Name _____ Date _____

The Class Pet

Short story · 1st–2nd grade

On Friday, Ms. Rivera held up the hamster cage. "Who will take Peanut home this weekend?" Leo's hand shot up first. "Remember," said Ms. Rivera, "Peanut needs fresh food and water every day, and the cage door must stay closed."

Leo carried the cage home very carefully. He showed Peanut to his whole family. He gave her seeds and a slice of apple and watched her run on her wheel.

On Saturday morning, Leo went to say good morning. The cage door was open. Peanut was gone!

Leo's stomach flipped. He wanted to hide the empty cage and pretend nothing had happened. Instead, he ran to his mom. "Mom, I left the door open. Peanut is missing. I need help."

Mom hugged him. "Thank you for telling me. Let's think. Hamsters like small, dark places." They looked under the couch and behind the bookshelf. Nothing.

Then Leo had an idea. He put a few seeds on the floor in each room and sprinkled a little flour around them. "If Peanut eats, she'll leave tiny footprints."

The next morning, the seeds in the kitchen were gone, and tiny floury footprints led straight under the refrigerator. Mom tapped on the floor with a carrot, and out crept Peanut, whiskers twitching.

On Monday, Leo told the class what happened. "I made a mistake," he said, "but I fixed it." Ms. Rivera smiled. "That's exactly what a responsible person does."

Questions

1. Who is Peanut?

2. What was Leo's mistake?

3. What did Leo want to do at first?

4. What did Leo do instead?

5. How did the flour help?

6. Which word describes Leo at the end?

7. Why is it hard to admit a mistake?

8. What was clever about Leo's idea?

The lesson in my own words

Answer Key

1. The class hamster.
2. He left the cage door open.
3. Hide the empty cage.
4. Told his mom and asked for help.
5. It showed Peanut's footprints.
6. responsible.
7. Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary.

Lesson: Being responsible means taking care of what you're trusted with, and asking for help when you need it.