Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 7

Answer Key

Finders, Keepers?

Characters: JADE, thirteen · OMAR, her brother, ten · MRS. HALVORSEN, an elderly neighbor

(Saturday morning in a small neighborhood park. JADE sits on a bench reading. OMAR runs in, holding a scruffy brown dog with a red collar and no tag.)

OMAR: Look what I found by the fountain! He followed me the whole way. I'm calling him Biscuit.
JADE: *(closing her book)* Omar, he's wearing a collar. He belongs to someone.
OMAR: There's no tag. Finders keepers!
JADE: That's a rule for playground marbles, not dogs.
(The dog licks JADE's hand. She hesitates, then scratches his ears.)
JADE: *(aside, to the audience)* I want to keep him too. That's the problem.

(OMAR wanders toward a lamppost and freezes. A paper sign is taped to it. He glances at JADE, quietly pulls the sign down, folds it, and slides it into his back pocket.)
JADE: What did you just put in your pocket?
OMAR: *(too quickly)* Nothing. A gum wrapper.
JADE: *(holding out her hand)* Omar.
(He sighs and hands it over. JADE unfolds it and reads aloud.)
JADE: "LOST DOG. Answers to Pepper. Very friendly. Please call." *(quietly)* There's a phone number.
OMAR: *(staring at the ground)* I know. I read it.

(MRS. HALVORSEN enters slowly, leaning on a cane and holding an empty leash.)
MRS. HALVORSEN: Pepper? Pepper! *(The dog barks and pulls toward her.)* Oh, thank goodness. He was my husband's dog. Since Arthur passed, Pepper is the only one who keeps me company. I've been searching since dawn.
(OMAR looks at the dog for a long moment. Then he walks over, clips Pepper to her empty leash, and gently places it in her hand.)

OMAR: He likes having his ears scratched. Right behind the left one.

MRS. HALVORSEN: *(smiling)* He does. You know, my legs aren't what they used to be. Pepper needs long walks on Saturdays. I don't suppose two young people might help?
OMAR: *(looking up, eyes wide)* Really?
JADE: We'd love to.
(MRS. HALVORSEN exits with PEPPER. OMAR watches them go.)
OMAR: *(aside, to the audience)* Maybe finders don't get to keep. But maybe they get to visit.
(Lights fade.)

Part A: Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer.

1. Where and when does the play take place?

   Answer: b) In a neighborhood park on a Saturday morning

2. What does Omar want to do with the dog at first?

   Answer: c) Keep it and name it Biscuit

3. What does Omar do with the sign on the lamppost?

   Answer: b) He hides it in his pocket.

4. Why is Pepper especially important to Mrs. Halvorsen?

   Answer: c) He was her late husband's dog and keeps her company.

Part B: True or False

Write T for true or F for false.

5. Jade secretly wants to keep the dog too.

   Answer: True

6. The dog is wearing a tag with a phone number.

   Answer: False

7. Mrs. Halvorsen invites Jade and Omar to walk Pepper on Saturdays.

   Answer: True

Part C: Dialogue, Stage Directions, and Asides

In a play, stage directions describe actions and feelings. An aside is a line a character speaks directly to the audience that the other characters cannot hear. Asides reveal a character's private thoughts.

8. Find Jade's aside. What does it reveal about her, and why is it important to the conflict?

Jade's aside is "I want to keep him too. That's the problem." It reveals that she is tempted just like Omar, which makes her choice to do the right thing harder and more meaningful.

9. How do the stage directions show that Omar changes during the play? Give two examples.

Sample answer: Early on, he "quietly pulls the sign down" and answers "too quickly," showing he is hiding something. Later, he "clips Pepper to her empty leash, and gently places it in her hand," showing he has decided to do the right thing.

Part D: Think and Explain

10. The title asks a question: "Finders, Keepers?" How does the play answer it? What theme does the ending suggest?

Sample answer: The play answers no: finding something does not make it yours if it belongs to someone else. The ending suggests that doing the right thing can lead to unexpected rewards, since Omar loses the chance to keep Pepper but gains a friendship and weekly visits.