Grade 6

Winter Break ELA Packet

1. Answer multiple choice questions 1-24 on the scantron sheet
2. Answer short response and essay questions directly in the booklet
3. Daily: Log on to I-Ready and complete 5 assignments in Reading

PLEASE NOTE
• Use only a no. 2 pencil.
• Example: Ⓐ ● Ⓒ Ⓓ
• Erase changes COMPLETELY.

Mark one answer for each question.

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2. Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ
3. Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ
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Teacher Signature: **Ms. Jackson**
Scholar Signature: _____
Parent Signature: _____

Directions

206015P

Read this poem. Then answer questions XX through XX.

Ponies and donkeys were once used in mines to pull carts of ore—in the United States as well as Great Britain.

The Pit Ponies

by Leslie Norris

They come like the ghosts of horses, shyly,
To this summer field, this fresh green,
Which scares them.

They have been too long in the blind mine,
Their hooves have trodden only stones
And the soft, thick dust of fine coal,

And they do not understand the grass.
For over two years their sun
Has shone from an electric bulb

That has never set, and their walking
Has been along the one, monotonous
Track of the pulled coal-trucks.

They have bunched their muscles against
The harness and pulled, and hauled.
But now they have come out of the underworld

And are set down in the sun and real air,
Which are strange to them. They are humble
And modest, their heads are downcast, they

Do not expect to see very far. But one
Is attempting a clumsy gallop. It is
Something he could do when he was very young.

When he was a little foal a long time ago
And he could run fleetly on his long foal's legs,
And almost he can remember this. And look,

One rolls on her back with joy in the clean grass!
And they all, awkwardly and hesitantly, like
Clumsy old men, begin to run, and the field

Is full of happy thunder. They toss their heads,
Their manes fly, they are galloping in freedom.
The ponies have come above ground, they are galloping!

1

122060111_2

Why are the ponies scared in line 3?

A They are unable to see where they are headed.
B They are unfamiliar with the world above ground.
C They are uncomfortable being around other ponies.
D They are unsure why they are no longer in the mine.

2

122060112_2

What is the central theme of the poem?

A the appeal of discovering the unknown
B the thrill of newfound freedom
C the promise of a well-planned future
D the wonder and beauty of nature

3

122060117_4

In line 7, why don't the ponies "understand the grass"?

A They are sick from breathing in too much coal dust.
B They are too old to remember where they are going and why.
C They have injured legs from pulling heavy coal-trucks.
D They have lived most of their lives in a dark and stony space.

4

122060118_3

In line 1, what does the simile "like the ghosts of horses" suggest?

A Living in the mine has made the ponies fierce.
B The ponies are sick because of conditions in the mine.
C Working underground has changed the ponies.
D The ponies look dreadful covered with dust from the mine.

5

122050119_3

What is the importance of lines 19 through 24?

A They suggest that the ponies prefer playing to working.
B They show the feelings experienced by one unusual pony.
C They reveal what was once natural behavior for the ponies.
D They indicate that one pony is much smarter than the others.

6

122060121_2

In line 28, what is the "happy thunder"?

A the sound of a storm approaching
B the sound of the ponies running
C the sound of the trucks in the mine
D the sound of a pony rolling on the grass

Directions
205031P
Read this article. Then answer questions XX through XX.

The Sea Turtle's Built-In Compass

by Sudipta Bardhan

If you were bringing friends home to visit, you could show them the way. You know the landmarks—a big red house, a bus-stop sign, or even a pothole in the front of your driveway. But what if you were swimming in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, where everything looks almost the same? Could you find your way home?

A loggerhead sea turtle could. It's born with a magnetic sense that tells it how to find its way from any place on Earth.

These big turtles swim thousands of miles each year. But somehow, they know which way to turn to stay in warm waters where there is a lot of food.

Loggerheads also seem to have a good memory for places, even for places they have seen just once before. Each female will lay eggs only on the beach where she was born, even if she hasn't returned since she hatched. Each year, she goes back to the same beach. That means a baby loggerhead must figure out exactly where it is from the moment it hatches.

