8th GRADE

READING/WRITING
The Quilt

It was around my sixth birthday in February, 1929, when my brother, William, and I boarded that fateful train. We were to travel from New York to a place called Wisconsin. A sixteen month old baby, he clung to me the way static electricity clings to clothes. The air was bitterly cold and seemed to stab through the holes of my thin coat. Clutching my coat on the noisy station platform, I was unsure of what my future held. William wasn’t dressed properly either, so I wrapped him in a quilt my mother made embroidered with our family crest.

Just one year ago, our family had come from Ireland to New York City where we shared an apartment with another family. My father was lucky enough to be hired by Con Edison because he spoke English. In order to earn an extra $1 each week, my mother embroidered scarves and handkerchiefs from home. With Da’s paycheck and Ma’s sewing, we managed to scrape together our portion of the rent each month. We may have been poor, but we were still a family united as one. That is, until my father died on the job. A heart attack, most likely, said the doctor.

Ma couldn’t support our half of the rent anymore and faced eviction. The other family said she could stay but suggested to she put her children up for adoption. Wealthy people out west could provide a chance for a better life. But before Ma could make a decision, she became ill with tuberculosis and was sent to a sanitarium. Without any family to care for us, William and I found ourselves aboard a train soon after.

Singling me out of the dozens of other children, a man and woman from the Children’s Aid Society approached me on the platform. The woman touched the lapel of my tattered coat, and cleared her throat.

“What’s your name, child?”

“...Emily O’Connor,” I replied, unsure whether I should be talking to this stranger. I squeezed my eyes shut and wished with all my heart for Ma to appear. When I opened them I saw only the two strangers.

“How old are you?”
I told her that the next day might be my sixth birthday, but I wasn't certain. She laughed and wished me a happy birthday. The woman explained to us that there were families who wanted to adopt children like us. But we had to be polite and present ourselves as clean and neat as possible. I didn't understand how they expected us to remain clean without a change of clothes or a place to wash our faces, let alone without Ma.

Several days later we arrived in Wisconsin. The weather was colder than anything I had none. My lips were cracked and aching. I hugged and rocked William to distract him from his hunger. The woman reminded me several times that if William remained such a fussy baby we would risk being adopted. I patted his back gently, desperately to calm him.

A couple named Mr. and Mrs. Cable chose William immediately. He could grow into a strong young man and help at their general store. William cried as they carried him away and left the quilt behind. I quickly retrieved it and folded it under my arm. A couple with two babies, the Finleys, decided I would make the perfect household helper and adopted me.

Two years passed in their care before they released me to be fostered by another family, then another and another. Each time I brought my mother's quilt with me to keep me warm. Sometimes I swear I could smell Ma's familiar scent as if it was woven into the worn fabric.

Several times I asked about my brother. I was told that the Cables moved out of the area. Rumors circulated that children were mistreated, overworked, and not sent to school. I prayed every night that William remained unharmed and educated. At 18 I aged out of the foster system and returned to New York with a glimmer of hope within my heart that Ma would still be alive.

It was November 1941 when the bombing of Pearl Harbor forced the U.S. to declare war on Japan. Young women like myself were hired to work in factories to support the war effort. During that time I lived at a boarding home and worked at a factory doing what I had to survive.

After the war, I met my husband, Harold, whom I married in 1947. Together, we raised 4 wonderful children. Harold provided me with a secure life I never knew existed.
. Even though his family became my family, the hole inside me grew deeper. I couldn't find any news of my mother no matter the number of hours I spent poring over historical documents at the library. The one person I didn't try to find was William. I was afraid the news would ruin my perfect life and force me to board another train to nowhere. As the years went on, the memories of my brother continued to haunt me. Eventually, Harold encouraged me to try to locate William.

Finally, in 2000, my granddaughter helped me search the Internet. We also combed out-of-state phone books and wrote to the Children's Aid Society. Finally, we found one, Mr. William Cable, a retired attorney, who was adopted in 1929 and now lived in California. I tracked down his address and phone number. When I called, my heart was lodged in my throat.

That November 2000, William and I met in New York City. I told him I would be holding an old quilt with an Irish family crest. As soon as he spotted the quilt, he shouted, "Emily!" I wrapped the quilt around him as we embraced. Seeing William was like finding a missing puzzle piece. Since that day we never lost touch until he passed away at the age of 81. Today, when I hold the quilt, I feel close to all my family, even Ma and Da whose faces seem like shadows from another lifetime.

