



Name _____

Unspoken Weight

Directions: Read the passage carefully. Notice that not every thought or feeling is directly stated. Pay attention to **body language, pauses, and what is left unsaid**; these are clues to meaning. Answer the questions by making inferences. Support your answers with **text evidence**.

The Quiet Porch

Daniel sat on the porch swing, the late afternoon sun slanting across his uniform, still folded neatly in his lap. His father leaned against the railing, saying nothing, sipping sweet tea from a glass that dripped with condensation. The cicadas hummed in the trees, louder than either of them.

Inside, Daniel's mother clattered dishes in the kitchen, her voice rising occasionally in forced cheer as she asked about dinner. Daniel ran his thumb over the stitched patch on his sleeve and pressed his lips together. He had rehearsed a dozen things to say on the flight home, but now the words felt heavy and wrong.

His father cleared his throat, glanced at him, and then looked back toward the road. Daniel shifted on the swing, its chains creaking, and stared out into the distance. The silence stretched, settling between them like something neither one was ready to touch.

1. What unspoken emotions does Daniel seem to feel as he sits on the porch?
2. How does the description of the setting (porch, cicadas, silence) reflect Daniel's inner state?
3. What can you infer about the relationship between Daniel and his father based on their actions?
4. Why might Daniel's mother use "forced cheer" in her voice? What does this suggest about the family dynamic?
5. If you were to continue the story, what conflict might Daniel face in reconnecting with his family and community?