"We think that the loggerhead turtles have a global-positioning system of sorts," explains Dr. Ken Lohmann, "and that it is somehow based on Earth's magnetic field."

This global-positioning system, or magnetic sense, is important. It helps the turtles locate what they need to live—from the best spots for finding food to their home beaches. Understanding the turtles' magnetic sense will help researchers figure out which areas are important for the survival of this endangered species.

It isn't such a stretch to think that loggerheads may have a magnetic sense. Scientists already know of several animals that can detect magnetic fields. Whales, honeybees, birds, fish, and even some bacteria use Earth's magnetic field to find their way. Many of these animals, including loggerheads, have a substance called magnetite in their bodies. That's what may give them their magnetic sense.

A difference between other animals and loggerheads, though, is the way they learn to use their magnetic sense. Young whales, honeybees, and birds can learn from adults. Loggerheads are abandoned as eggs.

With no adults to learn from, how do hatchlings figure out how to use their magnetic sense? Lohmann thinks they use cues from the environment. One of the cues he tested was light on the horizon.

Baby loggerheads hatch only at night. However, a small amount of light reflects off the ocean. The light makes that region brighter than the rest of the sky. Heading toward the light helps loggerheads get quickly out to sea, where they can find food.

Turtles hatching in eastern Florida first swim east, since that is the direction of the light. Lohmann tested whether hatchlings use this light source to set their magnetic compasses.

"We outfitted each hatchling with a cloth bathing suit that was attached to a fishing line and set them free in the tank," says Lohmann. The fishing line was connected to a tracking system so a computer could record which way the turtles swam.

Around the tank, the scientists set up electrical coils to create a magnetic field that matched the Earth's. They set a dim light to either the "east" or the "west" of the magnetic field. Then they let the hatchlings go.

At first, the hatchlings swam toward the light, no matter where it was. After scientists turned off the light, the turtles that had seen the light in the "east" always swam toward "east." When the researchers reversed the magnetic field, these turtles turned around and swam toward the new "east." They had learned how to use their built-in compass.

Turtles that had seen the light in the "west" swam toward "west." In the wild, swimming west would take them the wrong way—away from the ocean. So the light helped set the built-in compass, even if it did give the wrong direction.

Turtles that had their first swim in total darkness swam in random directions.

These experiments showed that loggerheads use cues from the outside world to set their magnetic sense. Loggerheads can detect magnetic fields from birth, but at first they don't know what they mean. After they follow the cues from their surroundings, they remember the "correct" magnetic direction.

Lohmann's work has led others to protect the loggerheads' habitat. For example, if a turtle hatches on a beach with a bright boardwalk, the turtle may be confused about which lights to follow. If it turns the wrong way, its magnetic sense may be warped forever. That would make survival hard for the turtle.

Lohmann is working to find other factors that are important in helping sea turtles find their way around the world. Many questions about these beautiful ocean creatures have still not been answered, so researchers have a lot of ideas to study.

7

132060077_4

Which detail is most helpful for understanding the central idea of the article?

A Loggerhead turtles hatch in eastern Florida.
B Loggerhead turtles prefer to feed in warm waters.
C Scientists are interested in protecting animal habitats.
D Scientists have studied how different animals navigate.

8

132060073_4

Why are lines 9 through 13 important to the article?

A They show how the turtles hatch eggs.
B They show the types of beaches turtles prefer.
C They explain why the turtles travel long distances.
D They explain why the turtle's sense of direction is so important.

9

132060075_2

Why do loggerhead hatchlings have to learn differently from the way many other animals learn?

A They hatch when it is dark outside.
B They do not have adults to teach them.
C They do not live completely on land.
D They depend on their surroundings.

10

132060079_4

Scientists conducted experiments to track the movements of baby turtles because they

A wanted to study how quickly turtles learn new behavior
B were hoping to recreate turtle territories in a laboratory
C were hoping to discover where turtles hatch
D wanted to learn how turtles react to light

11

132060074_2

According to the article, how might humans threaten loggerhead turtles' survival in the wild?