Questions

What type of figurative language is the following quote:

“The wind stabbed through my coat.”

A simile  
B. metaphor  
C. personification  
D. hyperbole

What is the connotation of the phrase “my heart was lodged in my throat”? 

A. apprehensive  
B. thrilled  
C. indifferent  
D. relaxed

How old can you infer Emily is when she is reunited with her brother, William?

A. Younger than 30  
B. Around 30-50
C. About 50-70
D. Older than 70

Which two details suggest the quilt symbolizes the warmth of family?

a
“William wasn’t dressed properly either, so I wrapped him in a quilt my mother made.”

b
“William cried as they carried him away and left the quilt behind.”

c
“I brought my mother’s quilt with me to keep me warm in more ways than one.”

d
“I told him I would be holding an old quilt with an Irish family crest.”
Teleportation Gone Wrong!

Haru was no stranger to traveling with his family. He’d been to more countries by the time he reached his fifth birthday than some people had been in their entire lives. Haru’s mother was a well-respected judge and she often had to travel for her work. Since the invention of teleportation booths, it was easy for the whole family to travel with her. They would pack their things and join her for the weekend. On Mondays, they would pop back to their homes so they could go to school and work.

Haru loved this about his family. He loved getting to see new places and meeting new people. This particular weekend, they were visiting his mother in Japan. There was the added bonus of getting to see his grandparents, so he was especially excited about this trip. He’d packed his new camera and couldn’t wait to document his travels.

When he arrived, he found that his grandparents had prepared all of his favorite foods and had set up a cot in the backyard so he could camp under the stars. He spent the entire weekend seeing new sights and going for jogs with his grandfather. He couldn’t imagine a better way to spend his time. The night before his family was set to return home, his grandparents surprised them. They announced, “We’ve decided to return home with you, and spend more time with the family.”

Haru could hardly contain himself, he was so excited! He couldn’t wait to introduce his grandparents to his friends and show them his new school. Suddenly, going home wasn’t going to be so sad after all.

When Haru woke up, he hopped right out of bed. He was sad to leave Japan, but was thrilled to spend more time with his grandparents. He carried his suitcase downstairs and waited for everyone else to wake up. Slowly, the family started to trickle in for coffee and breakfast. It was another hour before everyone was ready to go. Haru helped his dad carry the suitcases out to the sidewalk. Then, the whole family made the short trip to the teleportation station.
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His dad went through first with his baby sister. His mom followed quickly, holding Haru's little brother tightly. Haru was about to step through when his grandmother cried out, “Oy, I left my pocketbook back at the house!”

Haru’s grandfather started to turn back to get it when Haru put his arm out to stop him. He was thirteen now and could step up to this responsibility. “I'll go back to get it. You two head back with the family and I'll be right behind you,” he assured them.

Haru jogged back to the house. He found his grandmother’s bag on the table where she left it. Then he headed back to the station. His grandparents had already stepped through so Haru joined the line alone. He stepped up as each passenger vanished. He'd teleported hundreds of times. He knew exactly what to expect.

When it was finally his turn, he stepped up to the booth. He held his teleport card in one hand and swiped it through the reader. It didn’t let out its usual beep. Haru tried again. He must have swiped too fast. Still, the reader remained silent. Feeling frustrated, Haru firmly swiped through a third time. There was still no sound.

Haru stepped out of the booth. Calm down, he thought. “I think this machine is broken,” he said to the people still waiting in line. He joined another line and waited for his turn again. When he stepped into the booth and swiped his card, the same thing happened. Haru broke out in a cold sweat and a continuous frown. How will I get home?

**Questions**

**What can you infer about the setting of the story?**

A. It takes place in the present.

B. It takes place in the future.

C. It takes place in the distant past.

D. It takes place in the recent past.

**In what ways is Haru different between the beginning and ending of the story?**

A. He is a confident thirteen year old who becomes nervous at the end.

B. He is an excited individual who has even more energy at the end.
C. He is a content teenager who becomes more depressed at the end.

D. He has a large problem at the beginning that is solved by the end.

Which detail supports Haru’s conclusion that the teleportation booth is broken?
A. When Haru swipes his card, there is no beep.
B. Haru runs back home.
C. Haru’s grandparents step through.
D. There are several people waiting in line.

