Why Characters Act

Grade 4 Reading Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____

Read the text. Circle the reason for what the character does.

READ THIS FIRST

The Mystery Painter: A Play

CHARACTERS: NIA, a fourth grader. TOMÁS, her classmate. MS. REYES, their teacher.

SETTING: The school stage, after school. A large cardboard castle leans against the wall. It is only half painted.

NIA: (walking in) I left my water bottle here at rehearsal. (She stops.) Tomás? What are you doing up there?

TOMÁS: (startled, on a ladder with a paintbrush) Nothing! I mean, I'm just painting.

NIA: You painted the castle? Everyone has been wondering who did that. It looks amazing.

TOMÁS: (climbing down) Please don't tell anyone, okay?

NIA: Why not? Ms. Reyes asked you to be in the play three times. You said no every time. I thought you didn't care about it.

TOMÁS: (looking at the floor) I care. I just can't stand up there and talk. Last year I had one line in the spring show. My mind went blank, and everyone stared at me. Somebody laughed.

NIA: Oh. I remember that. (pause) But you still wanted to help with the play?

TOMÁS: My grandpa painted signs for stores in Mexico. He taught me how to make stone look real, with gray and a little purple. When I heard we needed a castle, I thought, I can do that part. Nobody has to look at me.

NIA: Tomás, people will be looking at your castle the whole time.

TOMÁS: (smiling a little) That's different. The castle doesn't have to talk.

(MS. REYES enters, carrying a box of costumes.)

MS. REYES: Tomás! So you're our mystery painter. This is wonderful work.

TOMÁS: (quietly) Thank you.

MS. REYES: We still need a forest and a night sky for Act Two. Would you be in charge of all the scenery? You could work behind the curtain during the show.

TOMÁS: (looking up for the first time) Behind the curtain? Then yes. I'd like that.

NIA: When the play ends, the whole crew comes out to bow. You'll have to come out, too.

TOMÁS: (laughing) Maybe. If I can stand next to the castle.

1. Why has Tomás said no to being in the play?

   His grandpa does not want him to act.

   He is too busy painting signs for stores.

   He is afraid of speaking in front of people.

   He does not care about the play.

2. Why does Tomás paint the castle in secret?

   He wants to surprise his grandpa.

   He thinks his painting is not good.

   He is not allowed to climb the ladder.

   He wants to help without being noticed.

3. What earlier event explains why Tomás avoids speaking on stage?

   His mind went blank during last year's show.

   Nia left her water bottle at rehearsal.

   Ms. Reyes asked him to act three times.

   His grandpa painted signs for stores.

4. Why did Tomás choose to work on the scenery?

   He wanted a part in Act Two.

   Nia asked him to paint a castle.

   He can use his painting skills without talking.

   Ms. Reyes told him he had to help.

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Answer Key - Grade 4 Reading Worksheet

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