A by creating artificial magnetic fields
B by building bright structures near the ocean
C by preventing turtles from returning to their eggs
D by removing baby turtles from their natural habitat

12

132060083_3

What is the author's **main** purpose for including Dr. Lohmann's work in the article?

A to explain to readers how turtles behave in captivity
B to show how Dr. Lohmann conducts his experiments
C to highlight the important role of environment on turtles
D to describe the influence Dr. Lohmann has on the scientific community

13

132060076_1

Which statement from the article **best** represents a central idea?

A "It's born with a magnetic sense that tells it how to find its way from any place on Earth." (lines 5 and 6)
B "Loggerheads also seem to have a good memory for places, even for places they have seen just once before." (lines 9 and 10)
C "In the wild, swimming west would take them the wrong way—away from the ocean." (lines 47 and 48)
D "Lohmann is working to find other factors that are important in helping sea turtles find their way around the world." (lines 59 and 60)

Directions

206033P

Read this article. Then answer questions XX through XX.

Ring of Horses

by Cindy Seiffert

You hand the man your ticket. The round platform rocks slightly as you step onto it. Spying your favorite mighty steed, you rush toward it, weaving your way past the other horses. As you scramble into the sky-blue saddle, the bouncy cadence of the organ makes you smile. You hold on tightly to the shiny gold pole in front of you as your horse begins to move up and down, round and round. The world whirls around you, the horse galloping through it. What a wonderful ride!

You've probably ridden a carousel at least once, maybe many times. Did you ever wonder who decided to make pretend horses spin in a circle with people riding them?

The origins of the carousel can be traced all the way back to games played on horseback by Arabian and Turkish men in the 1100s. In one game riders played catch with clay balls filled with scented oil or water. In another the men held a lance while riding and tried to run it through a small ring dangling by ribbons from a tree or pole. If a rider was successful, the ribbons would pull off the tree and stream behind the ring on his lance like a waving rainbow.

Hundreds of years later, Italian and Spanish travelers observed these games and brought them to Europe. The contests were called *garosello* by the Italians and *carosella* by the Spanish. Both words mean "little war." The English word carousel comes from those words.

The first carousel-like contraption was created in France and was designed to help men practice for their "little war" games. It didn't look as fancy as the carousels you see today, but the structure was similar. The umbrella-like construction had a wooden pole with spokes radiating from the top. Chains hanging from the spokes held carved wooden horses. Men, real horses, or mules turned the center pole while riders practiced putting their lances through a brass ring hanging to one side.

In the late 1700s carousels like the ones we know today began to appear throughout Europe. Rather than being used for training, these were enjoyed for the sheer thrill of the ride. In the beginning the carousel was ridden mostly by grownups, not children. Light and small, these first carousels were designed to be easily spun by man or mule.

Gustav Dentzel began building the first carousels in America in the 1860s. Powered by steam engines, these carousels moved faster and held more weight than the old model, allowing for a more lavishly decorated machine. Dentzel's company is famous for having carved and painted a variety of animals for his carousels, including cats, lions, ostriches,

pigs, rabbits, and even a kangaroo! For those who could not or did not want to straddle a horse or other animal, he created handsome chariots.

Remember the game of tilting a lance through a brass ring? The early carousel designers had this game in mind when they hung brass rings on a wooden arm next to many of their carousels. As the carousel turned, riders would try to grab the ring; if they succeeded, they won a free ride. Today you'd be lucky to find a carousel with a brass ring arm—only a handful in the United States still feature them.

Carousels were so popular that nearly 4,000 were built from 1860 to 1930. But when hard times came upon America during the Great Depression in the 1930s, few people had money to spend on extras. Many carousels stopped being used and fell into disrepair, and no one could afford to fix them. Some were even taken apart and put into storage.

