Making It Better

(1) I felt the slamming jolt and the horrible swerve that threw me against the door. (2) Oh Lord, I thought, this is it! (3) Somehow I managed to unbolt the door and scramble out. (4) The flight attendants, in their seats, indicated that I needed to sit down. (5) As I lunged ahead toward my seat, passengers looked up at me with the stricken expression of creatures who know they are about to die.

(6) I looked at the small girl sitting next to me. (7) She was from a small town in east Texas, and this was only her second time on an airplane. (8) She had won a trip to England by competing in a high school geography bee and was supposed to make a connecting flight when we landed in Newark.

(9) In the next seat, at the window, sat a young businessman who had been confidently working. (10) Now he looked worried – something that really worries me: when confident-looking businessmen look worried. (11) The laptop was put away. (12) “Something’s not right,” he said.

(13) The pilot’s voice came over the speaker. (14) I heard vaguely through my fear, “Engine number two...hit...emergency landing...New Orleans.” (15) When he was done, the voice of a flight attendant came on, reminding us of the emergency procedures she had reviewed before takeoff. (16) Of course I never paid attention to this drill, always figuring that if we ever got to the point where we needed to use life jackets, I would have already died of terror.

(17) Now we began a roller coaster ride. (18) I was ready to faint, but when I saw the face of the girl next to me I pulled myself together. (19) I reached for her hand and reassured her that we were going to make it. (20) What a story you’d going to tell when you get home!” I said. (21) “After this, London’s going to seem like small potatoes.”

_____1. Which sentence would best introduce the setting?
   a. I was in the tiny bathroom in the back of the plane.
   b. The seatbelt was tight around my waist.
   c. Her trip to London may never happen.
   d. Newark is lovely this time of year.

_____2. Where would the following sentence best introduce the central conflict? “I think we got hit by lightning,” she said.
   a. before sentence 1
   b. after sentence 5
   c. after sentence 11
   d. after sentence 21
3. To change sentence 20 to present tense, which word needs to be replaced?
   a. you're
   b. your
   c. you is
   d. you'd

4. What does the dialogue in sentence 20 reveal about the narrator?
   a. She is foolish.
   b. She is cruel.
   c. She is clever.
   d. She is kind.

5. Which detail added to sentence 17 would effectively develop the setting?
   a. up and down
   b. of our lives
   c. through the thunderclouds
   d. in the plane

6. Choose the best way to rewrite sentence 4 by using sensory language.
   a. The flight attendants, already strapped and buckled into their seats, waved wildly
      for me to sit down.
   b. The flight attendants, already in their seats, waved wildly for me to sit down.
   c. The flight attendants, already strapped in their seats, indicated that I needed to
      sit down.
   d. The flight attendants, in their seats, waved wildly and indicated that I needed to
      sit down.

7. Which sentence would make the best conclusion?
   a. I let go of her hand and braced for the devastation that was sure to come.
   b. She smiled gratefully, and holding my hand, braced for impact.
   c. She quickly let go of my hand, embarrassed that I had noticed her terror.
   d. She quickly let go of my hand and fastened her seatbelt even tighter in
      preparation for impact.