

## UNIT TWO

### Chapters 3 and 4

#### COMPREHENSION SKILL QUESTIONS

##### A. Vocabulary in Context

1. In the following excerpt, what does the word *clutches* mean?

"We freshmen." Darrell turned the phrase over in his mind. . . . He held on to that simple phrase the way a drowning person clutches a rope.

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| a. plays with | c. grabs tightly |
| b. lets go of | d. twirls        |

2. In the following excerpt, what does the word *deliberately* mean?

[Tyray] deliberately stepped on Darrell's foot. . . . "Whoops, sorry," Tyray said, acting as innocent as possible.

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| a. by accident | c. on purpose |
| b. repeatedly  | d. gently     |

##### B. Supporting Details

3. The following words were said by

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|-----------------|-----------------|
| a. Mom.         | c. Malik Stone. |
| b. Uncle Jason. | d. Tyray Hobbs. |

"Don't worry when you see the boys playin' rough. They're just testin' themselves. That's how a boy becomes a man. Understand?"

4. The following words were said by

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|-----------------|------------------|
| a. Tyray Hobbs. | c. Mr. Mitchell. |
| b. Uncle Jason. | d. Mom.          |

"The back of the room seems a bit too distracting for you. Besides, people who sit in the front of the room tend to have much better grade point averages than those who sit in the back."

##### C. Main Idea

5. The main idea of the excerpt below is that
- Darrell felt slightly better about being in California.
  - Darrell figured that Tyray probably would not be in any of his classes.
  - Darrell hoped to find another friend like Malik.

Walking home, Darrell felt a little better about California. Amberlynn was really nice. Maybe there were other kids at Bluford like her. Maybe it'd be okay after all. Tyray and his friends might not be in any of his classes. They might even forget all about him. Darrell hoped there would be someone like Malik in Bluford.

6. The main idea of the excerpt below is that
- Darrell remembers the many times Jermaine hurt him.
  - because Darrell knows what Nate is going through, he can't let it continue.
  - big kids always pick on little kids.

Darrell could not bear to watch. He knew how Nate felt. He had been in that position before. He remembered the times Jermaine hurt him and no one stepped in to help. No matter where he went, it seemed there always were bigger kids who liked to show how strong they were by picking on smaller, weaker people. Now he was seeing the same thing happening in his own family. He could not sit still and let it happen.

7. The main idea of the excerpt below is that
- in Philadelphia, Darrell could sometimes find paid work.
  - Darrell had worked as a babysitter in Philadelphia.
  - at a pizza shop, Darrell swept the floors, cleaned the counters, and took out the trash.

Back in Philadelphia, [Darrell] would occasionally find work to make a few dollars. Once in a while he babysat a neighbor's kid. A few times he worked at a small pizza shop sweeping the floors, keeping the counters clean, and taking out the trash.

8. The main idea of the excerpt below is that
- Darrell was very embarrassed to be looked at when the teacher introduced him.
  - Darrell felt as if he looked too short to be in high school.
  - Darrell thought that some of the students were feeling sorry for him.

As the teacher spoke, everyone in the class turned to look at Darrell. He wanted to hide under his desk. He could feel their eyes scanning him. He knew they were thinking he looked too short to be in high school, that he looked skinny and weak. Worse, he thought, maybe some were feeling sorry for him because of how small and scared he looked. He wanted to get up and run out of the class.

#### D. Conclusions

9. You can conclude from the following excerpt that
- Darrell thinks Tyray and his friends are probably at church.
  - because it is Sunday, the store will be closed.
  - tough kids don't usually hang out on the streets early on Sunday mornings.

On the following Sunday, before Darrell's first day at Bluford, his mother asked him to walk to the supermarket to pick up some groceries. . . . Darrell was nervous about going out again, but it was early Sunday, so he thought everything might be okay. To be safe, Darrell made sure that Tyray and his friends were nowhere in sight. . . .

10. You can conclude from the following excerpt that Darrell
- doesn't want to lug his groceries home.
  - wants to read the magazines on the rack.
  - wants to spend more time with Amberlynn.

He took her hand. It was warm and soft. . . . Finally the line moved, and Amberlynn turned around to pack her groceries. For once, Darrell wished that the checkout line was even slower.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. How does Amberlynn behave toward Darrell at the supermarket? Why does Darrell like it when she says "we freshmen," referring to herself and Darrell?

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2. What does Darrell hear happening outside involving his cousins Travis and Nate? How does he react? How does Uncle Jason react?

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What happens between Tyray and Darrell in Mr. Mitchell's class?

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What is Darrell's initial opinion of Mr. Mitchell? How does his opinion change? Why?

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Does Darrell enjoy his first lunch period at Bluford? Why or why not?

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that Jason is right to raise his boys by letting them play rough? Why or why not? Before coming to a conclusion, make a list of the pros and cons of raising children this way.
2. Why do you think kids looked the other way when Tyray was bothering Darrell? Would you have done the same? Explain.
3. As he begins school at Bluford, Darrell worries he'll never be "in" with the other kids. What do you think it takes to be "in"? Is being "in" important to you? Explain.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Like Darrell, have you ever felt so anxious about something that you had trouble sleeping or eating? Write about a time when you were too nervous or worried to sleep, eat, or both. What were you nervous about? How exactly did you feel? Did the worst of your worries come true, or did everything turn out okay?
2. Uncle Jason has one theory about how boys become men. Write a paper about your definition of a "real man." Think about men—ones you know personally and/or famous ones you've heard about—and the characteristics you most respect and admire in them. Be sure to provide an example for each of the admirable qualities you identify.
3. On his first day of school, Darrell especially worries about who he will sit with at lunch. Write a paper describing lunchtime in your school. Do certain kids sit with each other and avoid other people? Do you always sit with the same people? At the same table or in the same area? If someone you did not know or someone new in your school asked to sit with you, how would you respond? How would you want someone to respond if you were in that situation?