These beautiful machines had nearly disappeared when, in the 1970s, people began to realize the importance of keeping the magic of the carousel alive for future generations. Enthusiasts formed the National Carousel Association and the American Carousel Society to raise money, restore, and preserve wooden carousels. Thanks to their efforts, today about 150 antique carousels are back in service.

14

132060121_2

Which phrase best explains why people first created carousels?

A to provide people with a thrilling ride
B as training devices for soldiers
C to display carved animals
D as a game for horses

15

132060122_2

What made more elaborate carousels possible?

A new kinds of animals
B a new source of power
C the addition of a chariot
D the inclusion of brass rings

16

132060128_3

Based on the entire article, the word "lavishly" in line 31 shows that the carousels were

A faster than they had been
B larger than they had been
C fancier than they had been
D stronger than they had been

17

132060129_4

How do the details about the Great Depression in lines 40 through 43 contribute to the development of the article?

A by helping readers form a mental image of an abandoned carousel
B by describing for readers the costs involved in running a carousel
C by creating curiosity about where the carousels were stored
D by providing an explanation for the decline of carousels

18

132060125_3

What does the history of the word "carousel" reveal about the modern-day carousel?

A Carousels were once used for training; now they have been put into storage.

B Carousels were once celebrated for their beauty; now they have fallen into disrepair.

C Carousels were once used for military practice; now they are used for entertainment.

D Carousels were once appreciated for their decoration; now they are used for amusement.

19

132060130_1

Which statement best expresses the author's point of view in the article?

A The carousel is an exciting and fascinating piece of history.

B The work to restore and preserve carousels has been completed.

C The first carousels in Europe were more beautiful than later ones.

D The National Carousel Association can do more to save the carousel.

Directions
206014P
Read this article. Then answer questions XX through XX.

Snow Way

by Beth Geiger

Where will you find the world's best spot for stargazing? Many astronomers would say the South Pole. The sky is always clear there, and during the winter it's always dark.

Astronomers flock to the South Pole, as do scientists who study climate, the atmosphere, and polar ice. To accommodate them, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) built an outpost, called the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station.

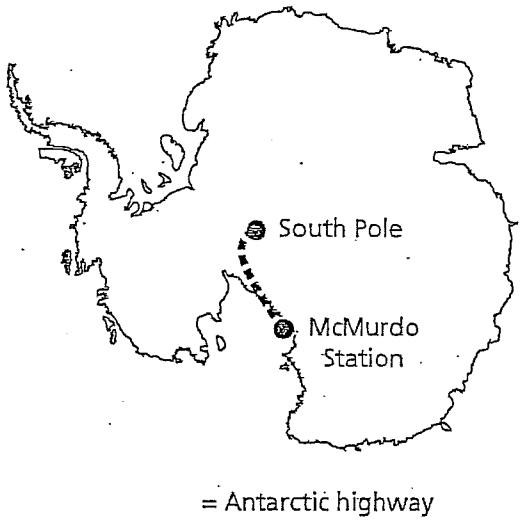
Getting people and supplies to the station is not easy. Military transport planes do it when weather permits. Therefore, the NSF is building a "highway" to the pole. The project is one of the most unusual road-construction projects ever undertaken.

Top of the Bottom

The Antarctic highway, called the South Pole Traverse, will not be a typical thoroughfare. "Everyone knows what a road looks like," said Peter West, an NSF spokesman. "What we are working on is not that at all, by any stretch of the imagination."

When completed, the traverse will be a 1,600-kilometer (1,000-mile) path of groomed snow and ice, marked by green flags. It will cross floating ice, gaping *crevasses* (cracks in the ice), deep snow, treacherous mountains, and frozen nothingness.

The traverse is not a typical road, because Antarctica is not a typical continent. Ice—4,570 meters (15,000 feet) thick in some places—covers 98 percent of the continent. Antarctica is the world's coldest desert and receives only about 5 centimeters (2 inches) of precipitation (rain or snow) annually. The thick ice is the buildup of millions of years' worth of snowfall.



