A. "Mrs. Pruitt, out walking her dog, stopped and read the backrest for a long time."

B. "Mr. Halvorsen was on his porch with his single cup."

C. "Then, in the last week of summer, the hammering stopped, and the second coffee cup disappeared from the porch table."

D. "When the bus pulled up, he lifted the cup toward us, the way people raise a glass at a wedding, and I lifted my hand back."

9. Suppose a reader argues that Mrs. Pruitt now regrets the way she treated her neighbor. Which quotation would support that argument most strongly?

A. "Her husband joked that the old man was building a boat to sail away from all of us, and everyone laughed, though not very hard."

B. "She said nothing at all, which on Calder Street was a kind of apology."

C. "By August the rumors had grown."

D. "Mrs. Pruitt, out walking her dog, stopped and read the backrest for a long time."

10. The story ends with the sentence "I had watched his garage all summer and never once seen what he was making." What does this final line suggest about watching people from a distance?

A. A closed garage door makes it impossible to know what anyone is doing.

B. Mr. Halvorsen hid his work in order to fool the neighbors.

C. The neighbors were right to complain about the noise.

D. Watching someone closely is not the same as understanding what that person is going through.