Name_____ **Theme Practice**

Jenna and the Black Cat

"Eek! That's bad luck!" Jenna said when Erica walked under the ladder that leaned up against the card-store wall. "Quick! We've got to find some salt to shake over your right shoulder."

Erica was used to her friend's superstitions[1]. Jenna had many of the usual ones, like not stepping on cracks. She also had a slew[2] of superstitious beliefs that were unique. She wouldn't wear the same color shirt two days in a row. She believed that you couldn't experience each day as a new day if you wore yesterday's color. Erica overlooked Jenna's quirks[3], though she kidded her about them sometimes. What she liked about Jenna was that she was thoughtful and that she liked to help. She volunteered as a tutor after school and, on Saturdays, she worked at an animal shelter.

After getting the salt to toss over her shoulder, Jenna and Erica began the walk from the mall back to Jenna's house. Their route took them through the park, where a soccer game was going on. That meant that they had to take a longer route, around the field and past the "ghost" tree. The ghost tree was just a maple tree whose limbs grew in a pattern that looked like arms reaching to the sky. When its leaves fell off, the ends of the branches pointed like sharpened fingers in all directions. It had been called the ghost tree as long as anyone in town could remember. On Halloween, some kids would put streamers in the tree to make it look especially spooky. Jenna usually stayed away from the tree. It gave her the creeps.

Jenna quickened her pace. That's when they heard a small cry. "It's coming from the tree," Erica said. While Erica went to the base of the tree, Jenna held back. "It's a kitten," Erica called to her friend. "I can't reach it." Jenna stepped closer and saw the animal on a low branch. It seemed scared. "If you cup your hands, I can climb up and get it," she said. **Erica was surprised to see Jenna reach for the black cat.**

1. superstition: a belief or practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, or trust in magic
2. slew: a large number
3. quirk: an odd personal habit; idiosyncrasy

For numbers 1 – 5, fill out the chart below.

T- The main character	1.
H- How about the beginning of the story? What happens to the main character?	2.
E- End? What happens to the main character at the end?	3.
M- Moral/Life Lesson	4. One theme of the story is that A. fears can be put aside in an emergency. B. bad luck comes in threes. C. superstitions are ridiculous. D. good friends always help each other.
E- Evidence	5. Which of the following sentences supports the theme of the passage? A. Jenna was afraid of the ghost tree, but she still helped the kitten. B. Jenna volunteered as a tutor after school and worked at an animal shelter. C. Jenna told Erica to shake salt over her right shoulder after Erica walked under a ladder. D. Jenna wouldn't wear the same color shirt two days in a row.

6. **Erica** considers **Jenna** to be the kind of person who

A. is proud of her schoolwork.
B. cannot think straight.
C. often helps others.
D. doesn't like soccer.

7. Which detail from "Jenna and the Black Cat" **supports the answer for 6**?

A. After getting the salt to toss over her shoulder, Jenna and Erica began the walk from the mall back to Jenna's house.
B. What she liked about Jenna was that she was thoughtful and that she liked to help.
C. Jenna usually stayed away from the tree.
D. She wouldn't wear the same color shirt two days in a row.