A few high peaks in the Transantarctic Mountains poke through the ice to form islands of rock called *nunataks*. East of the Transantarctic chain is the *polar plateau*—the flat top of the bottom of the world. On the plateau lies the Amundsen-Scott Station.

Antarctica's ice doesn't stop at the edge of the continent. Thick slabs of floating, slowly shifting ice, called *ice shelves*, fringe the continent. The biggest, the Ross Ice Shelf, is the size of France and is hundreds of feet thick.

Ice Route

The traverse begins at McMurdo Station, the main U.S. base on the continent. From there, it heads across the Ross Ice Shelf.

Floating, shifting ice might seem like dangerous ground for heavy truck traffic. Why not go straight over the land instead? Traveling across the Ross Ice Shelf keeps the journey at the relative warmth of sea level for as long as possible. At higher elevations on land, temperatures can get so cold that they cause machinery to malfunction. The shelf also makes for relatively easy cruising. "It's really smooth and flat," said Erin Pettit, a University of Washington geologist who works in Antarctica.

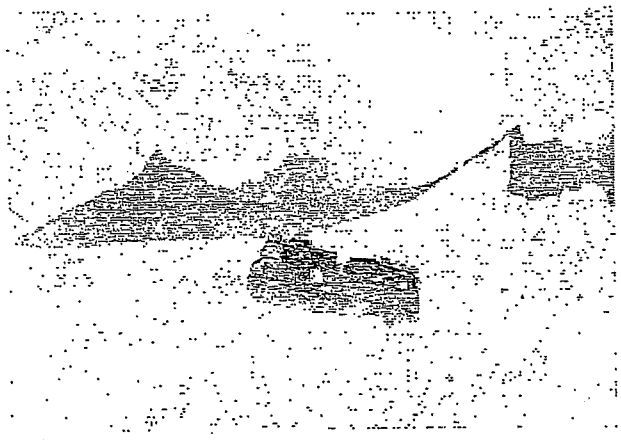
Frigid Summers

Building the traverse has been a daunting job. A hardy five-man crew works only during the Antarctic summer (December to March). Even then, temperatures remain well below freezing. "At first, it is strange for anybody to work in the cold-cold like that," said project manager John Wright. "But you learn to deal."

The first summer, the crew members tackled their most chilling challenge: yawning crevasses in the Ross Ice Shelf that can swallow a tractor in the blink of a frozen eyelash. The crevasses, which can be 30 meters (100 feet) deep, might not be so dangerous if they were visible. But most of them lurk under covers of snow called *snow bridges*. Many people have fallen through snow bridges to icy deaths.

The nastiest crevasses on the route are in a *shear zone* about 48 kilometers (30 miles) from McMurdo. There, ice within the shelf moves at different rates, stretching and cracking into a maze of crevasses. To cross that area safely, the team members probed the ice ahead with radar. Whenever they found a crevasse, they used a bulldozer to fill it in with snow. Then they inched across.

During the last construction phase, the crew worked for 66 straight days. After filling crevasses in the shear zone, the team bogged[1] down in a 260-kilometer (160-mile) stretch of deep snow on the shelf. The biggest surprise, remembers Wright, was any *good* day. "We had two last year," he said.



[1]**bogged:** to sink or get stuck

NAME _____

20 How does the author show that the Ross Ice Shelf is dangerous?

A by explaining that some crevasses are hidden

B by giving the locations of the worst crevasses

C by telling about a truck getting stuck in the snow

D by describing how the crew used bulldozers

21 Which sentence would be most important to include in a summary of the article?

A ~~Many~~ scientists perform research at the South Pole because the skies are always clear and in the winter, always dark, making the South Pole ideal for stargazing.

B Scientists set up a station at the South Pole for studying the climate, stars, atmosphere, and polar ice.

C Building a road to a scientific station at the South Pole was a difficult task with many dangers, like cold weather and deep crevasses.

D Construction of a road for travel to the South Pole could only be done in the summer months

22 Read this sentence from lines 12 and 13.

When completed, the traverse will be a 1,600-kilometer (1,000-mile) path of groomed snow and ice, marked by green flags. Which claim from the article is best supported by this sentence?

