



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 10

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Handoff

Characters: Denise, Priya

Setting: A small office, after hours. DENISE, a senior editor, reviews a manuscript at her desk. Her junior colleague, PRIYA, knocks and enters, holding a folder.

PRIYA:

Do you have a minute? I wanted to talk about the Hendricks manuscript before tomorrow's meeting.

DENISE:

Of course. What's on your mind?

PRIYA:

I think we should reject it. The writing is strong, but the structure has real problems in the second half, and I don't think three more rounds of revision will fix it in time for the spring catalog.

DENISE sets down her pen, giving Priya her full attention.

DENISE:

I actually agree with your read on the manuscript. But I have to tell you, I already promised the author we'd move forward. I gave my word two weeks ago, before I saw the full second half.

PRIYA:

Then we're in a difficult spot, because I already told the acquisitions team this morning that I'd be recommending against it.

A tense pause. DENISE stands and walks toward the window.

DENISE:

You told them before talking to me first?

PRIYA:

I didn't think it needed your sign-off to share my honest opinion in a meeting, Denise. Was I supposed to?

DENISE:

No. You're right, you weren't. I think I'm more frustrated with myself than with you, honestly. I made a promise I probably shouldn't have made, and now it's colliding with your good judgment in a way that makes us both look uncoordinated.

PRIYA:

I wasn't trying to make you look bad. I was trying to be honest.

DENISE:

I know that. And I don't want you to start softening your honest opinions just to avoid friction with me. That would be a much bigger problem than one awkward meeting.

DENISE turns back to face Priya directly.

DENISE:

Here's what I'll do. I'll call the author tonight, be honest about the second half, and see if there's a smaller path forward, maybe a shorter timeline, maybe a different editor pairing. You keep your recommendation exactly as it is tomorrow. We'll figure out the disagreement in the room, together, instead of pretending it doesn't exist.

PRIYA:

That actually sounds better than either of us backing down quietly. Thank you for not asking me to change my recommendation.

DENISE:

Don't thank me yet. Tomorrow's meeting is still going to be uncomfortable. But at least it'll be honestly uncomfortable.

Circle the Correct Answer

1. What disagreement does Priya bring to Denise about the Hendricks manuscript?

- a) She thinks it should be rejected due to structural problems
- b) She thinks the advance is too small
- c) She wants a different cover design

2. What complication does Denise reveal?

- a) She already promised the author the manuscript would move forward

- b) She has never read the manuscript
- c) She wants to fire the author

3. Why is Denise initially frustrated when she learns Priya spoke to the acquisitions team?

- a) She believes Priya lied to the team
- b) She is caught off guard by the conflict between her promise and Priya's stated recommendation
- c) She thinks Priya should be fired

4. How do Denise and Priya resolve their disagreement by the end of the scene?

- a) Priya agrees to change her recommendation to match Denise's promise
- b) Denise will address the author honestly while Priya keeps her recommendation, and they'll navigate the disagreement openly in the meeting
- c) They decide to reject the manuscript together without telling the author anything

True or False

5. Denise actually agrees with Priya's assessment of the manuscript's problems.

6. Denise asks Priya to soften or change her honest recommendation. _____

7. The scene ends with the conflict fully and comfortably resolved, with no remaining tension. _____

Fill in the Blank

8. Denise says she is more frustrated with _____ than with Priya.

9. Denise says tomorrow's meeting will still be uncomfortable, but at least it will be honestly _____.

Think and Explain

10. Trace the dramatic structure of this short scene: identify the initial situation, the moment of rising tension, and the turning point that leads toward resolution. Use specific lines as evidence for each stage.

11. This scene explores a power dynamic between a senior editor and a junior colleague, but subverts the expectation that the senior figure will simply overrule the junior one. Analyze how the author uses this subversion to develop Denise's character.
