Why Characters Act

Grade 4 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

Name _____ Date _____

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

READ THIS FIRST

The Ferry at Willow Bend

Every summer, Luz helped her uncle Mateo run the small ferry across the Willow River. The ferry was a flat wooden raft pulled along a thick rope. It could carry six people at a time, or one car. On busy days, the line on the dock stretched past the ice cream stand.

One hot July afternoon, Uncle Mateo went home with a headache. Luz ran the ferry with the help of a teenage deckhand named Ben. An old woman and her young grandson had been waiting on the dock for almost an hour. They were next in line.

Just as Luz unhooked the gate, a man in a shiny gray car pulled up and honked. He rolled down his window and held out two twenty-dollar bills. "I have a meeting across the river in twenty minutes," he said. "Take me first. You can keep the extra."

Luz looked at the money. Forty dollars was more than she earned in a whole week. The ferry could take the car or the woman and boy, but not both.

She thought about a rule her abuela had painted on a board above the ticket booth years ago: FIRST COME, FIRST CARRIED. She also remembered a rainy day when she was six. She had waited with her mother at a bus stop while a man pushed ahead of them to take the last seat. They stood in the rain for forty more minutes. Luz still remembered how small she had felt.

"I'm sorry," Luz told the man. "They were here first. I'll come right back for you."

The man frowned and checked his watch. "Unbelievable," he muttered.

Luz helped the woman and boy onto the raft. She noticed dark clouds piling up in the west. She and Ben pulled the rope steadily, and Luz did not stop to chat with the passengers as she usually did. On the far side, she helped the woman step off, then turned the ferry around right away. Going back, she pulled so hard that her arms burned.

When she reached the dock, she waved the gray car aboard. The man said nothing during the crossing. He watched her hands on the rope and the clouds drawing closer. He reached the other side just as the first drops of rain began to fall.

Before he drove off, he rolled down his window again. Luz expected him to complain. Instead, he held out one twenty-dollar bill. "For the fare and a tip," he said. "You run a fair ferry." Then he nodded to the old woman, who was waiting under the shelter for her ride, and drove away.

1. Why does Luz refuse the man's offer?

Her uncle told her never to carry cars alone.

She thinks people should be served in order.

She thinks forty dollars is not enough money.

She does not trust the man in the shiny car.

2. Which two things from Luz's past shape her decision?

her uncle's headache and the line by the ice cream stand

her abuela's sign and the day at the bus stop

her weekly pay and advice from Ben

a stormy day on the ferry and a missed meeting

3. Why does Luz skip chatting and pull so hard on the trip back?

She is angry and wants the woman off the raft quickly.

She wants to finish early and go home too.

She wants to keep her promise before the rain comes.

She is trying to show Ben how strong she is.

4. What most likely causes the man's change of heart?

He watches Luz work hard to keep her word.

The old woman asks him to be kind.

Ben tells him why Luz said no.

He realizes he is too late for his meeting.

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Answer Key - Grade 4 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

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