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| Reading Homework 27.1.22 | Due in 3.2.22 |

**Please answer these questions on the next page.**

1. Where did Tom’s parents move from? (Retrieval question.)

2. What adjectives does the author use to describe Josie? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (Retrieval question.)

3. What does ‘insightful’ mean? (Vocabulary question.)

4. Why does Michael often trip up or bump into things? (Inference question.)

5. What was the name of the class hamster? (Retrieval question.)

**The Boy at the Back of the Class**

**By Onjali Rauf**

I don’t like maths. Simple maths is fine, but this year we’re learning about long division and square numbers and all sorts of things that my brain doesn’t like doing. Sometimes I ask for help, but it’s embarrassing putting your hand up too many times to ask the same question. I’m lucky because Tom and Josie and Michael always help me with the things I get stuck with. They’re my best friends and we do everything together.

Tom’s got short spiky hair and a side-smile and a big Adam’s apple that looks like a ping-pong ball got stuck in his throat. He’s the smallest in our group but he’s also the funniest. He only joined our class last year after his parents moved here from America, but we became friends instantly. He has three older brothers who all tease and bully him. Not seriously – only for a joke. But I think they steal his food too which is why he’s so skinny and always super-hungry. I once saw him eat a whole pizza with extra toppings and a double cheeseburger for lunch and still not be full up! So, I hide my snacks and chocolate bars from him when I can.

Josie has large, brown eyes and at least a million freckles across her face. She’s tall and gangly and is always chewing on her hair. She’s the fastest girl in our year and can kick a football past any goalie from the other side of the pitch. She’s the coolest person I know, and I’ve known her since we were three. Our mums say we became instant friends the first day we started nursery, so they decided to become friends too. I don’t really remember much about myself at that age, but Josie is in all my school memories. We even got our first detention together last year – all because of a hamster called Herbert. Josie had heard one of the upper school bullies say that he was going to flush our class hamster, Herbert, down the toilet at home-time. Josie told me, and we decided to go on a Hamster Rescue Mission. We hid Herbert in my rucksack before home-time and took him straight to my house. But of course, Mum found out and made me take him back the very next day. I tried to explain to boring Mr Thompson what had happened, but he wouldn’t listen and gave me detention. And even though she didn’t have to, Josie stood up and said she had helped to steal Herbert too – just so we could do detention together. You know a friend’s a Best Friend when they’re willing to sit in detention with you.

Michael has the neatest, puffiest Afro out of all the boys in our year. Most people think he’s weird. But not us. His glasses are always broken, and his shoelaces are never done right, so he’s always tripping up or bumping into things when he walks. But we’re all so used to it now that we never notice. He’s mostly quiet but when he does say something, grown-ups usually look impressed and say that it’s ‘ingenious’ or ‘insightful’ or use other strange words beginning with ‘in’. I don’t know what they mean, but I guess they mean he’s clever. Grown-ups always like coming up with long words for simple things.