

Read each excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

T H E S K I N I ' M I N

ing. We don't say nothing. We just listen to the clock tick. Shuffle our papers. Watch for some reaction from Miss Saunders.

"Freak," she says. "I saw that too when I was young." Then she explains how she was born with her face like that. How when she was little her parents had the preacher pray over it, the old folks work their roots on it, and her grandmother use some concoction to change the color of that blotch on her cheek so it matched the rest of her skin. Miss Saunders says none of the stuff she tried on her face worked. So she finally figured she'd better love what God gave her.

"Liking myself didn't come overnight," she says, "I took a lot of wrong turns to find out who I really was. You will, too." Everybody starts talking at once, asking her questions. Miss Saunders answers 'em all. Some kids even go up to her face and stare and point. She lets them do it too, like she's proud of her face or something.

Then Miss Saunders comes over to my desk and stares down at me. "It takes a long time to accept yourself for who you are. To see the poetry in your walk," she says, shaking her hips like she's doing some African dance. Kids bust out laughing. "To look

1. What does Miss Saunders say her face says to the world?

- a. Sassy, Smart, Sexy
- b. Snobby, Self-Confident, Shy
- c. Sassy, Sexy, Self-Confident
- d. Sophisticated, Sassy, Strong

2. Which student called Miss Saunders a freak?

- a. Maleeka Madison
- b. Charlese Jones
- c. John-John McIntyre
- d. Daphne Robinson

3. Write an onomatopoeia word from the first three lines of the excerpt. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which is the most suitable theme based on the excerpt?

- a. No matter how difficult your day is, always smile.
- b. How you love yourself is how you teach others to love you.
- c. Do not dwell on the past, but look to the future.
- d. You may struggle today, but you will find strength tomorrow.

pushing her away as best I can. Only every time I do it, it feels like my hair is being ripped from my scalp.

Kids are yelling all around me. "Beat her butt good. Ain't nobody got the right to steal your man." Teachers say to break it up and for kids to move so they can stop this thing.

Char's just standing there eating a candy bar like she's at the movies. I'm eyeing her, hoping maybe she'll jump in or at least say she was the one that was kissing Worm. She digs the chocolate out from between her teeth and takes another bite of candy.

All of a sudden here comes Miss Saunders, pushing her way past everybody to where me and Daphne are fighting. I never thought I'd be so glad to see that woman. But I am. She's pushing her way through the crowd, like there ain't nobody at McClenton big or bad enough to stop her. I don't know what's got into me, I ain't no fighter. Never fought one day in my life. But all of a sudden, I'm feeling strong when I see Miss Saunders headed my way. So I raise my hand in the air and give Daphne some of what she been giving me. Next thing I know, Miss Saunders's grabbing hold of my hand, telling me to cut it out. Big mistake. Now Daphne's got the chance to get in one last hit. She

1. What is the setting of the incident in the excerpt?

- a. Girl's Bathroom
- b. School Cafeteria
- c. School hall
- d. School Gymnasium



2. How is Maleeka punished by her mother for her part in the fight?
  - a. She is not allowed to watch television, use the telephone or hang out with friends for three weeks.
  - b. She is forced to wear the clothing her mother makes to school.
  - c. She must complete chores around the house such as cleaning dishes, taking out the trash and laundry.
  - d. She must find a job to pay Daphne's medical bill.
  
3. Which is the most suitable theme based on the excerpt?
  - a. Do not expect from others what you cannot promise them yourself.
  - b. Do not expect to get what you give because everyone is not like you.
  - c. You always pass failure on the way to success.
  - d. If you believe in yourself anything is possible.
  
4. What was special about this day for Maleeka?
  - a. She was wearing the new clothes Momma bought her.
  - b. Caleb had promised to eat lunch with her.
  - c. She had just gotten a haircut from Sweets' cousin Ronnie.
  - d. She will be reading her diary to the class today.

ON MONDAY MS. ALLEN, THE art teacher, does a double take when I walk into her class. I know she wants to ask me what happened, but teachers can't always just come out and ask you stuff like that. Kids, they're different. As soon as I walked into the school building they were all over me, wanting to know why I didn't have no hair.

I expect John-John not to like the cut. I mean, what does he like about me, anyhow? Nothing. And I expect Charlese and the twins to say they don't like it, even if they secretly do.

In third period, kids really light into me. By fourth period, I'm wearing the baseball cap I brought from home, just in case. Mr. Klein, the social studies teacher, tells me to take off the hat, but I give him some lame excuse and he lets me keep it on. The next thing I know, somebody's yanking off the hat and making cracks about my peanut head.

1. Match each McClenton Middle School employee to their role.

\_\_\_\_\_ Science Teacher  
\_\_\_\_\_ Math Teacher  
\_\_\_\_\_ English Teacher  
\_\_\_\_\_ Principal  
\_\_\_\_\_ Art Teacher

a. Miss Carol  
b. Mr. Pajolli  
c. Miss Benson  
d. Mr. Klein  
e. Miss Saunders

\_\_\_\_\_ Librarian  
\_\_\_\_\_ Secretary  
\_\_\_\_\_ Social Studies Teacher

f. Miss Allen  
g. Tai  
h. Mr. Mac

2. Which theme below is most suitable based on the above excerpt?

- a. Believe in yourself and others will believe in you too.
- b. Beauty is only skin deep.
- c. Being beautiful is more important than being smart.
- d. Only beautiful people are important.

3. Who did Maleeka's hair?

- a. Momma
- b. Sweets
- c. Ronnie
- d. Juju

4. How was Maleeka able to afford the hairstyle?

- a. She got an after-school job.
- b. She used her allowance from Momma.
- c. She sold some of the items she found under her bed from her deceased father.
- d. She offered to sweep the beauty salon.

5. "When she is finished, it seems like ten thousand tiny black shiny curls was all over my head." What figurative device is used here?

- a. Personification
- b. Hyperbole
- c. Metaphor
- d. Alliteration