

Noticing Nuances Answer Key

Question 1:

- *Answer:* The garden is described as colorful, warm, and lively, while Ella is hunched, downcast, and heavy with sadness.
- *Evidence:* "sunlit garden...alive with color" vs. "her shoulders hunched and her eyes fixed on the ground."

Question 2:

- *Answer:* The contradiction occurs when the sweet, warm air contrasts with Ella "pulling her jacket tighter, as if bracing against a chill."
- *Explanation:* Her body language opposes the pleasant description, showing her inner turmoil.

Question 3:

- *Answer:* Her forced smile to the neighbor suggests she is hiding her true feelings or unable to fully connect with others despite the cheerful environment.
- *Evidence:* "Ella forced a quick smile but did not stop walking."

Question 4:

- *Answer:* The contrast suggests a theme that **outward appearances don't always reflect inner emotions** or that **personal struggles can overshadow external beauty**.
- *Supporting Evidence:* Bright setting vs. Ella's heavy mood.

Teacher Notes:

- Accept variations in student answers as long as contrasts or contradictions are clearly identified and supported with text evidence.
- This activity is meant to sharpen students' ability to see tension in a text, which often points toward theme or character complexity.
- Extension: Have students rewrite the passage so that Ella's mood matches the setting, then compare how the meaning changes.