1. Read the following passage:
   Greg had sat in the small, pale green kitchen listening, knowing the lecture would end with his father saying he couldn’t play ball with the Scorpions. He had asked his father the week before and his father had said it depended on his next report card. It wasn’t often the Scorpions took on new players, especially fourteen-year-olds, and this was a chance of a lifetime for Greg.

   What is the conflict in this passage?

2. Read the following passage:
   “And you want to play basketball?” His father’s brows knitted over deep brown eyes. “That must be some kind of a joke. Now you just get into your room and hit those books.”

   What can you infer (determine) about the relationship between Greg and his father? What type of characterization is this? Direct or Indirect? Explain how you know.

3. Read the following sentence:
   His father’s words, like the distant thunder that now echoed through the streets of Harlem, still rumbled softly in his ears.

   What type of figurative language is this?

4. Read the following passage:
   He reached the house just as another flash of lightning changed the night to day for an instant, then returned the graffiti–scarred building to the grim shadows.

   How does the weather match how Greg is feeling? What kind of people do you predict he will meet in a place like this?

5. Read the following passage:
   He sat a while, watching the sign blink first green then red, allowing his mind to drift to the Scorpions, then to his father. His father had been a postal worker for all of Greg’s life, and was proud of it, often telling Greg how hard he worked to pass the test. Greg had heard the story too many times to be interested now.
Greg’s feelings reflect a conflict about his father. State what the conflict is and then identify what type it is. What can you determine about Greg based on his lack of interest in his father’s story. What type of characterization is this? Direct or Indirect?

6. Read the following passage:
(Lemon Brown says) “Don’t try nothin’ cause I got a razor here sharp enough to cut a week into nine days!”

Greg, except for an involuntary tremor in his knees, stood stock still. The voice was high and brittle, like dry twigs being broken, surely not one he had ever heard before.

What can you learn about Lemon Brown based on his words?

What do you learn about Lemon Brown based on the author’s descriptions? Is this direct or indirect characterization? Why?

7. Read the following passage:
He was an old man. His black, heavily wrinkled face was surrounded by a halo of crinkly white hair and whiskers that seemed to separate his head from the layers of dirty coats piled on his smallish frame. His pants were bagged to the knee, where they were met with rags that went down to the old shoes. The rags were held on with strings, and there was a rope around his middle. Greg relaxed.

Is the writer using direct or indirect characterization in his description of Lemon Brown? How do we know?

Why does Greg’s tension (stress) lessen when he sees Lemon Brown?

8. Read the following passage:
“You ain’t one of them bad boys looking for my treasure, is you?” Lemon Brown cocked his head to one side and squinted one eye. “Because I told you I got me a razor.”
“I’m not looking for your treasure,” Greg answered, smiling. “If you have one.”

What do you think of when you see the word treasure?

9. Read the following passage:
“Yessir. Sweet Lemon Brown. They used to say I sung the blues so sweet that if I sang at a funeral, the dead would commence to rocking with the beat. Used to travel all over Mississippi and as far as Monroe, Louisiana, and east over to Macon, Georgia…”
“What happened to you?” Greg said.
“Hard times, boy. Hard times always after a poor man.”
What do you learn about Lemon Brown through this dialogue?

10. Read the following passage:
    “I used to have a knotty-headed boy just like you.” Lemon Brown had half walked, half shuffled back to the corner and sat down against the wall. “Had them big eyes you got, I used to call them moon eyes. Look into them moon eyes and see anything you want.”

What does this dialogue reveal about Brown’s feelings toward his own son?

What could be a possible theme from this dialogue?

11. Read the following passage:
    “What’s that noise?” Lemon Brown asked, suddenly sitting upright.

    Greg listened, and he heard a noise outside. He looked at Lemon Brown and saw the old man pointing toward the window.

    Greg went to the window and saw three men, neighborhood thugs, on the stoop. One was carrying a length of pipe. Greg looked back toward Lemon Brown, who moved quietly across the room to the window. The old man looked out, then beckoned frantically for Greg to follow him. For a moment Greg couldn’t move. Then he found himself following Lemon Brown into the hallway and up the darkened stairs. Greg followed as closely as he could. They reached the top of the stairs, and Greg felt Lemon Brown’s hand first lying on his shoulder, then probing down his arm until he finally took Greg’s hand into his own as they crouched in the darkness.

During this part of the rising action, how does Greg and Lemon Brown’s relationship change?

What is the definition of rising action?

12. Read the following passage. Write the sentence that is the climax of the story.
    As Greg howled, the light moved away from Lemon Brown, but not before Greg saw him hurl his body down the stairs at the men who had come to take his treasure. There was a crashing noise, and then footsteps. A rush of warm air came in as the downstairs door opened, then there was only ominous silence.

13. A motivation is a reason for a character’s actions. What is Lemon Brown’s motivation for fighting the bad men?
14. Read the following passage:

“Y’ou sure you’re not hurt?” Greg asked Lemon Brown.
“Nothing that ain’t been hurt before,” Lemon Brown said. “When you get as old as me, all you say when something hurts is, ‘Howdy Mr. Pain, sees you back again.’ Then when Mr. Pain sees he can’t worry you none, he go on and mess with somebody else.”

How have Greg’s feelings changed toward Lemon Brown?

The author uses indirect characterization here. What does this tell us about Lemon Brown?

15. Read the following passage (Lemon Brown is speaking):

I used to travel around and make money to feed my wife and Jesse—that’s my boy’s name. Used to feed them good too. Then his mama died....he growed up to be a man, and when the war come he saw fit to go off and fight in it. I didn’t have nothing to give him except the things that told him who I was, and what he come from. If you know your pappy did something, you know you can do something too...I travelled around and one time I come home, and there was this letter saying Jesse got killed in the war. Broke my heart, it truly did.

They sent back what he had with him over there, and what it was is this old [harmonica] and these [newspaper] clippings. Him carrying around with him like that told me it meant something to him. That was my treasure, and when I give it to him he treated it just like that, a treasure. Ain’t that something?

How did you react to finding this out about Lemon Brown?

What theme do you think the author is developing here?

The underlined section is indirect characterization. What does it tell you about the kind of person his son was?
16. Read the following passage:

“You really think that treasure of yours was worth fighting for?” Greg asked. “Against a pipe?”

“What else a man got ‘cepting what he can pass on to his son, or his daughter, if she be his oldest?” Lemon Brown said. “For a big-headed boy you sure do ask the foolishest questions.”

What do you think the theme of the story is? What evidence from the story can you use to support your theme?

17. Toward the end of the story, when Greg heads home, the weather changes. “The night had warmed and the rain had stopped.”

How is this change in setting symbolic of the change in Greg?

Does this change make Greg a static character or a dynamic character? Why?

In your opinion, is Lemon Brown a static character or a dynamic character? Why? USE EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT TO SUPPORT YOUR ANSWER.