

Name:

SL.K-2.2 Confirm understanding of a text read aloud.

A Mind of His Own

PICK A CHICK! JUST IN TIME FOR EASTER! \$5 EACH

Beneath the handwritten sign, four baby chickens huddled together in a cardboard box. Their feathers shone buttery yellow in the city lights. Forming a circle around them, a group of children anxiously reached in to hold and pet the chicks. As their parents thumbed through their wallets, the kids grabbed three of the birds.

Fluffing his feathers, the last chick pecked at the floor of the box. Finding nothing to eat, he peeped for his mother. Just then, a boy lifted him up and held him in the palm of his hand. *He's awfully cute*, he thought. *Bet Mom and Dad wouldn't mind if I brought him home. They love animals. Buster probably wouldn't mind either.*

Buster was the boy's cat, a big gray tom, now four years old. He'd been with the family since he was just a tiny kitten. *Soon, this small chick will grow up too, into a big, fluffy chicken*, the boy realized.

Before his family adopted Buster, the man at the shelter had asked all kinds of questions. He wanted to make sure the kitten got a good home where he would be cared for all his life. The boy looked at the man selling the chicks. He didn't remember him asking any of the kids' parents how they planned to care for a full-grown chicken.

Cupping the chick in his palm, the boy petted his downy head. Just last spring, he'd seen other chicks like this one—not in a cardboard box, though. His class had taken a field trip to a family farm. There, a flock of roosters, chicks, and hens wandered in and out of a henhouse. The birds seemed so happy. They chirped to one another, sunbathed, and took dust baths in their yard.

"You buying that bird or not?" a voice interrupted the boy's thoughts. It was the man behind the box, counting a stack of five-dollar bills.

My home is great for a cat like Buster, the boy thought. *But a full-grown chicken? Most people couldn't take care of an adult chicken*, he guessed—at least not the way they should. What would they do once their Easter chicks grew up?

"No, I guess not," he said slowly, putting the chick back in the empty box. The man shrugged without glancing up.

The boy saw his friends walking off with their new pets. "Wait up!" he shouted. He might not be able to stop the kids from bringing the birds home. But he knew he had to try.

What do you think happens next?

