

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Read the passage carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

(60 points)

### HAIL TO THE CHIEF

#### I

After much debate, the Nswazi people from Matandele in southern Zimbabwe have broken with traditional culture and appointed their first female tribal leader. Surrounded by government ministers and other tribal chiefs, Singobile Mabhena appears to be a model of female subservience as she bows her head and modestly lowers her eyes at the ceremony. But this demure 23-year-old has rocked Zimbabwe's traditional culture by becoming the first woman to take on the powerful mantle of tribal chief. "I know many people are opposed to me becoming chief because I am a woman," said Ms. Mabhena. "I will prove to them that I can work as much as a man. Being a woman doesn't mean you are disabled."

#### II

Ms. Mabhena was installed over the weekend as chief of the estimated 100,000 people of the Nswazi communal area in southern Zimbabwe. The colorful ceremony featured Ndebele warriors in leopard-skin loincloths stomping out war dances, wizened old women in bone necklaces intoning the spirits of their ancestors, several choirs singing, loud drumming and, of course, a feast of beef, chicken, vegetables and rice.

#### III

"I bring your community a Christmas present: your new chief, Singobile Mabhena," said Zimbabwe's Minister for Local Government, John Nkomo, to cries and cheers. "When Chief Howard Mabhena died, he had no son to succeed him. It therefore fell upon his eldest daughter, Singobile, to do so and she has taken up her responsibilities with humility," he said. He explained that Ms. Mabhena's investiture had been delayed by more than a year due to objections. "The government held lengthy discussions, and the Nswazi people insisted they would rather have Singobile than a male chief who would not have been appointed by them. All's well that ends well."

#### IV

A chief's main responsibility is to preside over hearings to settle family disputes and matters of property. "I want to look at all sides in any dispute," said the new chief. Mr. Nkomo invested Ms. Mabhena with the traditional chief's costume, an incongruous but arresting mix of African and colonial symbols of authority: a crimson and purple chief's robe, a white pith helmet, a leopard skin and a staff. Five other chiefs witnessed the event, as well as the governor of Matabeleland South province.