PART OF THE FAMILY

SHORT STORIES

by Barbie Heit • illustrated by Erin Taylor
and Olga and Aleksey Ivanov



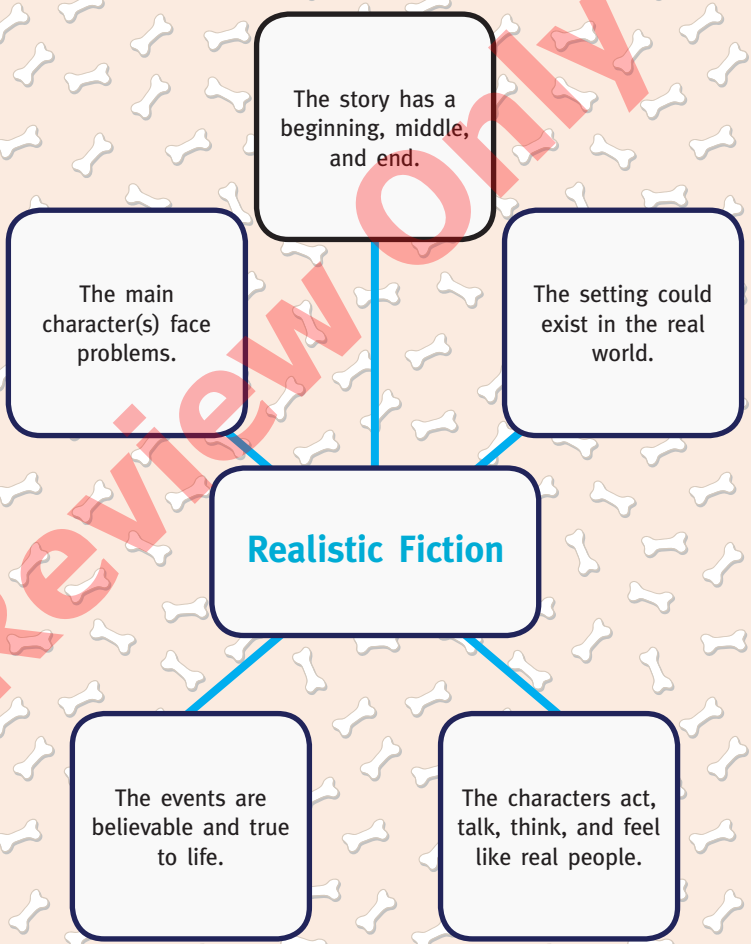
Benchmark EDUCATION

REALISTIC FICTION
LITERATURE

Level	N/30
Lexile®	590L

Realistic Fiction

Look for the genre features noted below as you read this book. Use the features to help you understand the text.



For Review Only

© Benchmark Education Company, LLC. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.
Printed in Guangzhou, China. xxxx-xx-xxxx

LEXILE® is a trademark of MetaMetrics, Inc., and is registered in the United States and abroad.

E-books and additional digital resources available at benchmarkuniverse.com.

ISBN: 978-1-5322-5125-2

Toll-Free 1-877-236-2465
www.benchmarkeducation.com
www.benchmarkuniverse.com

BENCHMARK EDUCATION COMPANY
145 Huguenot Street • New Rochelle, NY • 10801

ALONG CAME RUSTY



For Review Only

A RESPONSIBLE BOY

"Time to wake up," called Dylan's mom from the bottom of the stairs. "Please don't miss the bus and make me drive you to school for the third time this week."

"Okay, okay, I'm up, Mom." Dylan rolled over.

Five minutes later, his mom called again. "Dylan! Get out of bed right now! Why do I always have to repeat myself when I ask you to do something?"

Dylan stumbled out of bed. He searched through the pile of dirty clothes on his floor for something to wear. He saw his mop of curly red hair in the mirror and brushed out a few cookie crumbs. Then he rushed downstairs.

"Didn't you just wear that shirt yesterday?" asked Mia, Dylan's little sister. They sat down for breakfast. "Mom is not going to be happy. She told us to put our clothes in the laundry after we wear them every day."

For Review Only

Sure enough, when Dylan walked into the kitchen, his mom was not happy. It wasn't just because he had left his dirty clothes lying around. It was also because he had forgotten to take out the trash again last night. He also hadn't handed in his homework last week.

He thought he had a great excuse! "But Mom," he said, "I'm the number one player in the online video game competition. I have to play or I'll lose my winning title!" He couldn't see why his mom didn't agree.

"The more I lecture you, Dylan, the less you do," she said. "Sometimes I feel like giving up. How can I teach you to take responsibility?"



For Review Only

"Well, I guess you won't get that pet you've been asking for," his mom said. Yet she had agreed to let Mia have a pet hamster.

"It's not fair," Dylan said. "Why does Mia get her own pet, but I don't?"

"Mia does well in school, and she folds and puts away her laundry like I ask her."

Then his mom thought for a moment. "Okay, Dylan. Let's make a deal. I will let you adopt a dog from the shelter in three weeks if, and only if, you can show me you are responsible."



For Review Only



Later that day, Dylan raced upstairs after school. "How was school?" his mom called. "Do you want a snack?"

"I have chores to do!" he called back. First, Dylan made his bed. He also vacuumed his rug. Then he carried his dirty clothes to the washing machine. Then he sat down to do homework.

"What are you doing?" his mom called out. "I'm being responsible," said Dylan.

For Review Only

THEN CAME RUSTY

Finally, the day arrived! When Dylan and his mom walked into the local animal shelter, some of the dogs barked and jumped. "I knew I would get my dog!" he said. He ran from dog to dog. *But how will I know which one is right for me?* he thought.

Suddenly, Dylan spotted a dog with a familiar look. His fur was a mess. His reddish curls were matted to his body and loaded with crumbs of food. His water bowl was upside down. His toys were scattered all around his cage.

The dog reminded Dylan of someone, but he wasn't sure who it was. "You're the dog for me," Dylan said. "I think I'll call you Rusty!"



For Review Only

His mom reminded him, "Remember, Dylan. Being a good pet owner means being responsible. Rusty will need lots of care and training. You'll need to add this to the chores you already have or you won't be able to keep Rusty."

The next morning, Dylan woke to some new sounds.

Grrrr, hmph, grrr, sniff, sniff. Wuff, wuff, wuff, wuff, grrr, grrr. Arf, arf.



For Review Only

"Rusty, please shush. It's only 6 a.m. We still have an hour before it's time to get up," pleaded Dylan.

But Rusty only got louder. Dylan dragged himself out of bed and stepped right into his slipper, but his toes came out the other side! He looked around and couldn't believe his eyes. Everything was everywhere!

He picked up his slipper. It was so chewed up the threads were hanging out. His homework was torn and all over the floor. And his favorite shirt was hanging out of Rusty's mouth!

"But I'm responsible now. How did I get into this mess?" Dylan said.

For Review Only

