Name: _____ Date: _____

Feathers on a Raptor

Reading level 8 (4th grade) · 346 words

Theo had to make a poster for Dinosaur Day at school, and he knew exactly what to draw. A Velociraptor! He drew it long and green, with tough, scaly skin, sharp claws and a grin full of teeth. He colored every scale carefully, one at a time, and he felt very proud of it.

His older cousin Dani came over that afternoon. Dani loved fossils so much that she kept a shoebox of them under her bed. She looked at the poster for a long time. "It's a great drawing," she said. "But I think your raptor forgot something. It's missing its feathers."

"Feathers?" Theo laughed. "Raptors aren't birds." Dani grinned. "Well, birds are dinosaurs," she said. "They're the dinosaurs that are still alive today. And Velociraptor had feathers too. It just couldn't fly with them." Theo stared at her. "No way," he said.

Dani found a book and showed him a picture. Velociraptor was only about the size of a turkey, with feathers along its arms and tail. Scientists learned this by studying fossils, including some from the Gobi Desert in Mongolia. "Some dinosaurs did have scaly skin," Dani said. "Just not this one."

Theo felt his face get warm. His whole poster was wrong! But the longer he looked at the book, the more excited he felt. "A dinosaur the size of a turkey, with feathers," he said slowly. "That's way cooler than scaly." He asked for a new sheet of paper and got out his markers.

This time he drew every feather. He drew them along the arms and down the tail, and he picked bright colors, because it was his poster. When he held it up, Dani clapped. "Now that," she said, "looks like a cousin of every bird at the feeder."

On Dinosaur Day, Theo's poster hung on the wall next to the scaly ones. A girl in his class asked why his raptor had feathers. Theo smiled. "Because it did," he said. "I'll show you." And for the first time all year, he was the one who knew something amazing.

Questions

1. What did Theo draw on his first poster?

A. A scaly green raptor
B. A feathered raptor
C. A turkey

2. What did Dani say Velociraptor had?

A. Scales and wings
B. Feathers, but it could not fly
C. Feathers, and it could fly

3. How big was Velociraptor?

A. As big as a house
B. As small as a mouse
C. About the size of a turkey

4. Why did Theo start over instead of staying upset?

A. The new facts made the dinosaur more exciting to him
B. He was told to
C. He ran out of paper

5. In this story, what does "proud" mean?

A. Happy about something you did
B. Angry at a friend
C. Tired from a long day

Words to know

fossil: old buried remains
feathers: soft bird covering
scaly: covered in scales
poster: big picture sign

Answer key: Feathers on a Raptor

1. A. A scaly green raptor
2. B. Feathers, but it could not fly
3. C. About the size of a turkey
4. A. The new facts made the dinosaur more exciting to him
5. A. Happy about something you did