

Name:

Period:

Directions: Read the following short story and poem and answer the questions that follow.

What Happened During the Ice Storm

By: Jim Heynen

One winter there was a freezing rain. "How beautiful!" people said when things outside started to shine with ice. But the freezing rain kept coming. Tree branches glistened like glass. Then broke like glass. Ice thickened on the windows until everything outside blurred. Farmers moved their livestock into the barns, and most animals were safe. But not the pheasants. Their eyes froze shut.

Some farmers went ice-skating down the gravel roads with clubs to harvest the pheasants that sat helplessly in the roadside ditches. The boys went out into the freezing rain to find pheasants too. They saw dark spots along a fence. Pheasants, all right. Five or six of them. The boys slid their feet along slowly, trying not to break the ice that covered the snow. They slid up close to the pheasants. The pheasants pulled their heads down between their wings. They couldn't tell how easy it was to see them huddled there.

The boys stood still in the icy rain. Their breath came out in slow puffs of steam. The pheasants' breath came out in quick little white puffs. Some of them lifted their heads and turned them from side to side, but they were blindfolded with ice and didn't flush. The boys had not brought clubs, or sacks, or anything but themselves. They stood over the pheasants, turning their own heads, looking at each other, each expecting the other to do something. To pounce on a pheasant, or to yell "Bang!" Things around them were shining and dripping with icy rain. The barbed-wire fence. The fence posts. The broken stems of grass. Even the grass seeds. The grass seeds looked like little yolks inside gelatin whites. And the pheasants looked like unborn birds glazed in egg white. Ice was hardening on the boys' caps and coats. Soon they would be covered with ice too.

Then one of the boys said, "Shh." He was taking off his coat, the thin layer of ice splintering in flakes as he pulled his arms from the sleeves. But the inside of the coat was dry and warm. He covered two of the crouching pheasants with his coat, rounding the back of it over them like a shell. The other boys did the same. They covered all the helpless pheasants. The small gray hens and the larger brown cocks. Now the boys felt the rain soaking through their shirts and freezing. They ran across the slippery fields, unsure of their footing, the ice clinging to their skin as they made their way toward the blurry lights of the house.

Gracious Goodness

By: Marge Percy

On the beach where we had been idly
Telling the shell coins
Cat's paw, crossbarred Venus, china cockle,
We both saw at once
The sea bird fall to the sand
And flap grotesquely,

Name:

Period:

He had taken a great barbed hook
Out through the cheek and fixed
In the big wing.
He was pinned to himself to die,
A royal tern with a black crest blown back
As if he flew in his own private wind.
He felt good in my hands, not fragile
But muscular and glossy and strong,
The beak that could have split my hand
Opening only to cry
As we yanked on the barbs.
We borrowed a clippers, cut and drew
Out the hook.
Then the royal tern took off, wavering,
Lurched twice,
Then acrobat returned to his element,
Dipped,
Zoomed, and sailed out to dive for a fish.
Virtue: what a sunrise in the belly.
Why is there nothing
I have ever done with anybody
That seems to me so obviously right?

1. In "What Happened During the Ice Storm," which element is important in establishing the **theme**?
 - a. Setting
 - b. Dialogue
 - c. Point of view
 - d. Tone
2. Which of the following influences provides the main source of **conflict** in the short story?
 - a. The boys' sympathy for the birds
 - b. The farmers' actions
 - c. The pretty landscape
 - d. The boys' fear of the birds
3. In "Gracious Goodness" the **narrator** seems to experience:
 - a. Conflict
 - b. Boredom
 - c. Satisfaction
 - d. Regret
4. One way the story *differs* from the poem is in the story's:
 - a. Unexpected ending
 - b. Humorous tone