A "Astronomers flock to the South Pole..." (line 3)

B "The project is one of the most unusual road-construction projects ever undertaken." (lines 7 and 8)

C "Antarctica's ice doesn't stop at the edge of the continent." (line 29)

D "...temperatures can get so cold that they cause machinery to malfunction." (line 37)

23 In line 53, the word "inched" means the builders of the highway

A tiptoed hastily

B glided casually

C stepped boldly

D crept slowly

24 Why are lines 9 through 14 important to the article?

A They establish the danger involved in the project.

B They explain how the project will be completed.

C They introduce the unique nature of the project.

D They provide a brief history of the project

Directions

306024P

Read this passage. Then answer questions XX through XX.

Sweet Science Comes Baked In

by Dan Risch

Some students dream that one day their picture will appear on boxes of breakfast cereal, because they are a star athlete or a celebrity. As a middle school student, Morgan Goodall dreamed of inventing the food filling those boxes. This spring, Morgan will take a giant step toward making her dream real. In May, Purdue University will award a Master's of Science degree to Morgan, in food science.

Morgan grew up surrounded by delicious food, like warm oatmeal cookies tucked full of raisins. Her great-grandfather was a baker. Her grandfather, David, ran a storefront bakery for 40 years. He then invented frozen bagel dough and built a production plant to make it. Even Morgan's father is a foodie. He sells specialized food ingredients to food makers around the country.

"When I was 10," recalls Morgan, "I'd go into the back of my grandfather's bakery and play with the dough. My favorite thing was the maraschino cherries. I'd stick my hand into a tub and take home as many cherries as I wanted."

Over time, much more than cherry juice stained Morgan's fingers. A zest to learn about food colored her ambitions.

"Learning about and working with food is absolutely fun," Morgan says with enthusiasm. "Every food acts different, looks different, and tastes different. People have differing opinions about food, and you make food choices based on more than just basic need. For me, who always wants to work on and learn about different things, food [as a career] is perfect."

Morgan saw a career in food science as a way to link everything she had learned from her family. It would also allow her to make her own unique contribution to the family's history. As a food scientist, she says, "I could shine as an individual."

Purdue University put the polish on Morgan's dream. But as she started the four-year food science program, she had to confront a fear faced by many students. "When I first went into the program," Morgan admits, "I was apprehensive about the science I had to take. It's definitely science heavy—chemistry, biology, and microbiology. In those three areas, you take basic-level courses and then food-specific classes."

"You study food from a biological standpoint: food microbiology and food chemistry. You take sensory science. You learn how consumers react to how food tastes and feels, and you learn how to create a food product from an idea."

"BUT," Morgan stresses, "the fact that you're majoring in food science gives you an edge because you learn everything in the context of FOOD. I'm the type of person that needs to see it and feel it to understand it. So, to put chemistry in terms of food, I go into my kitchen and try something to understand the basic chemistry. That helps me."

It also helped that Purdue's program encouraged Morgan to participate in summer internships provided by General Mills. For two summers, Morgan was up to her elbows applying—in a real job—the science she was learning at school. In the cereal maker's food labs, Morgan whipped up new kinds of cakes and cookies. You have to wonder if she knew that she was also stirring up a recipe for reaching her childhood dream.

First, though, she needed to add a final ingredient. For that, Morgan traveled to West Africa.

According to Morgan, West Africans eat bread every day. It's a big part of their diet. Yet the daily staple sops up much of their money. Wheat doesn't grow well in parts of Africa. It must be bought from other countries. Importing, or transporting wheat into Africa, is expensive.

As part of her graduate school research, Morgan looked for other grains that could replace wheat in West African bread. But it's no cinch to throw out wheat, mix in rice or corn, and expect to bake golden loaves of bread. The problem is proteins.

