

Name _____



Fear vs. Freedom Test

Directions: Read the passage carefully. Pay attention to the main character's **choices** and **outcomes** involving risk and safety. Then, answer the questions that follow.

The Cliff Jump

Lena stood at the top of the rocky ledge, staring down at the water below. Her friends had already jumped, their laughter echoing through the canyon. She wanted to feel that rush too—but her heart pounded with doubt.

“You don’t have to,” her cousin Noah said. “It’s fine to stay safe.” Lena stepped closer to the edge. The air smelled of salt and sun. She took one deep breath, then leaped. The cold water hit like lightning, stealing her breath for a moment—but when she surfaced, she was laughing.

Back on shore, Noah handed her a towel. “So?” he asked. “It was terrifying,” she said, “but worth it. I didn’t want fear to choose for me.”

1. What is the story’s true theme (the real message)?
2. What is a possible counter-theme (the opposite idea)?
3. Find 2-3 pieces of text evidence that disprove the counter-theme.
4. Explain why the evidence shows that the counter-theme is not supported by the story.

Reflection Prompt: Why might the author include both *risk* and *safety* in the story? How do both contribute to the lesson learned by the end?