What do you learn about Haru and his grandfather in the story?
A. They are both experts in math.
B. They both love Haru’s grandmother very much.
C. They have both lived in Japan for a quite a while.
D. They are both excited for an adventure in a new territory.
Louis Pasteur

Louis Pasteur was a talented chemist and biologist. His breakthroughs on the causes of disease in the 1800s changed medicine forever. His work has saved countless lives.

Early Life

Pasteur was born on December 27, 1822, to a poor family in Dole, France. He was an average student as a boy. Pasteur was more interested in drawing and painting than school. He was considered very talented.

He earned his degrees from the Royal College of Besançon in 1840 and 1842. He went on to become a researcher at École Normale Supérieure. ENS was a special university in Paris where he earned his doctorate in 1847.

In 1848, Pasteur became a professor of chemistry at the University of Strasbourg. This is where Pasteur met Marie Laurent. She was the daughter of the head of the university. They got married on May 29, 1849 and had five children. Unfortunately, three of them died of typhoid as children. This experience with tragedy motivated Pasteur to research and work toward curing diseases.

Career
In 1854, Pasteur became the dean of the new science faculty at the University of Liège. He began to study fermentation. Fermentation is process that turns sugar into alcohol. He then moved to Paris to become the director of scientific studies at ENS.

A portrait of a young Pasteur

Pasteur also served as professor of geology, physics, and chemistry at another elite school in Paris. He later established the Pasteur Institute in Paris in 1887 and directed it until his death in 1895.

Fermentation

In 1857, Pasteur’s research led him to the conclusion that fermentation is caused by microscopic life. These tiny forms of life are known as microorganisms. He showed that fermentation with yeast changes sugar to alcohol without exposure to air. He also showed that further fermentation by bacteria makes lactic acid. This insight led him to develop germ theory. Pasteur’s germ theory says that spoiled food and human illnesses are caused by the growth of micro-organisms.
A Little More Careful

“I just don’t understand why you had to go and ruin everything!” My older sister Rowan stood in front of me with her hands on her hips. I looked at my feet, unsure of what I could say to fix this. “I’m sorry, Row—” I started to say, but she cut me off by turning on her heel and stomping away. I was left standing by myself in front of the flight deck.

Our grandparents were looking after Rowan and me while our parents were on a moonwalk. It wasn’t unusual for these types of trips to take around a week or two. This was the first time that Rowan had tried to sneak out, though. She had used the window chamber in my bedroom to hoist herself into the upstairs hallway to meet her friends for a midnight movie. I remember not being able to sleep at all as I waited for her to come back. It felt like a million hours and before I knew it, the sun projectors were lighting up.

Out here in space, we’re lucky to get some starlight, let alone any real sunlight. The scientists on our spacecraft had found a way to copy the sun’s rays to give us a little taste of our old lives on Earth.

Even though we were floating around in space, some things were still the same. Like Rowan for example. She was always getting mad at me. Usually, I’d do anything for her to include me in her adventures, but this time I couldn’t help it.

When the “sun” had lit up my room and she still wasn’t back, I couldn’t take it. I ran into my grandparents’ room and told them everything. From the way she’d pulled herself up onto my window ledge to the way she’d told me not to tell anyone about it. Before I knew it, my grandparents had found Rowan and were in the process of grounding until our parents got back.

Hours later, Rowan still wasn’t talking to me. I tried to knock on her door, but I just heard the click as she locked me out. Finally, I got the idea that I would write her an apology note.

Dear Rowan,
I'm sorry that I got you in trouble. I got really scared and worried when you didn't come home. I hope you will forgive me.

Love,

Dimitri

I slid the note under her door and sat on the ground waiting. After a few minutes, I could hear footsteps as she moved around her room. The lock unbolted and she stuck her head out into the hallway. I scrambled to my feet. "I really am sorry, Row-
" She cut me off again, but this time instead of leaving, she pulled me into a hug. "I'm sorry, Dimitri. It wasn't your fault. I made a mistake," she whispered into my hair. I felt the guilt drain out of my body and let myself hug her back.

Questions

Which of the following events are key to the story? Choose 2.

a. The narrator describes the sun projector.
b. Dimitri tells his grandparents where Rowan went, and she is grounded.
c. The narrator describes the movie Rowan saw.
d. Dimitri writes an apology note to his sister, Rowan, who forgives him.

Which word best characterizes Dimitri during the story?

A. Concerned
B. Young
C. Ecstatic
D. Loyal

How does the author show that Rowan realizes her mistake?

A. Rowan stopped talking to Dimitri when her grandparents grounded her.