Determine the Theme

Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the answer.

READ THIS FIRST

The Stage Manager: A Play

CHARACTERS: ROSA, a fifth grader; NKECHI, Rosa's best friend; MR. LIANG, the drama teacher

SCENE 1

(The hallway outside the school theater. A cast list is taped to the door. ROSA and NKECHI hurry in.)

NKECHI: I can't look. You read it.

ROSA: (running her finger down the list) "Princess Amaya: Nkechi Obi." (She pauses.) You got the lead.

NKECHI: (gasping) Really? What about you?

ROSA: (quietly) "Stage manager: Rosa Mendez."

NKECHI: Rosa, I'm sorry. I know you wanted Amaya.

ROSA: (forcing a smile) It's fine. Congratulations. You'll be great.

(NKECHI exits, waving. ROSA stares at the list.)

ROSA: (to herself) Stage manager. I won't even be on the stage.

(MR. LIANG enters, carrying a thick binder.)

MR. LIANG: Rosa, I was hoping to find you. This is the prompt book. It holds every cue in the play: every light change, every sound and every curtain.

ROSA: So I just stand in the dark and hold a binder?

MR. LIANG: You stand in the dark and run the whole show. The actors can't see what's happening backstage. You can.

(ROSA takes the binder slowly. She does not look convinced.)

SCENE 2

(Six weeks later. Opening night, backstage. ROSA wears a headset and holds the binder. NKECHI paces in her costume.)

NKECHI: My hands are shaking. What if I forget my lines?

ROSA: You won't. You knew every line at dress rehearsal. (She checks the binder.) Lights in thirty seconds. Breathe.

(The play begins. Halfway through, a loud clunk is heard. MR. LIANG rushes in.)

MR. LIANG: The castle backdrop is stuck halfway down! Nkechi's tower scene starts in two minutes.

NKECHI: (panicking) I can't do the tower scene in front of half a castle!

ROSA: (flipping pages quickly) Wait. The forest scene doesn't need the castle. We can swap the two scenes. The forest scene goes first, and that gives the crew time to fix the rope.

MR. LIANG: Can the actors handle the switch?

ROSA: I'll tell them. (Into her headset) Crew, hold the castle. Forest lights, please. (To NKECHI) You're in the forest next, then the tower. Same lines, different order.

(NKECHI nods and steps onstage. The lights change. The crew fixes the backdrop.)

SCENE 3

(After the show. The audience is still clapping. NKECHI runs backstage and hugs ROSA.)

NKECHI: You saved the play! Nobody in the audience even knew.

MR. LIANG: That's how it should be. A great stage manager is invisible.

ROSA: (laughing) Six weeks ago, I thought being invisible was the worst part.

NKECHI: And now?

ROSA: (holding up the binder) Now I think I'd like this job again next year. I didn't get the part I wanted. But I found out I'm good at something I didn't know about.

(The lights fade.)

1. Which theme best fits this play?
   - A disappointment can lead someone to discover a hidden strength.
   - Only the lead actor really matters in a school play.
   - Problems backstage can always be hidden from an audience.
   - Best friends should try out for different parts.

2. How does Rosa's attitude toward her role change from Scene 1 to Scene 3?
   - She goes from disliking Nkechi to becoming her friend.
   - She goes from nervous onstage to calm onstage.
   - She goes from feeling left out to wanting the job again.
   - She goes from loving the job to wishing for the lead.

3. In Scene 1, what does the stage direction "(forcing a smile)" reveal?
   - Rosa is about to tell Nkechi she will quit.
   - Rosa is truly happy she did not get the lead.
   - Rosa thinks Nkechi's part is too small.
   - Rosa hides her disappointment to support her friend.

4. Mr. Liang tells Rosa the actors can't see backstage, but she can. How does this matter in Scene 2?
   - Rosa takes over Nkechi's role onstage.
   - Rosa sees both the problem and a solution.
   - Mr. Liang fixes the backdrop by himself.
   - Rosa admits she could not see the stage at all.

5. How does Rosa solve the problem with the castle backdrop?
   - She cuts the forest scene out of the play.
   - She swaps two scenes so the crew has time.
   - She asks the audience to wait during a break.
   - She tells Nkechi to do the tower scene anyway.

6. How do Nkechi and Rosa respond to pressure on opening night?
   - Both stay calm because nothing goes wrong.
   - Nkechi panics, while Rosa stays calm and makes a plan.
   - Both girls panic until Mr. Liang solves the problem.
   - Rosa panics, while Nkechi stays calm and fixes the rope.

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Answer Key - Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

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