

Read this short story and answer questions at the bottom of the second page. While reading, think what you like about the story and why.

Jess felt like she could hardly breathe, the corridor was so hot. It smelt funny too, musty and sweaty at the same time, even though the windows stood open, throwing harsh blocks of sunlight onto the bumpy red floor. She took a deep breath and leaned against the wall, closing her eyes. She imagined herself sitting in the shade, maybe by the old fountain at her grandma's house, dipping her feet in the cool green water ...

Ms Sahota came out of the Year 5 classroom behind her.

"Come on Jess, stop daydreaming and get out there in that lovely sunshine! And don't lean on the wall, you're crumpling up my autumn leaves! Come on, let's get going!"

Jess sighed, and walked very slowly down the corridor towards the doors to the playground, Ms Sahota's voice following her as she went. She pushed the doors open and the heat and light sprung at her like a tiger. She stood close to the hot brick wall. Maybe, if she was very quiet and still, they wouldn't see her ...

Jess stopped short at the top of the steps up to the playground. No, no, no! She should have known they'd be here. Ruby and Millie ... and Paige. Perched on the wall by the steps, like three brightly coloured but dangerous birds of prey. She had to walk past them to get to the playground.

Jess didn't see whose foot it was that tripped her up. She knew it had a trainer on it, but they all wore trainers, even though it was against the rules. She only knew how hard the ground was as she slammed into it, and the crack of pain in her knee, and how loud Ruby, Millie and Paige were laughing ...

Jess lay in bed later that night. She looked up at the glow-in-the dark stars on the ceiling, and hot angry tears ran down from her eyes into

her ears. Her knee throbbed. Suddenly Jess sat upright. She jumped out of bed, reaching under her mattress as she did so for the crumpled piece of paper she had stuffed there when she got home. She tiptoed over to her desk and opened her laptop. She looked up the school's social media page, and took a deep breath as she began to type. The words she had written earlier flowed easily onto the screen. Paige wouldn't know what to do about this!

The next day, there was a tense atmosphere in the classroom. Ruby and Millie were looking very upset. Paige wasn't there. Mr Baker stood at the front of the room, a stern expression on his face.

"Now class. This is very serious. I am sure you all know by now what was written on our social media page. If the person responsible is in this room, I'd like him or her to come and see me at breaktime, own up and tell me why they did it."

Jess looked out of the window at the hot sun. In her imagination she was back by the fountain again, dipping her feet, eyes closed. She smiled. She would go and see Mr Baker at break. And she would most certainly tell him why she did it.

What did you like about the opening of the story? Was it tempting? Why/Why not

What do you think of the main character?

What is the most important moment of the story?

What do you think of the ending ? Is it a powerful or thoughtful ending ? Why

Did you like this story? Why / Why not?