Bread making is a science and an art, says Morgan, in part, because of the proteins in wheat. "Mixing wheat flour and water," she says, "gets you something so extraordinary compared to any other flour. Wheat flour and water together create a viscoelastic dough. That's a term we use to describe the unique properties of wheat-flour dough. If you try to make bread out of corn, out of rice, out of any other grain, you're not going to get the same thing as you would with wheat."

But that didn't mean Morgan wasn't going to try to help West Africa's people. With creative flare just like her grandfather's, she experimented with sorghum. "There's a certain variety of sorghum developed at Purdue that caught my interest," says Morgan. "We found that the proteins in that sorghum were different than any other sorghum proteins. I thought maybe it would act different when tried in bread."

Morgan mixed batches of bread dough using the special variety of sorghum. By tinkering with different amounts of water and salt and mixing the dough at different temperatures, she found that "we could make the sorghum dough act a little bit more like wheat dough."

The discovery may someday lead to big savings for West Africans. For right now, Morgan's inventiveness has boosted her to the brink of realizing her childhood dream. After graduation, she'll go to work for General Mills. From there it won't be long before Morgan's food creations find their way to grocery store shelves. And that will be the sweetest cherry of all.

25 Why does the author choose to end the passage with "And that will be the sweetest cherry of all"? Use two details from the passage to support your response.

Directions

306023P

Read this story. Then answer questions XX through XX.

As Amy will discover, her first day exploring a cave without her parents will demand using her experience in a way she had never imagined.

Beyond the Twilight Zone

by Nikki McCormack

Our first rope drop was into a large, dark room. I could hear water splashing noisily down into the bottom from the other side of the huge chamber.

"Tight squeezes, huh?" I muttered.

Jake winked at me and returned to his work. His crooked grin made it hard to be annoyed, so I dug into my pack and pulled out my seat harness with the rappel device[1] and climbing gear attached.

After checking the rope, Jake slipped into his harness with remarkable speed and finesse, then watched me finish. I felt a surge of irritation as he rechecked all the connection points on my harness. It was silly, since he also checked Sean's and Sean checked his, but I felt as if he had expected a mistake.

"You comfortable with this? It's a ninety-five-foot drop," Jake said, his expression serious now. "There's never any shame in turning around."

Turn around! What would my parents think?

"No problem," I replied quickly.

Jake raised an eyebrow, but he nodded and turned to the rope. "On rope," he called, taking hold of it and winding it into his rappel device. He checked the device, then eased himself over the edge. I heard him zipping down the rope from where I stood, well away from the edge to avoid knocking down loose rock. After a moment, his voice rose from the bottom. "Off rope!"

I glanced at Sean, who met my gaze with an almost fatherly expression of patience. He nodded. I stepped up and took hold of the rope. "On rope!"

I wound the rope through my rappel device, checked it, and eased myself over the edge. Up to that moment, I had been nervous, but once I was actually hanging on the rope, a familiar comfort washed over me. I enjoyed rope work, and my nerves relaxed as I

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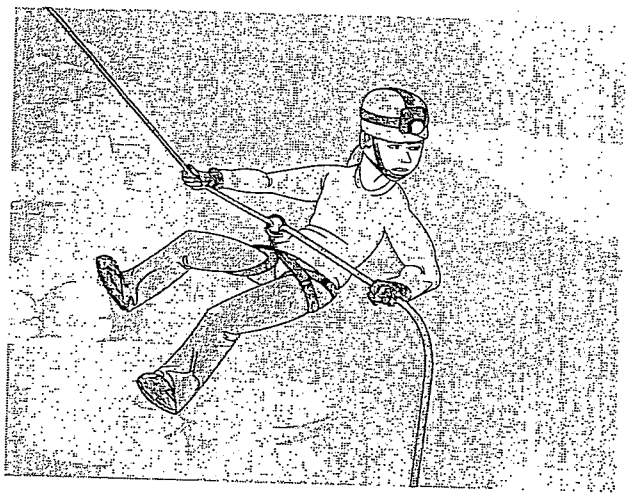
[1] **rappel device:** a system of ropes and levers used to descend in a controlled way down a cliff

settled into the process of letting myself down. I watched the growing speck of Jake's headlamp, glancing occasionally at the marble wall in front of me to admire its water-washed surface.

