Nelda's Adieu

On a frigid, autumn day, Nelda stood on the banks of the river that crept its way through her hometown. She was immersed in memories of the countless blissful summer hours she’d spent swimming and picnicking there with her friends. Images of bygone summers at the river eased through her mind like a movie in slow motion. The images were as clear as yesterday; days so hot that no one wanted to sit on the bank and rest between swims; tiny, green-brown grass snakes wriggling across Nelda’s grandmother’s rainbow-colored picnic quilt; sunburned skin soothed by ice packs; last summer’s new sky-blue bathing suit and neon-green water shoes. Moving away and starting a new life in another state would be difficult, almost as difficult as it had been to beat Tracy in a swimming race to the nearest tree that muggy July day. That tree, with its feet planted solidly in the lazy, muddy depths of the river, never failed to trigger the same triumphant elation Nelda had felt when she’d beaten Tracy for the first time. It had been no easy task, since Tracy was a stellar swimmer and had won best all-around school athlete awards almost every year.

Nelda watched the biting November wind rattle the leaves of that tree that stood resolute far out in the river. The wind pressed in on Nelda’s shoulders, humming in her ears, bringing with it shivers and still more fragments of elusive memories. So audible were the clamoring voices of her friends in those memories that she almost turned to see if any of them had followed her. Perhaps they had come to help her say a temporary goodbye to the spot where they’d spent so much of their summer leisure time. No, she was definitely alone, but like the tree in the river, she would always have friends and people around her who looked to her, who loved her. Nelda squared her shoulders and scrambled up the bank, determined not to let the cold dampen the anticipation she felt.

The move to another state, because of her parents’ employment relocation, would be stressful, but exciting. There would be new friendships to form; fresh, unknown adventures to experience; and the inevitable obstacles of high school life to overcome. “I’ll make a success of it. I know I can,” she said aloud to herself. Her hometown, this old river, and her loyal friends would always be there to come back to visit. Her parents had promised she could come back and visit Tracy and her family next summer. She felt sure there would be more summers on those banks, more swimming races with Tracy in the warm, muddy river; more picnics with sandwiches and lemonade, more leisurely bike rides, and most importantly, more jingling ice cream trucks to chase down River Street. Smiling again, Nelda lurched through the mud and high grasses of the riverbank and hurried home.

17 Which of the following lines from the text, "Nelda's Adieu" shows that Nelda is a self-confident young woman?
A. Moving away and starting a new life in another state would be difficult...
B. "I’ll make a success of it. I know I can," she said aloud to herself.
C. Her hometown, this old river, and her loyal friends would always be there to come back to.
D. She felt sure there would be more summers on those banks.

18 This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: What inference can be made about Nelda’s relationship with Tracy?
A. Nelda values Tracy and sees her as a friend.
B. Nelda sees Tracy as her competition, so their relationship is based on rivalry, not friendship.
C. Nelda relies on Tracy and fears she will not find a friend like Tracy in her new neighborhood.
D. Nelda really likes Tracy, but Nelda’s parents would like Nelda to have different friends and spend less time with Tracy.