



The Perfect Pet



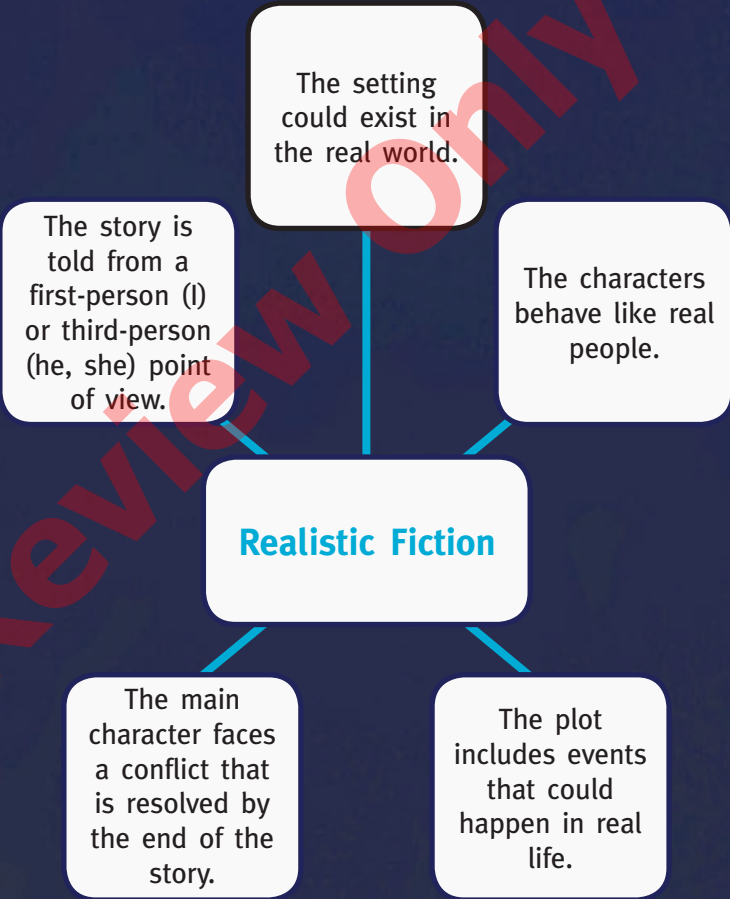
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REALISTIC FICTION
LITERATURE

Level	P/38
Lexile®	600L

Realistic Fiction

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



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A Surprise Gift

Moez and Hala had already started counting down to the first day of summer vacation.

“Amma, just three more days left!”
Moez hollered.

“Did you see our report cards? All As!”
boasted Hala.

“Yes, I’m impressed! Since you did such an excellent job this school year, we thought you could get something extra special. Something you’ve always wanted.” Amma smiled.

Moez and Hala held their breath. Was it a pet? They had been asking for a pet for over a year.

Abba continued, “Because you both have done an excellent job, you can get a pet but . . .”

The kids whooped and jumped up and down!

“I can’t wait to get a fluffy white kitten!”
shrieked Hala.

“And I can’t wait to get a snake!” added Moez.

Abba put up his hand and Amma raised her eyebrows.

“Now wait a minute,” said Amma. “You are getting ONE pet, not two, and as for a snake ...”

Moez went on, “I can get a green snake. Or how about an albino corn snake? I learned about them in school. They are really easy to take care of, they’re not poisonous, and all you need to do is feed them rodents.”

“No snakes allowed!” Amma shuddered just thinking about it. “It might get out of its cage and slither around the house!”



Looking at Moez's sad face, Hala felt bad, even though she also hated snakes.

"Are there any other pets you might want?" Amma asked.

She handed Moez a book titled *1000 Amazing Animals*. "Take this," she said. "See if you can find another animal that we can agree on."

"Good idea," said Moez. He skipped to the reptile section of the book.

A few minutes later he said, "I think I have an animal. I want an iguana!"

Hala's face fell. She didn't want a lizard. "Kittens are cuter," she said.

"Seems like you two need to compromise and decide on one pet," said Amma.

"You kids are lucky that your parents are letting you get a pet," added their Nani. "When I was a little girl, I wanted a pet bird so badly. There was a merchant in Pakistan who sold the most beautiful parrots, parakeets, and other birds."

Nani flipped through the book, searching for exotic birds.

“The merchant had a little stall on the road that seemed to burst with colorful birds. Some birds were in cages and some were perched on his shoulders, making the most beautiful sounds on cool summer mornings.” Nani closed her eyes. “I can still hear the sounds of those birds!” she said.

“I begged my parents for one, but they didn’t want more noise in the house. My brothers were definitely loud, but we had such fun times together.”



Moez and Hala loved when Nani told them stories about her childhood. Her descriptions made them feel like they were there.

Nani hugged them. “I have an idea. Why don’t you do some research to determine which animal is the best for everyone?”

“Okay, Nani,” they said. Hala went to the bookshelf and Moez ran to the computer.

“After you’ve done your investigation,” said Amma, “how about you each make a poster listing pros and cons? Pros are reasons why the animal is right for you, while cons are possible problems.”

“Great idea!” said Abba. “How about we take a ride to the animal shelter? Then you can make your charts to persuade us about which pet we should get.”

“Yes, let’s see how you feel when you see the animals,” said Nani. “Each time I saw a bird, my heart knew it was the pet for me.”

“But how?” asked Moez.

“Hmmm ... birds have a lot of personality and are such friendly animals. Every time I would walk by the parrots to go to school, it seemed like they were saying hello to me!”

“I bet that’s how I’ll feel when I see a kitten,” said Hala.

“Or when I see an iguana,” added Moez.



Hala's Turn

At the shelter, there were many kinds of animals, including cats, dogs, birds, and reptiles.

Hala gazed longingly at the cats. “There are so many! How do I choose one?” she wondered.

“Well, we’re not just looking at cats. We still have to see iguanas,” replied Moez.

Hala looked around happily as the cats meowed. So many different cats! “But where are the fluffy kittens?” she asked.

“Come right this way,” said a volunteer named Evan.



“Look how adorable they are, Moez!” Hala flipped her notepad open, and under Pros she wrote ‘Cute.’

“Cats scratch. Plus, you have to clean their litter boxes! Yuck!” said Moez. “Make sure to add that to your cons list.”

“Are kittens easy to take care of?” asked Hala, ignoring her brother.

“It does take some effort,” said Evan. “They can be cuddly for sure, but they have sharp claws and can scratch your furniture. They can also have a lot of energy at night. Their favorite time to play could be at 2:30 a.m.!”