When my feet hit solid ground, I detached from the rope and crawled out of the rock fall zone before hollering up, "Off rope!"



Sean joined us quickly, and we continued without removing our vertical gear, which meant another rope was coming up. We were in walking passage now with blue-and-white marble walls and a stream down the center. We straddled the stream to keep dry and to avoid contaminating the water.

A collection of limestone draperies cascaded down the walls of the passage like magnificent waterfalls of transformed stone. I focused my light on the breathtaking formations. Minerals in the water had given some of the flowstone a dark orange color that contrasted with the brilliant white of the rest. It was moist, living formation, beautiful in a way so different from the rugged, imposing beauty I had seen to this point.

The passage opened into a large room with a big rope ascent. We stopped at the bottom, the cold creeping in on us like a deadly virus. We ate quickly and shared our extras—cheese chunks, jerky, and bite-sized carrots—then packed up.

Jake sent Sean up the rope first as we sat at the bottom and turned off our head-lamps to conserve batteries.

"How long have you been caving?" Jake asked.

"Most of my life," I boasted.

"Me too," he replied with a chuckle.

Silence followed, and we heard Sean breathing hard with the effort of the climb.

"Off rope!"

"Your turn," Jake said.

I clipped on to the rope and started my climb. Climbing requires a harness and a series of small devices that you slide up the rope with your hands and feet. These lock into place when you put weight on them, allowing you to ascend. There is something exhilarating and frightening about climbing rope in the dark, especially on a long climb where you get halfway and can see neither the top nor the bottom. Jake and Sean had

turned off their lights to conserve batteries, and the dramatic effect sent a chill down my spine. I continued climbing, listening to my labored breathing over the sounds of running water in the cave. I was eager to get to the top where I could sit down and have a much-needed drink of water.

I moved my hand ascender up, then stood in the foot loop, but suddenly there was no resistance. I was falling!

As it turns out, there really isn't enough time for a person's life to flash before their eyes in one of these moments. The only thing flashing before my eyes was a cave wall lit by a circle of light from my headlamp. My chest constricted with fear so quickly that I could not even scream. Something large zoomed past in the darkness, followed by a loud crash. I jerked abruptly to a halt. A moment of silence ensued, followed by several exclamations from above.

"What happened?" Jake called up, and I heard the waver in his voice. He must have been out of the fall zone when the rock hit, but he was clearly shaken.

"The main rig point broke," Sean hollered back.

"Amy, are you all right?"

I remembered to breathe then.

"I guess," I called back, my voice trembling.

"You're close to the top. Can you finish the climb?"

I wanted to scream that I couldn't, that someone needed to save me, but I knew better. If the backup rig point was at all unstable, I had a better chance of making the top than I did of switching to my rappel device and descending before it gave. I didn't respond. Fear clenched my throat too tightly as I resumed my climb.

"She's heading up," Sean called.

The breath was rasping in my throat, and I felt as if I couldn't get enough air, but I kept moving. Slide the hand ascender up the rope, stand in the loop to move the chest ascender up, sit down in the harness, and repeat. I was so intent that I started with surprise when my hand ascender contacted the lip of the drop. My legs trembled as I pushed away from the wall to get enough clearance to move the ascender over the lip. With a desperate heave, I pulled myself over and moved as far as I could from the edge before disconnecting.

"Off rope!"

The wavering cry was a female voice, so I knew it was mine. Sean patted me on the back.

"Good job."

6

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What is Amy trying to prove? Use two details from the story to support your response.

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27

How does the author build suspense throughout the story? Why are lines 62 through 71 important in building suspense? Use details from the story to support your response.

In your response, be sure to
- explain how the author builds suspense throughout the story
- explain the importance of lines 62 through 71 in building suspense
- use details from the story to support your response

Check your writing for correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.